Message from the President

Dear WCCI Members and Educators around the world:
Greetings, I hope you and your families and educational communities are safe and healthy during this Covid-19 global pandemic. It is indeed a very difficult time for billions of people and nations worldwide experiencing the suffering, hardships, dangers, uncertainties and disruptions caused by this disease. WCCI expresses our thoughts and hopes that the crisis can be resolved in the not too distant future.

On behalf of the World Council for Curriculum & Instruction (WCCI), we are pleased to present this Special Issue of the WCCI Newsletter focusing on the theme of *Education in the time of COVID-19 Challenges and Responses*.
Since the beginning of 2020, over 12 million human beings have been infected and nearly 540,000 have died from COVID-19. Apart from the tragic loss of family members and loved ones and widespread ill-health, the pandemic has resulted in major disruptions to national economies and the global economic order. The lockdowns and suspension of many economic activities have led in turn to massive unemployment and further hunger and deprivation of basic needs to marginalized citizens and communities. However, other dimensions of social systems have also been significantly affected. In particular, for many countries, the impact on education has been enormous.

UNESCO has estimated that nearly 1.4 million students or 80 percent of the world's learners at pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary and tertiary levels of education are now being kept out of educational institutions by country-wide closures. Educators at all levels, as well as families, are facing the challenges posed by this crisis. In response, educational agencies, schools and universities have implemented alternative modes of education during school closures (e.g. distance or remote learning, use of IT tools) or in some cases, transitioning into a “post-pandemic” scenario.

In accord with our vision to building a peaceful, just and sustainable world through education, WCCI, therefore, is publishing this Special Issue of the WCCI Newsletter to provide our members and all educators an opportunity to share our stories, reflections and concerns on how COVID-19 has affected your work, your institutions, and the lives of your learners and their families and communities. In addition, your exemplars of creative, innovative, critical and appropriate curricula and pedagogical practices in response to the crisis are very helpful and enhance the hopefulness and resiliency of educators and learners. Not least, your thoughts on the role and nature of education in contemporary society in a post-COVID 19 world are very interesting to stimulate dialogue on how education in your country or region can best promote the well-being of humanity and our shared planet.

The following is a list of themes and issues that are included in the Story Articles for this Special Issue of the WCCI Newsletter. We hope our feature articles will be viewed as a contribution of WCCI to helping our members and other educators to overcome the challenges of education in the time of COVID-19:

- Ways of alternative teaching and learning modes (e.g. distance or remote education; use of digital tools) - strategies and challenges
- Providing safe, healthy and equitable learning in schools that are still opened or reopening in the transition out of the pandemic (e.g. health checks, classroom design, extracurricular activities, emergency education etc.).
- How institutions, teachers and learners can support inclusive, culturally and socially responsive teaching and maintain relationships and core practices of multicultural and global education during a time of physical distancing.
- Strategies for responses to overcome or avoid prejudices and discrimination in light of the crisis.
• Cases on institutions, educators and learners supporting others during the pandemic.
• Stories about families, community outreach and personal stories of perseverance.
• Challenges of assessment and evaluation of quality learning in the alternative educational modes
• Economics of school closures – impact on working parents.
• Recognition of role of educators as “frontline” workers
• Impact on economic, social, gender and cultural inequalities and injustices (local, national, international, global)
• Relationships of paradigms of development and globalization and global pandemics
• Relationships between consumerism and pandemics
• Relationships between attitudes, behavior, and health system policies and COVID-19 pandemic
• Links between COVID-19 or other pandemics and environmental destruction and climate change
• Impact on globalized travel (e.g. tourism)
• Role of powerful nations and transnational corporations
• Role of United Nations agencies and other international/global organizations
• Impact of COVID-19 emergency policies of containment on human rights, democratic participation and political authoritarianism
• Shifts in international political relationships

May we thank you again for your interest and commitment to contributing your educational ideas, experiences and practices related to this Special COVID-19 pandemic in commemoration of WCCI’s commitment to global education, citizenship and sustainability of our planet Earth.

Warmest regards,

Toh Swee-Hin (S.H.Toh)
President, WCCI

WCCI President outside the UN Headquarter, New York
Message from the Secretariat

Greetings from the Secretariat.

It is truly a challenging time to write these “greetings” for this Special Issue of the WCCI Newsletter during this historic COVID-19 Pandemic.

This Special Issue intends to share with the WCCI family the sentiments of being lockdown in such a once in lifetime situation of great impact to everyone’s whole being and yet full of sentiments and unique as well as rich experiences needed to be shared with one another the “WCCI family way.” As we always try to do, we extend as widely as we can our influence through sharing stories, programs and what this pandemic impact in our lives and lessons that can be learned from it so far. It is new. It impacts on everyone worldwide and it is a serious global crisis indeed!

The Secretariat keeps its usual busy schedule, perhaps even more busy this time because of this “uncertain” times. We have a scheduled world conference in July, 2020 to celebrate the 50th year of WCCI and was rescheduled and finally cancelled due to the uncertainties of the situation. A virtual 50th Anniversary Commemoration conference in early November, 2020 was suggested. A proposal was submitted by WCCI President Dr. Swee-Hin Toh to the Board members and now in the process of being finalized.

In view of this pandemic, WCCI is going to use the technology to gather members and friends to celebrate the 50th year of WCCI. It will be the first of its kind and hopefully a unique contribution to the history of WCCI.

We continuously seek the support and cooperation of all the members of the WCCI family as we continue our journey of peace and justice in this “challenging” world.

A million thanks as always.

Estela C. Matriano
WCCI Executive Director

Carole I. Caparros
WCCI Executive Assistant

EVENT2021
A GLOBAL PANDEMIC EXERCISE
Message from the Editor

Greetings and a warm welcome to this important Spring-summer COVID-19 special issue!

We are facing an unprecedented time in the history of our world when in a matter of months our whole world, the way we live, love, socialize, shop, learn and connect with each other as human beings changed with little warning. We could not have predicted that with all the science, technology and human capacity that we would be forced to shelter away in our homes, many of us fearing what will come next during this uncertain time.

Yet, we remain optimistic and excited about our past success in solving world problems and even pandemics. WCCI’s record of success does not begin or end with our World Conference 2020 that had to be postponed in to protect our members and others!

Please take some time to get to know the layout of this special newsletter. In this issue you find COVID-19 messages from President, Secretariat, SIG leaders, members, new members and others who join us in this fight to preserve and support ongoing efforts to keep education alive. We plan to continue our on-line presence, journal and newsletter publishing as we promote using innovative technologies to connect us to global stories, friends and colleagues around the world during this pandemic.

We are honored to share resources, strategies, work and success of so many worldwide contributors!

Be safe, stay healthy and let us hear from you more! We came away from our last 2018 World Conference more energized and researchers around the world as we explored processes and effects of global education in advancing economic, social and environmental justice.

Let’s continue to be energized, believing that continuing to serve our global colleagues, learners and educators can only happen through training, professional sensitive, competent and active members working together to create and support new global governance processes to find resolutions to global problems that have only been exacerbated due to COVID-19.

We are WCCI citizens willing to advocate for policy changes for the attainment of an inclusive, just and peaceful world. Let us continue the fight for human rights of the disenfranchised, including immigrants living, working, studying and contributing to societies and worlds outside their birth
homes. This is an ongoing issue that we must all engage dialogue and inspire our neighbors and institutions to support human, social and environmental justice for all.

Such important issues must continue in scholarly discussions, research papers, laboratories and online environments to exchange ideas worthy of deeper thinking. WCCI Special Interest Groups are creating and sustaining global dialogues that are critical to bringing about the dynamic educational transformational and sustainable solutions needed for creating a more impactful global society. In each newsletter message, the goal of the editorial team is to stimulate your thinking and encourage you to contribute your voices using our communication platforms to share in critical conversations, governance and share messages that lift up our voices in the WCCI journal, newsletter, Websites and the world!

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**Educational Initiatives Amid COVID-19: A Case from India**

*By Sangeeta Pethiya*

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With pandemic COVID-19 striking, inclusive and quality education has emerged as a major challenge for the apex organization in education in India, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), an autonomous organization under Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. While many private schools shifted to online teaching mode via Microsoft teams or google classrooms, the same cannot be said to be a generalized practice among all schools. Thereby, the challenge of imparting education rests with NCERT for all the students, whether studying in private or Government schools across the length and breadth of the country.

What emerged as a powerful support for education in the country, is the ‘The Central Institute of Educational Technology’ (CIET) a constituent unit of NCERT, which promotes educational technologies viz. radio, TV, films Satellite communications and cyber media. Established in 1984, it has steadily built a strong foundation for e-based education, and immediately filled in the void due to school closures. Its E-pathshala portal has a large repository of audio and videos, e-pubs, flipbooks, etc. These resources can be easily accessed through the laptop, desktop, smartphones, etc. They have been made available in multiple languages i.e. Hindi, English, Urdu. Since the app is very small (less than 7 MB), it requires very less memory and can be easily downloaded on any operating system.
Besides, National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) developed by CIET, has a large collection of educational resources catering to primary, secondary and higher secondary classes. The resources are also available in formats like audios, videos, images and documents. These are very interactive, engaging and interesting for the learners.

Screen shot from NROER

The Diksha portal of NCERT has the specific objective to equip teachers with digital literacy as a self-paced hand-holding aide. It supports the teachers to create training content, in-class resources, content profile, assessment aids, as also to connect with other teachers’ fraternity. It is also a platform where teachers can enroll for online teacher training courses. It has a rich repository of suggestive lesson plans, and concept videos have also been provided. Teachers can also access this material offline on their smartphones, laptops and other devices anytime, anywhere. They can also contribute their resources on this platform. The portal records the journey of the teacher since joining to retirement and is expected to improve the quality of education by assimilating educational technology.

At the behest of Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry, Alternative Academic Calendar from Primary to Higher Secondary have been planned, by NCERT, aligned with learning outcomes. (For more information log onto http://ncert.nic.in/aac.html)

The E-Vidya initiative has been launched by the Government, under which each class has been assigned a dedicated channel. Prof. Hrushikesh Senapaty, Director NCERT in an interview with the Times of India stated ‘The class wise e-content focus on learning outcomes as text books vary from state to state. We will start some national level programme -more of animation, demonstration and interactives. This will be aimed at the under-served section. Besides, building of audio programs for the community radio is also underway.... MHRD is also in the process of finalizing the guidelines submitted by NCERT in case of school reopening, these suggestions include staggered opening, protocols on social distancing, health and hygiene and odd and even sort of arrangements.'
Besides, NCERT on took the responsibility of enhancing the digital skills of the teachers. Since 7th April 2020, 55 webinars have been organized till 31st May 2020, on topics like creating videos with slide presentation, creating concept maps using B.U.E, creating infographics, formative assessment using go formative and similar other areas. These webinars were streamed live on NCERT official YouTube channel, as well as Doordarshan, (the national channel with deepest penetration) and also disseminated through major satellite and cable TV providers.

Now, moving on to share about my experience, in the constituent unit of NCERT, Regional Institute of Education, Bhopal, where I work. On 23rd March 2020, all history students of all four semesters that I teach, were busy preparing their History Practicum projects as a part of their internal assessment for presentation, in the form of drama, PPT’s, History narrating through stories, to name a few for presenting before the class. They were deep into studies as their internal assessment was going on. Hardly had they taken their exams in a couple of subjects that the lock down was announced. COVID-19 had struck and the number of positive cases had shot up to 499, putting the entire nation on a red alert. The institution abuzz with activities and chirruping students, suddenly wore a deserted look.

In the coming week, everyone seemed to be panic gripped, and were trying to make sense of the situation. My concern also shifted more on ensuring about stocking grocery and other essentials and managing daily routines. Only in the following week as life started coming to terms with the changed scenario, did the concern about education dawn upon.

The thought whether the students would be spending their time productively, became a serious concern for me. It was very important to keep them engaged and involved. My WhatsApp group that was already in place as a part of communicating and sharing resources, now became the first active platform of learning. To begin with, the lectures were audio recorded and shared on the WhatsApp group. As work from home guidelines started coming in, and accountability was fixed through weekly reporting, even the ones with laid back attitude, became active in the teaching-learning process.
Through the support from my son who is pursuing graduation in Information technology and some amount of self -discovery and self- exploration, I became well versed in creating my online classes through various Apps, and in taking online lectures through digital video conferencing platforms. However, challenges emerged, only a few had accesses to internet, students residing in far flung villages had either no internet or very low speed and disrupting connection and therefore could not attend online classes. To make for, audio-video recordings of the online sessions taken, were sent to all the students to reinforce self-paced understanding, as and when they could get access to internet.

COVID-19 has enhanced digital interconnectedness and interdependence. However, due to digital divide, wherein roughly 40% of the people in the world, have either no accessibility, affordability or availability (Three vital A’s) to the digital world, inequalities and injustices for the marginalized may only be reinforced. The answer lies in addressing the three A’s through which we may be able to create an equitable and humane digital world.

Meanwhile, the Council had already taken up the mammoth task of assigning one channel for each class and had started on-line teaching, as a part of e-vidya initiative mentioned above. The task was now to cover the entire syllabus and prepare e-content as large portion of e-content on syllabus was still unavailable. I suddenly found myself teaching at primary, upper primary, secondary and at higher secondary level, besides teaching my own undergrads and fellow teachers! (Teaching fellow teachers through various webinars in which I was invited.)

Such varied range of teaching was exciting and exhausting at the same time. Here, I was into e-teaching, recording and re-recording shots, takes and retakes drained off all energy and enthusiasm as, at times, whatever I was saying sounded so artificial to myself. I have already started longing for real life teaching which is far more satisfying and effective than e-teaching.

On line teaching brought in its fold its own challenges. Students started indulging in messaging through private chats or cross chatting. At times, I kept wondering if I was addressing the students or only their screens! Slowly, with experience, these discipline challenges were resolved. Closing chatting option, raising hand to speak, taking surprise on line attendance and so on. On line classes have now started looking a little akin to real classes.

Soon, the institutional meetings started through online video conferencing platforms. Initially, there were challenges such as not knowing how to put your name and image in the profile which was required as a part of ensuring everyone’s presence and administrative records. Other small challenges included not knowing how to mute oneself, how to present oneself, share one’s screen and the like, which with experience now, have all been resolved. But more interesting is the shifting of the agenda of the meetings, revolving around going digital. These agendas included, discussing modalities of e-mode of working (which would be paper less and
so at least and at last, contribute towards sustainable development with less of paper being used!), deliberating upon modus operandi to develop e-contents, reviewing the e-contents to be telecasted, brainstorming on ways of reopening schools amidst pandemic and the like.

Academic forums are a part of the Institutes routine affairs. In these forums, a faculty member presents on a certain issue or concern before fellow academicians, followed by engaging discussions. This opens up new dimensions of thinking. These forums also started online. The focus Screen shot from Academic Forum at Regional Institute of Education organized on 3rd June 2020.

Here also now shifted from being confined to one’s own discipline to technology. Issues like teaching and learning in flipped classrooms, blended learning through google classrooms, making videos with power point presentations and similar other were now presented and discussed. These greatly helped in enhancing the digital literacy of fellow colleagues. The presentations also reinforced the fact on how fast educationist respond to changing times, by embarking upon learning technology and arming themselves to take up teaching in the digital world.

Upscaling my digital skills, became a paramount concern for me in order to equip myself with the required Digital skills. I have successfully completed a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on ‘Managing online classes and co-creating MOOCS 2.0’. I am now more digitally skilled to take my online classes. As part of learning, I also gained deep insight into ethical use of resources and managed to publish my videos on You tube. One being on Sanchi: A wonder in Stone (For more information please visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6nR7Vt3FXg&t=292s), and the other on the Commercial Revolution (For more information please visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SZT_CziC18).

As also sharing some images from my visits to historical places in the public domain on the web. Thus, at last graduating from knowledge consumer to knowledge creator in the digital world. I also find myself better equipped to accomplish my long-planned to-do list, which is to develop a MOOC on Global Citizenship education (GCED), trainings of which, I had passionately been conducting since past two years in a face to face mode. I strongly feel, that there is no difference between the global and the real world. Being digital citizens brings in its array added responsibilities. With increased and active participation of large number of people in the digital world, building a safe, just and humane digital world is of paramount importance. MOOC on GCED may serve as my little contribution in this endeavor.

At the home front, my small world has also transformed with separate digital workstations for all the four members in the family in four different corners of the house. New gadgets like
powerful microphones (for better quality audio recordings), lap top lamp (in order to work until late without disturbing others), web camera, external speakers, network adaptors and live wires have been added. Plugs, chargers and wires seem to adorn various nooks and corners of our home.

As adults, me and my son have come around new e- work mode. As far as my daughter aged 12, she is very happy and glad to attend her online classes. She has always been very fascinated with computers and enjoys working on my laptop as and when she can lay her hand to. She was immensely excited and all smiles when she got a system of her own to facilitate her online classes. She actively participates in her on line lessons and is enjoying her new online responsibilities as class monitor and as a shadow teacher. However, she also complaints of stiff neck and burning sensation in the eyes due to long hours of sitting in front of the screen, given that her online school runs from eight in the morning to one in the noon, with short breaks in between. During these short breaks also, she completes her various online responsibilities. Being a shadow teacher, she is responsible for helping children in clarifying their doubts in the previous class if any. Added further, are her online music and basketball lessons which she is unwilling to forego. I am reassured that her academics is not suffering and her daily routine is regularized. However, she is glued to the screen for almost 7-8 hours a day, which includes her own TV and mobile watching as a part of her leisure indulgence. Massive Isn't it? I am sure all mothers as I am must be so worried and concerned about their children’s physical wellbeing!

At home, I now find myself shuttling between office work, online course as enumerated above and managing domestic chores. Chores, which have suddenly gone up as no domestic help is available. Simultaneously, cooking has increased phenomenally to satisfy taste buds! Also, no outside food as a safety practice is being ordered. At times, I find myself up till 3 a.m., draining me off terribly. But I am sure that is how all educationists around the world must be working. Unprecedented times do call for unprecedented efforts! That is why educationists have been aptly called as the Corona warriors and placed along-side doctors, paramedics and other people working untiringly in these pandemic times.

As a last word, I would like to like to say that ‘The only constant in life is change.’ Changing and adapting at personal and professional levels. Living with safety and precaution while carrying forward our responsibilities, is what will sail us all through. With prayers for the world to heal soon, I wish all a safe time ahead (The author Dr. Sangeeta Pethiya is Assistant Professor at NCERT Bhopal).
COVID-19 Unity in Philippines

FACING CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION 4.0 IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC THROUGH HELPING STUDENTS ACQUIRE INTERNET CONNECTION

By Mary Grace A. Aquino
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Affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Capital Region has been under community quarantine – from Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) to Modified ECQ, to General Community Quarantine (GCQ). Classes have been suspended in all levels, with specific guidelines from Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Like other universities, a local university in Manila, where I have been a teacher educator, suspended all online classes effective 17 March 2020 to give all faculty and students time to attend to important personal and family matters during this health crisis. Since we started our second semester for the school year 2019-2020 only in January 2020, we were supposed to have our Midterm Examinations one week after the suspension of online classes.

We were not able to continue all academic activities for this term, so, I became so worried about the learning of my Teacher Education students. I have been concerned not only about the contents we were supposed to cover for the remaining half of the semester but also the competencies they have to master. Having online classes should have augmented our supposed regular face-to-face meetings and could help us in facilitating the learning of our students. But there was a saddening truth that I had to face – almost half of the student population in the entire university had no stable and reliable internet connection as mentioned in a memorandum from the University President.

From that group of students, there might be some who have no smartphone or laptop to use for online connection, or could not subscribe to any internet plan other than free Wi-Fi connection due to financial difficulties exacerbated by the limited economic activities due to lockdown.

Long before COVID-19 pandemic, universities have been facing challenges in embracing Education 4.0, a learning approach aligning with Industrial Revolution 4.0. Eventually, as schools and universities were included in the lockdown to contain COVID-19 infection, instructional technology haunted schools and universities. Through Internet of Things (IoT) people communicate, deliver information, implement work-at-home scheme, while some schools and universities continue their online classes. This IoT is actually the big challenge many Filipino students have been facing, causing university students to file petitions to CHED to urge
universities to suspend online classes, and eventually, our local university had to do the suspension to consider both the faculty and students’ situations.

If this lack of internet connection would not be addressed as soon as possible, many students may graduate and enter the industry with a serious handicap. To continue with their operations, a lot of companies, business entities, government offices, and other institutions have required their employees to work from home through videoconferencing and other online means during the lockdown. Thus, our students cannot just lag behind and regress due to lack of stable and reliable internet connection and appropriate gadgets. Crises, disasters, or pandemic might happen again. Even heavy rains resulting to flooding in Metro Manila can cause suspension of classes. It is therefore wise for our university to get more prepared for the future.

As I reacted to the ECQ, I read and reflected about the situations of schools and universities locally and globally. Knowing that the undergraduate students in our university are all scholars, I have come up with some suggestions on how to help students acquire gadgets and internet connection.

For the University Administration:

1. **Conduct a Survey on Students’ Gadgets and Online Access.** This will help the administration to classify students into what CHED calls as flexible learning. They can be grouped into students who have the ability to participate in *(a)* pure online learning; *(b)* blended learning; and *(c)* face-to-face learning, with printed learning materials that may be used if there is a need to stay at home.

2. **Help Students Acquire Internet Connection.** Students may acquire internet connection with the following options: *(a)* Internet Technology Scholarship; *(b)* Alumni Association Project; and *(c)* Faculty Members’ Extension Service.
   
   *(a)* **Internet Technology Scholarship.** Students can be offered with internet technology scholarship which will provide the qualified individual with free monthly subscription to internet, pocket Wi-Fi gadget, and online skills training. Sponsors of this scholarship may be private companies as part of their social responsibility, or by generous organizations and individuals. The possibility that telecommunication companies offer this scholarship may also be explored. Based on the result of the proposed survey, students who do not have access to internet can be initially identified. These students shall undergo further screening procedure based on clear criteria.

   *(b)* **Alumni Association Project.** Funds may also be raised from the alumni through a project which is specially intended for the internet subscription of needy students. This will be possible with a group of faculty alumni initiating the project since they can attest to the needs of their students.
(c) **Propose as Faculty Members’ Extension Service.** The funding of the students’ monthly internet subscription may be proposed to faculty members from different colleges in the university as their group extension service wherein it is not necessary to have one-to-one sponsorship but what the group can contribute will determine the number of students to accommodate. This will not only provide the monthly payment but also monitor how the student-recipients utilize the subscription in their academic activities. Training for online or flexible learning can also be offered by the faculty.

3. **Work for Gadgets.** To have funds for buying the smartphone or laptop that at least have the capacity to connect to internet and install basic software for online learning, students need employers to offer them a part-time job in which their earnings can buy their needed gadgets. What the university administration may do is to look for these employers. Two schemes may be offered for the student to choose from: (1) pay corresponding cash for their work; or (2) provide the laptop or smartphone and require the student to work for a period of time. If the student cannot comply with the requirements, they have to pay or return the gadgets.

4. **Training on Online Learning Skills (Soft Skills).** Although the main issue to address in this proposal is for internet connection and appropriate gadgets, students will also need skills or competencies in learning through online means including security issues and ethical use. This is to maximize and regulate their use of the internet and be grateful of the assistance that they will get. Providers of scholarship or sponsorship of the internet connection and gadgets as well as faculty members may provide such training.

For the Faculty Members:

1. **Get Involved and Informed about the Survey Result.** Faculty members shall participate in the administration of the survey forms to their respective students. They shall also get informed about the result of the survey to have a basis for categorizing their students according to their online learning capacities. The result will also help the faculty to design the curriculum and learning plan for each course that they will deliver to their students according to the latter’s needs.

2. **Volunteer to be Sponsors of the Internet Technology Scholarship.** Faculty members may help the administration by getting involved in the extension service which involves the sponsoring of students’ monthly internet subscription.

3. **Provide Lectures for Students on Online Learning Skills.** Faculty members may offer their service by conducting lectures that will mainly tackle security issues and ethical use of online resources, and how to maximize and regulate their use of the internet.

4. **Acquire Better Gadgets, Secure Software for Online Learning, and Try Upgrading their Internet Connection, if needed**
   Faculty members, if they have experienced some difficulties during the ECQ, may
explore some offers of telephone companies to upgrade their internet connection, acquire better smartphones with less cost, and to level up their capacity for online teaching. This may also help in getting ideas on designing their online modules, and in recommending help for their students with regard to internet connection and gadgets.

For the City Government:

1. **Request Sponsorship for Free Google Wi-Fi.** The possibility of establishing partnership of the city government with telecommunication companies has to be explored to have more areas that can utilize the Free Google Wi-Fi. Google has activated several Google Stations in the Philippines -- in universities, LRT2 and MRT3 stations, and a few barangays.

2. **Look for Sponsors of Internet Monthly Subscription of Students.** The city government may tap telephone companies to provide free internet monthly subscription to selected students. Some telecommunication companies have been offering programs that help develop students’ skills. Perhaps they can extend these programs to more students and provide them with internet access. In return, these students can be partners of the city government in communicating with its constituents residing in the respective communities of the students. There shall be an appropriate agreement (MOA or MOU), with the specific guidelines/obligations of both parties (between the telecom and the student-recipients, and between the city government and the student-recipients).

3. **Allocate Budget for Student Internet Technology Scholarship.** The City Council may propose for the inclusion of this scholarship in the budget for next year. This will depend on the taxes that the City Government will be able to collect from its constituents.

All these will require clear criteria for selection of qualified students, and detailed policies and guidelines.

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**Edupreneurial Strides by ASN**

*By Swarnima Luthra, Principal*

*ASN Senior Secondary School*

*Delhi, INDIA*

Covid-19 has brought in its wake radical change in the way Governments, Organizations, Institutions and people think and function. The whole world is going through a sea of change and the education sector is no different. The prediction by futurists and education technologists that technology would be the biggest intermediary of the teaching-learning process in coming years has become a default reality overnight, materializing in the form of online teaching mode. The educationists, teachers and students all over the globe are now grappling with the new
normal of a completely tech-mediated teaching-learning process. ASN School commenced its new academic session 2020-21 promptly on April 1, 2020 just as we had done in previous years when the lockdown and Covid-19 did not loom over heads.

The initiation of Learn@Home mode of education and the online classes for the Nry-XII grades were what made the timely opening of our school possible. To ensure that all the cogs ran smoothly in this new venture, teachers worked day and night: re-visiting our technology platforms, acquiring some new solutions, engaging with our technology partners for seamless integration of these technologies into our learning management systems. For the tech integrated curriculum, digital literacy became indispensable and necessary for the teachers and students to learn, adopt and master computer literacy skills for an enriching and fruitful learning platform. Thus, the most important task was the online training of teachers to equip them to conduct classes with one hundred percent proficiency through distance mode. A series of online training sessions were conducted for the entire school staff to make them competent for effective and smooth delivery of lessons. Our committed teachers worked tirelessly in preparing quality study material both for academics and co-scholastic modules. A well chalked out schedule for the classes was prepared and shared with the students. A multitude of platforms like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Snap HW, online assessments and digital tools like Podcasts and Padlets were used in teaching learning processes. Flipped learning mode was encouraged along with the virtual classrooms in real time.

This variety of platforms and surveys both telephonic and online conducted by teachers enabled the school to reach out successfully to a large heterogeneous community comprising of both students and their parents. Our school’s necessary and structured supportive framework provided to parents and students who faced difficulties allowed them to be a part of a comprehensive digital transformation, all the while maintaining a sense of normalcy for all the learners by enforcing a regular daily routine.

Understanding the critical role played by school as social-emotional support system for learners which is all the more critical in these disturbed and distressed times with physical distancing; extra emphasis and thought was put in designing co-curricular activities which fostered creativity and a sense of togetherness amongst students. Students across all grades participated in multitude of cultural, literary and multimedia events such as talent hunt, online debating, quizzes, poster and movie making, videos of everyday science experiments health and hygiene drive, show and tell at school and interschool levels. Students with their parent’s wholeheartedly participated in various engaging activities organized by the school for the celebration of the following international days - Earth Day, Heritage Day, World Energy Day, Technology Day, World Book Day, Mother’s Day, World Environment Day as per the co-scholastic calendar of the school. The students submitted online research project on UNSDGs, the study of these goals has been made an integral part of school curriculum since its launch in 2015, earning the
school, the title of First UNSDG lab in India by United Nations Information Center for India and Bhutan. The school website (https://www.asnschool.org/) and Facebook https://www.facebook.com/ASNSeniorSecondarySchool/) is abuzz with all the latest happenings providing a much needed social connect between the members of the school community.

The online connect and counseling sessions by the school counselor also went a long way in ensuring the emotional and mental well-being of students. Various webinars on career counselling, updating skills and knowledge resources upgrades like Liberal Education in India, Innovation enabled by Microsoft Teams and Technology, Developing Entrepreneurial Thinking in 21st century, Cyber Safety, New normal in Education, Exploring the role of Competency Based Assessment and many more were organized for both student and teaching fraternity.

The ties with parent community strengthened and flourished during these unprecedented times, as our parents seamlessly worked in tandem with our teachers to facilitate a richer teaching-learning environment for Learn@Home especially for young learners. Online Parent Teacher Meetings, Emails, Telephone calls, School App and SnapHW App mediums were utilized effectively and optimally to maintain valuable parent connect. The school went the extra mile to build parental involvement and well-being through inspiring webinar series on Effective Parenting, How to Engage Children during Lockdown by renowned life skills gurus, psychologists and others.

Back up our school motto of “Faith and Follow, Act and Achieve, Serve and Smile”, the school team lead by its Managing Director donated 850 PPE kits to local hospitals. We also created a provision for an open kitchen and distributed essential items to the poor and those in need during the Lockdown period at the District Magistrate’s office as a part of school community outreach program.

Every crisis is, in itself, an opportunity to re-think and reinvent. The pandemic has forced the evolution of a new hybrid education model and made working for a stronger and healthier community vital. Moving forward, we will need to stay one step ahead of the challenges that will arise of what, why and how of school re-opening.
Tears Are Washing Our Eyes That We May See, Teaching in San Antonio, TX, a “City of Compassion”

By Victoria Saldana, St. Mary’s University
Sister Martha Ann Kirk, Th.D., University of the Incarnate Word

What have been the main challenges for your area during the pandemic? How can educators be partners with civic groups in analyzing these and use all this as a teachable moment? How can education become civic engagement helping in transformation for equity and flourishing for all?

April 9, 2020, ten thousand hungry families lined up for help at the San Antonio, Texas, Food Bank. A few weeks into the pandemic confinement, the deep problems that the shining tourist areas of the city hides were revealed. Thousands of people have been living on the edge of food insecurity. Not only was the poverty revealed, national news spotlighted the tragedy. The pictures looked like a huge parking lot. Sadly, it was families lined up in their cars waiting for food.

San Antonio has the dubious distinction of the highest percentage of people living in poverty among the 25 largest U.S. cities and of being one of the most economically segregated cities with huge gaps in neighborhoods, education, job opportunities, housing and medical care
availability. In “normal” San Antonio, the mortality rate for persons in the most disadvantaged ZIP codes is 20 years less than persons in the wealthiest ZIP code.

Mayor Ron Nirenberg has initiated weekly online gatherings with faith leaders since the pandemic began. On May 7, he said, “We cannot accept going back to the way things were, back to 'normal.' We need to be better than that. When this pandemic began, the Food Bank lines doubled to 120,000 families per week. That means that normal in San Antonio was when 60,000 families depended on the Food Bank to put food on their tables. Normal was a booming economy with historic low 3% unemployment for months, but in which more than 15% of our community lived in poverty and nearly a quarter of all children. Normal was when 1 in 4 households didn’t have access to the internet to get homework assignments, order food, etc."

In August, 2020, educators from San Antonio colleges and universities are coming together virtually for a workshop “Critical Thinking, Compassion, and Paths to Civic Engagement.” They will explore teaching strategies so that students may recognize some of the realities in our city and be agents of transformation. This is part of a grant program “Pedagogies for Social Justice and Civic Engagement” funded by the Wabash Center. The grant stands with the city-wide effort to have compassion education for all levels and to truly live our title as a City of Compassion. The grant will also provide mentoring for a select group of Religious Studies educators to grow in pedagogical skills all year and document that progress as a pilot study of best practices.

The workshop for educators in colleges and universities developed in collaboration with the inaugural San Antonio Compassionate Institute 2020, a citywide initiative and workshop series
for K-12 teachers and college and university-level educators in June and July. School district and college and university leaders were invited by San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg to select representatives based on their previous work in equity, diversity and compassion, commitment to their community, leadership skills and character.

In November, 2009, at the University of the Incarnate Word, Religious Studies students did a service learning project of gathering Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs to discuss compassion in their tradition and watch online the inauguration of the “Charter for Compassion.” The San Antonio peaceCENTER and others kept promoting the charter movement seeking city-wide affirmation. In 2017 the City Council and Mayor Ron Nirenberg issued a Resolution that San Antonio be a City of Compassion. That means the city is listed among over 450 cities to be a model and seed more compassion in the world. The Charter movement also encourages “compassion for the earth.” The Compassion Tree Project is an aspect of that, regreening the earth to help the environment and all living creatures. San Antonians have been planting 20,000 trees for 2020. Tree planting at home by families is being encouraged during the pandemic.

This first city-wide institute has come at a pivotal time in the world as COVID-19 has forced schools to close down and made educators completely alter their classrooms as well as effected the routines and learning of millions of children. All are participating in Compassionate Integrity Training for this first institute and the eventual goal is curriculums for all levels. The CIT facilitators for the first institute are from Canada, Columbia, England, India, Ireland, Kenya, and the U. S. working together virtually.
CIT can help in many ways: in the way educators facilitate their classrooms, in the conversations they have with their students, in how and what they teach their students about the world, and how they shape young minds. In doing so they are implementing engaged compassion— the final stage of compassion after wishing and aspiring, which strives for individuals to take personal responsibility to alleviate others suffering. Teachers in their position do this everyday with students, and CIT training gives them the language to do this better and the tools to pass these teachings and ideas to their students.

Educators can shape and impart the teaching, thinking, and language of CIT to their students and especially during a time of physical distancing. While not being in the classroom can be traumatic, the language of compassion is a tool for teachers to use not only when they get back into the classroom, but now when their students need words to understand the current situation of the world, and the kindness to help them understand.

Compassionate Integrity Training is not like studying biology, but much closer to orchestra practice or sports practice. There is no quick set of rules to memorize and regurgitate at a designated time. Instead Compassionate Integrity Training is called a training because it requires personal and repeated effort, like building the skills of violin playing. One needs the solitary practice, but also the group interaction. CIT is facilitated in a group to develop the “muscle” of compassion. With the current world which is changing so quickly in front of students’ eyes, this muscle if developed well can be infinitely helpful.
As the pandemic unmasks the disparity of the city, the growing compassion movement with its deliberate educational strategies in compassion training, has potential to contribute to the transformation of the inequalities of the beautiful city by the San Antonio River which started 302 years ago.

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COVID-19-INDUCED ONLINE LECTURES VIS-À-VIS EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN NIGERIA

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The COVID-19 global pandemic is the game changer of the millennium from multiple perspectives. It is a catalyst and constitutes a major paradigm shift in many areas of human endeavor. Life and weltanschauung will never be the same again. There will definitely be a change in status quo in many societies.

The pandemic has brought many policies into effect. Nigeria suddenly directed a resort to online lectures for its higher institutions following the imposed lockdown. What made this
contentious is Nigeria's attitude to policy making and development. The topography of policy making in Nigeria, in some cases, calls for serious investigations in order to be convinced of the essence and justifications of such policies. A good policy with wrong timing is invariably a wrong policy. The same goes for a policy without any feasibility studies.

Online lectures are becoming au courant across the globe. It is always a welcome and appreciated policy and development in education. Nigeria appears to have hurriedly enacted its policy to join the queue following a critical assessment. However, a good policy should not contradict an existing one, just like a new law should not contradict an existing one, as the ancient Athenians would accuse the proposer of such of being guilty of *graphe paranomon* - illegal proposal.

One of the provisions of the Nigerian National Policy on Education, according to the Federal Government of Nigeria (2014) is the 'equality of educational opportunities for all citizens' which was stated in Section 1(6) of the policy which promised the: 'provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education'. The online lectures directive appears to be a policy by fiat. There was no preliminary study. This would have given the policy makers the opportunities to ensure that: a) the policy is feasible; b) that the policy does not challenge or cause an infraction on existing ones (either in part or in whole); and c) that the policy is an inclusive one.

To buttress all the above, analyses of the present Nigerian scenario would suffice. The online lectures directive was given during the lockdown with some students in the rural areas and others in the urban areas. Many of these rural areas can't boast of electricity and its supplies. There are no 3G (talk less of 4G) networks available in such areas. Majority of these students do not have android/smartphones. Even some lecturers do not have laptops. Many of the students are fending for themselves. With the online lectures, many will have to look for extra means of acquiring data. Due to the lockdown, this becomes herculean. The amount of data to be expended can be estimated by the number of courses/subjects a student is involved in.

Generally, there is no free Wi-Fi in the open society in Nigeria. Constant power supply is never guaranteed. No incentives for the lecturers with respect to the provision of the necessary devices and other facilities for such arduous undertaking. These challenge the feasibility of the policy. Comparatively, the group of students and lecturers in the urban areas have certain advantages. This is however limited. They can only boast of 3G or 4G networks, constant power supply is by God's grace.

In view of the above scenarios, one can see that the policy and goal of 'equality of access to educational opportunities for all citizens' appears challenged by such a policy. There is no equal access. There was no such provision and favorable environment for such equality of opportunities. The basic requirements, by way of infrastructures are not available. These should have been put on ground before the enactment of the policy. The students in the rural areas
are thus challenged to unfavorably compete with their counterparts in the urban areas. By the
time those in the rural areas will get favorable network status to login to the online lectures,
their counterparts in urban areas with favorable networks have finished the lectures. This is a
serious challenge not taken into cognizance by the policy makers.

Also, some of the students with various disabilities appear not to have been put into
consideration by the policymakers. They are now more disadvantaged and incapacitated. They
no longer have equality of access. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed a lot of loopholes in the
policymaking processes in some societies, especially in Nigeria. It has made many become
critical of the several actors in government. Many policies are unnecessarily highfalutin.
Developments do not operate in leaps. This is one of the mythos of this piece.

UNESCO (2020) made some important recommendations for nations wishing to embark on
online lectures to cushion the effects of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on academic calendars.
Two of such recommendations appear to have indicted the Nigerian directives on online
lectures: a). Examine the readiness and choose the most relevant tools. Decide on the use of
high-technology and low-technology solutions based on the reliability of local power supplies,
internet connectivity, and digital skills of teachers and students. b). Implement measures to
ensure that students including those with disabilities or from low-income backgrounds have
access to distance learning programmes, if only a limited number of them have access to digital
devices. Consider temporarily decentralizing such devices from computer labs to families and
support them with internet connectivity.

Recommendation ‘a’ above talked about the examination of local power supplies, internet
connectivity and digital skills of lecturers and students. In terms of local power supplies, this is a
perennial problem. Those in the rural areas are more disadvantaged. Power supply has been
the challenge of past and present governments in Nigeria. Internet connectivity is limited in the
rural areas. It is equally noteworthy that the lecturers were at home (locked down) when the
directives came. There was no prior orientation or workshops for the lecturers most of whom
are not ICT compliant to the level of use of interactive online lecturing media and materials.
This might seriously affect the successful delivery of lectures online. Recommendation ‘b’
advocates for measures to ensure that people with disabilities and people from low income
backgrounds were carried along. This is one of the glaring lacunae in the Nigerian scenario. The
policy can be said to lack social inclusivity. It presumed a lot in this regard. With respect to
people with disabilities, anyone who has entered a class in the Department of Special Needs or
has taught a mixed class with people with disabilities would appreciate the main thrust of this
particular narrative. Some policies can be inadvertently discriminating. It takes circumspection
and critical thinking to be aware of such subtle discriminations.

It is believed that researches build on one another and that every development policy calls for
improvement. The online lecture is a temporary measure due to the coronavirus pandemic.
Before it becomes a tradition, it is believed that the various lacunae must have been taken care of so that it would be an all-inclusive policy which will give every citizen equal access to educational opportunities in Nigeria.

References

Digital Modes for Teaching: Solutions to During and Post-Pandemic Education
By Mariyam Laiza
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The news of Coronavirus spread which was first found in December 2019 at Wuhan city of China brought a halt to almost everything in billions of people’s lives forcing for massive adjustments to regular life activities and the functioning of the systems. Lives of many people have been affected socially, economically and even emotionally. Lockdown of the countries has ended up with the loss of jobs of many people leaving with an uncertainty of what is going to happen in the nearby future. The risk and fear of getting the disease caught to self, family members or loved ones had led to anxiety and depression for many people.

In the effort to avert the spread of diseases, schools in 183 countries had been closed. According to UNESCO, 80% of the students are not receiving their typical education during the COVID 19 Pandemic (Collins $c Steele, 2020). Education being a basic human right, it is the responsibility of States to ensure that education of students is not interrupted or deprived even during the crisis. Hence, the governments were required to bring a paradigm or new learning modality shifts to the way education has been provided in the past.

Education in the Maldives during Covid19 Pandemic
Introduction
Maldives is an Island State in which islands are scattered all over, surrounded with sea. There are 20 administrative atolls with a total number of 1200 of islands of which 200 islands are inhabited. In each island, there will be at least one school, and base on the population, some islands may have more than one school. There are around 212 government schools with a total student population of 87776, 77 Privates schools with student population 8450 and 65 Community schools with 9691 students (Statistical Yearbook 2018).
In the Maldives, a COVID positive case was first found on 7th March 2020. Two foreigners from Kuredu Island Resort were found positive. On 12th March the Government declared first-ever Public Health Emergency including the closure of government offices and all educational institutions, a nationwide travel ban, and closing down Maldives’ borders. However, business, Intra Island and atoll movement and movement on the streets were allowed. The first Positive case from an inhabited islanded was found on 15th April from Male ‘city. As Male city is among the most congested and dense cities in the world, the fear of a community spread was there and hence, curfew was declared closing all the shops and other businesses as well.

**Education in schools**

After a week of closed down of schools, some government and private schools started online classes. However, due to not being able to ensure all the students are reached, the Ministry of Education asked the government schools to discontinue the classes. Although at the end of 2018, all the students of government schools were provided with tablets, only a few schools used them on a regular basis. Teachers and parents were not fully equipped with the skills necessary to use online platforms. Information such as the accessibility to home internet and space availability for home-based classes has not been collected. Nevertheless, many of the private schools in Male’ city with full preparation for online-based delivery mode were able to continue online classes. These private schools were organized and prepared in terms of educating parents through orientation programs on the learning platforms they were using (Google teams, Microsoft Education and Google classes) and has pre-gathered information on the accessibility of students to resources such as internet access and devices.

Starting from 6th April 2020 “Teleclass” was continued. “Teleclass” is a one-way lesson telecasted via television channels. These lessons were also available on Facebook, YouTube and “Filaa” portal of Ministry of Education. At first, these classes were taken focusing on key stages. This means there will be the same lesson for all students of Key stage 1 (Grade 1, 2 and 3). These classes were discontinued, after the curfew (movement restriction) was declared on 15th April. “Teleclass” were resumed on 25th May 2020 and is still continuing. Students from the islands who do not have a television at home go to a neighbour’s house and islands with no COVID 19 positive cases had made arrangements for them to attend schools to view the lessons. Students have to self-mark their attendance once they attend the “Teleclass” and the schools are supposed to keep the records of students’ attendance. Along with these
“Teleclass”, some schools assigned tasks via Viber and Google class platforms. Students who do not have access to such resources (very few in numbers) are provided with printed materials. In addition to this, the government in collaboration with the two telecommunication companies in the Maldives has been providing 5GB data to each government enrolled student and 10 GB to government teachers every month during the lockdown period.

Although all the government school teachers were fully paid during the lockdown it is noted that the teachers who are taking the lesson for the “Teleclass” are among the few teachers who are volunteering to take the lesson. Most teachers are reluctant to use this new platform as they have fear to appear in public platforms. This showed the lack of teacher readiness and preparedness in using new tools and platforms of teaching.

**Education in Higher Education Institutes and Universities**

The higher Education Institutes (government and private) in the Maldives are under the Ministry of Higher Education. There are two Universities (Maldives National University (MNU) and Islamic University of Maldives (IUM)) and a handful of private colleges and Higher Education Institutes. Both the Universities conduct courses in Block Mode and face to Face mode. For block mode classes, resources and learning activities are shared through Moodle.

There is one private college (Mandhu College) with full virtual set up even before the Covid 19 Pandemic and another private college which is Mainz International College which carried some courses using full online platforms. Hence, colleges and institutes pre-prepared for online modes of teaching were able to continue the classes even during the lockdown. However, the colleges and institutes that were not using these platforms had to discontinue the classes and had to spend time in finding other available options.

Both the Universities were able to carry a few online classes for a week or so before the State Public Emergency was declared. All the Higher Educations Institutes were asked to discontinue all the face to face classes and the Universities were also asked to discontinue the online classes as well. One of the main reasons for this discontinuity was students not being able to afford internet cost during a time of crisis as some of the families lost their jobs and were in an uncertain situation.

After sorting out and dealing with challenges, both the Universities resumed and have been continuing online classes from 29th May 2020. Some changes have been brought to the assessment policies and criteria to cater for the new paradigm shift. All the students studying in both the universities were provided with free 5GB data and lecturers with 10 GB data as a solution to the accessibility to internet service. MNU is using Google Meet to take face to face classes while Moodle is used as the Learning Management System. Most Lectures are working from home and for those preferring to work from office were given special permission under Maldives Police Services. People moving out of their home without Permission from Maldives Police services are being fined.
The Paradigms Shift
Although online teaching is not totally new to the education system in many countries, the sudden and spontaneous new paradigm shift from traditional face to face classroom learning to digital learning platforms might have led to educational discrepancies and inequalities, especially with shortfalls such as lack of information on the availability and accessibility of students to resources such as internet and other necessary devices. Awareness and readiness level of parents and teachers in terms of changing the learning to a full home-based learning system and the lack of new set of required skills for such a shift could be another challenge. To overcome challenges and avoid any interruptions in such a crisis in the future, it is important to be prepared and equipped with necessary information and digital skills and most importantly to rethink and plan for future with incorporation of new elements and roles for teachers and parents.

Building a close relationship with parents and other stakeholders
In addition to face to face communication, in order to build a close relationship with parents, the schools can find new ways of staying connected with students and parents using media and other digital tools which they have access to. By greater collaboration with parents and use of regular and effective communications, the school will not only build a close bond between the parents but it will also help the school management and teachers to understand the nature of the student and parent relationships and their living conditions hence being able to gather significant and essential information regarding individual students. This will help the teachers to cater the students’ individual needs for effective and quality education for all. Ongoing communications will also keep the parents informed and updated on new technologies and tools the schools are using, enabling them to assist their children at home in their learning. Moreover, parents also need to be equipped with digital knowledge and skills to enable them to track the progress of students and to become the mentor of their kids at home.

Maintaining an updated and manageable database of student’s information
The paradigm shifts from face to face to online platforms had to be a quick decision for many schools as students otherwise had to stay home without attending schools. Schools that had information on the students’ accessibility and availability of resources were able to bring quick paradigm shifts while the schools that did not have the relevant information had to spend more
time on exploring the available options. This led to number of days in which the students had to stay home bored and unattended as not all parents have had the knowledge on how to keep the kids engaged in learning activities. Teachers and parents readiness based on the acquired skills related to technology was another challenge for some schools to move to online or virtual learning platforms. Developing and maintaining a students’ database might be something the schools should consider when making new plans post to the pandemic.

**Continuing online training and learning**

After the pandemic, schools will resume to the normal face to face classes. However, continuing with the creative and innovative ways teachers delivered the lesson during the pandemic must not fade. Retraining and familiarizing on using various technologies and platforms to improve the quality of learning for children must be ongoing. To ensure this, schools must invest more on technology and provide more opportunities for teachers and students to use digital tools. Teachers must make use of online platforms and digital tools more often and make it a daily practice. Parent meetings, staff meetings, staff nights and gatherings, extracurricular activities such clubs, scout camps also can be conducted virtually. Teachers just have to be creative and innovative in using technology as technology is just amazing and beyond limit.

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**Providing Safe and Equitable Learning during Pandemics in Nigeria**

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**Introduction**

Over the last thirty years we have either seen and heard about wars, tsunamis, floods, diseases, hurricane, severe drought, famine, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides and outbreak of some endemic diseases like Ebola, Zica, SARS, HIV-Aids, but none of these climate changes effects and diseases has shaken the world or have been so devastating as the recent Corona Virus also known as COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has given all living beings an experience that will not be forgotten in a hurry.

**Origin, Cause and General Effects of Corona Virus**

The history of Corona virus can be traced back to its original source or root which is Wuhan, China, where it started towards the end of the year 2019. This pandemic has taken thousands of lives of loved ones across the nations of the world. Initially, it seemed minor and was not taken seriously until it spread like wild fire to almost all the nations of the earth in a space rocket travelling speed and that was when it was declared a pandemic. Corona Virus was declared a pandemic in March 11, 2020 by World Health Organization (WHO) (Kandola,2020).
The COVID-19 first confirmed case in Nigeria was announced on February 27, 2020. But recent figure shows that COVID-19 confirmed cases in Nigeria are about 13,873. The COVID-19 is notable for many things, the high speed at which it spreads and transfers from person to person, the speed with it spreads across regions, the death rate, its period of gestation, its duration and mortality level and the general fact that it has no drug, but it is manageable. One may be forced to ask what is the cause of Corona virus. Corona Virus is a group of viruses that can cause disease in both animals and human but this particular virus causes severe breathing symptoms in other words it affects the respiratory organs/tracts (Kandola, 2020). This is the first time in the last one hundred years the world is experiencing this high level of global tension.

The corona virus disease brought many negative impacts to the world. First, COVID-19 forced the entire world system to shut down. Every nations of the world accepted to introduce a Lockdown. The lockdown in this COVID-19 period was initiated as a requirement for people to stay where they are due to the pandemic risks to themselves or to others if they are allowed free movement. Lockdown in Nigeria went into effect at 11pm on March 30, 2020. The nation borders land, sea and air were shutdown except for cargo goods. The school, churches, mosques, administration, businesses, offices, industries and economy of nations across the globe were shut down and grounded as a result of the fear of the rapid spread and impact of corona virus. It brought about severe restrictions in movement of all kinds; human movement from one location to another, using whatever means, animal movements like the nomads and grazing, motor parks, railway stations, seaports and airports were shut down barring commercial vehicles, buses, trains and airplanes from entering and leaving from one location to another and even from one nation to another for the airplanes. Only hospitals and COVID-19 Intervention Centers were the only global activities left open to the public. It brought also about loss of jobs, scarcity of food, manufactured products, money among many others. It caused the oil price to crash affecting adversely the economy of many nations especially that of the developing countries, making many of these nations to enter into debts. It increased the world poverty level and hunger.

Effects on Education and Curriculum implementation
The coming of Corona virus has also introduced so many changes because of its effect upon human existence. The Global education system got a fair share of the changes. It brought changes in the way of curriculum implementation and learning in the school system. Different ways of curriculum implementation at diverse levels of education emerged because the learners could not be allowed to gather within the school premises, as usual due to the COVID-19.
Most of the visibly used ones in this period was the online form of curriculum implementation using the webinars, zoom classes, google meet, WhatsApp, skype for workshops, meetings, conferences and seminars as well as virtual classroom for those at tertiary, post-basic and basic education levels. Others include home tutoring especially for basic and post-Basic education level learners. The use of worksheets for nursery and kindergarten pupils has also been developed this period to take care of the learning needs of our young ones at that level. All these methods benefited more of those in private schools and urban located children. The challenges the Corona virus pandemic had on the education of learners in Nigeria is felt more among the rural located children; that is those children from low socio-economic background who could not access education and learning easily. Other challenges seen in this period in Nigeria as it affects curriculum implementation including lack of power, finance, administrative support, poverty, hunger. Among all these challenges, poverty and hunger were the major constraint as children can barely eat 2 times a day during the pandemic as parents where restricted from making any movement especially during the total lockdown period despite the government palliative measures. In the move to curb or reduce the spread of COVID-19, the government introduced so many measures which include stopping all forms of social gathering – funerals, weddings, parties, clubbing, social distancing that is staying 2 meters way from others, not more than fifty persons in a hall/gathering or an enclosure per time, disinfecting commonly touched surfaces, use of facial masks, washing of hands, use of hand sanitizers along with the full and partial lockdowns. All these measures were put in place, aimed at reducing the closeness of human beings to one another, a carrier and non-carrier and also to help ameliorate the tempo with which the killer disease was attacking and killing people. The school having a large crowd of students/pupils needed to adhere strictly to these measures as well as observe the lockdowns. Developed countries especially United States, after a while as an organized system, kicked off the online curriculum implementation/teaching/learning program as they have been doing this before now. Already their kids have access to both government and personal laptops so it came as an advantage. Their individual families had their internet facilities so that was not a problem to the kids. All the school districts and teachers needed were to think tank on ways to organize their time table to suit the online learning programs. So, to children in the developed nations and continents it did not make any difference because there was no serious
gap as teaching/learning continued. Portugal in partnering with their nation’s postal services delivers work sheets to students who do not have access to the internet at home.

This is not the case with the children in Nigeria. They are faced with varied issues as mentioned above and the government with their scarce resources concentrated more on saving lives of the citizens especially those affected by the virus, safe guarding the learners by shutting down the schools and putting up varied levels of lockdowns and curfews, curtailing the spread of the virus by bringing out different safety measures. Considerably, the Nigerian government has still been on their toes trying to find ways of tackling the learning needs of our teeming youths and young learners. The question then is willing the children in Nigeria, remain forever at home? Or for how long one may ask? In what ways can these children be helped so that they can benefit like their counterparts in developed nations?

**The New Strategies and Techniques in Curriculum implementation.**

Nigeria shutdown the nation’s educational system on March 23, 2020, from temporary to permanent shutdown till now the school gates has remain locked. The continuous stay-at-home-order by Nigerian government, due to the effect of the pandemic, made education stakeholders to constructively look for ways forward. In Nigeria, some states like Ogun and Lagos adopted the use of local radio and television channels as a means of curriculum implementation to reach out to the children within the area of coverage targeting all children (Ladipo & Adebori, 2020). The challenges of power supply as well as lack of one-on-one contact with the teacher to enable feedback from learners and the teachers used for the media curriculum implementation not trained on how to teach on the set which is quite different from classroom teaching most times affect this initiative. Most private schools, especially in Nigeria, considering what is on ground, as a way of moving on, have also devised some ways of implementing the school curriculum especially at basic and post-basic levels. With the help of the parents, some of them stilled maintained the-stay-at-home-order while introducing the online classes and using worksheet for pupils in nursery and kindergarten classes. At post-basic level they introduced the school lesson whereby they reduced the number of learners in a class with adequate spacing and ensures that all safety measures are observed. These measures were mostly adopted by private schools in the urban cities. The public urban and rural school children are yet to benefit adequately from these forms of learning so far.
Ways of Providing Safe and Equitable Learning during this Pandemic Period in Nigeria

Some suggested ways of providing safe and equitable learning during this pandemic period in Nigeria, that can benefit both rural and urban schools in this period of COVID-19 are: Restructuring the classroom seating arrangement in line with the COVID-19 standards and ensuring its continuous implementation always. Again, the development of worksheets and cards for learners at pre-primary and basic education levels is a welcomed development that can be used in Nigeria. The cards and worksheets can bear the name of the school/ school district or local government area. The topic is boldly stated as well as the instructions; the subject matter is clearly and concisely explained by teacher along with the assignment or home work that will be returned to the school. The schools can use the school buses to drop off these worksheets at the children’s home. The literate parents can be used as home teachers or older brother/sister and relations in the home. Also, home teaching and tutoring can be used. In this case, parents who can financially afford it, can recruit qualified teachers as home tutors to teach their children at home. In this situation, the parents provide a study or a conventional well-equipped classroom for such purpose. They will be responsible for the payment of the tutors in accordance with whatever payment and payment pattern they agreed upon, the subjects and the duration.

Another method that can be used in this period especially in the rural areas is the-town-hall-schools. This type of school was used during the 1966-1970 Nigerian civil war. In this type of school children are taught in town halls and village squares close to their homes and villages by unemployed graduates and Youth corps members (volunteers) within the community. This can be organized by the Local School Authority in cooperation with the communities and parents of pupils. In this type of school, the standard measures are taken while ensuring that the children do not go far from their homes. Stipulated days of meetings are maintained with less hours of learning while more of home works are given to the children.

Finally, Hussain (2020) suggested the use of solar powdered educational devices since Nigeria has adequate natural sunlight that can be harnessed for such project. Also, the pre-loaded
offline academic resources can be used to take care of the vulnerable disadvantaged rural children. Portable solar radios can be provided to each family especially in the remote places to facilitate curriculum implementation in this COVID-19 pandemic period (Ladipo & Adebori, 2020).

In all, adopting and utilizing all these methods, it will require additional fund/finance. Our Nigerian government may not be able to do all considering the nation’s large school children population and high rural density. It is here that the assistance of donor agencies like UNICEF, World Bank, WHO and others will be required especially in training and retraining of teachers and other personnel. Providing necessary facilities like laptops, tablets, solar powered educational devices, solar portable radios and torch lights, earpieces, internet, flash drives, flash cards and vehicles that schools can use to coordinate these programs. Providing funds for recruiting and payment of teachers, supervisors and monitoring workers, ad-hoc staff and other ancillary services will very much promote the success of the program. The World Health Organization (WHO) assisting Nigeria with the construction of solar powered boreholes, tanks, water taps and other containers that will facilitate the washing of hands and maintaining clean and healthy environment. Also, if WHO will provide schools and homes especially in the rural areas with original hand sanitizers, liquid soaps, antiseptic creams, disposable facial masks and other covering gadgets and vaccines it will help to maintain the stipulated preventive standards while learning takes place.

**Conclusion**

COVID 19 is here and will go with time but our lives must not remain in a stand still. Our children are the future of our nation thus they cannot be allowed to stay at home forever without learning. Our learners can be helped through the use of the above-mentioned methods of curriculum implementation this period while waiting for the exit of the corona virus. This can be achieved if our nation Nigeria is assisted by donor agencies to accomplish result like the developed nations.

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Globally, schools were shut down in 2020, to control the spread of the novel corona virus pandemic. Yet, no study has revealed the bio-security measures to control corona virus epidemiology in schools. The research was embarked to identify the unique and independent perception of parents on the bio security measures to control the transmission of corona virus and related outbreaks in schools. Qualitative method was used to develop semi-structured questions and administered via electronic platform, precisely, zoom cloud teleconferencing was used to elucidate data from thirty parents who were purposively selected respondents from six continents across the globe. Analysis followed the thematic technique. Findings indicates five themes that shattered both corona virus epidemiology and possible bio-security measures in schools, these has included: School mobility, Thermometer Usage, Hygienic practices in school, Class setting and Operations, Food Safety and Control. Hence, the bio-security measures in school needs to be intensified to facilitate reopening of schools. The on-going study will guide agents of curriculum development to: develop Teacher guide-kit incorporated with bio-security measures to control the transmission of corona virus in schools; Proactively organize online preparatory teacher and staff training for school reopening; it will encourage parents to send to schools children/ward who will be psychologically motivated to learn without the fear of been vulnerable to corona virus infection and related outbreaks. Thus, it can facilitate re-opening of schools globally.
Reflections from the President: Leading Amidst the Pandemic

By Bert J. Tuga

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When I started my new mission as President of the Philippine Normal University (PNU) in December 2019, I knew that it was going to be a challenging task leading the National Center for Teacher Education (NCTE). However, I would never have envisioned that managing PNU would be at the time of a pandemic especially in my first 100 days in office.

Pre-enhanced community quarantine (EQC) days

As early as February 2020, news about the spread of then novel coronavirus (now COVID-19) in China and other countries already infiltrated the free media and the Internet. I became worried and thought that Metro Manila, being the international gateway of the country and the most populous region, will suffer grossly from the outbreak of the virus. In response to the anticipated threat to the safety of the PNU community my office immediately conducted several coordination meetings with other University officials and, subsequently, issued corresponding advisories regarding the impending danger when COVID-19 reaches the country. We carefully laid out important precautionary measures to avoid the spread of the virus, especially in the campus. We then immediately initiated the following measures: (1) spearheaded information drive, both offline and online; (2) placed soaps, rubbing alcohols, and sanitizers in rest rooms, offices, and some strategic areas in the University; (3) required thermal scanning of all people upon entry to the University; (4) suspended classes and work to disinfect the campus; (5) encouraged physical/social distancing in offices; and (6) advised those who travelled abroad to subject themselves to self-quarantine. We likewise discouraged and cancelled pre-scheduled domestic and international travels of faculty members, administrative staff, and students, whether official or personal. All these things were implemented approximately three (3) weeks before the ECQ.

During the EQC days

The day that President Rodrigo Duterte announced the implementation of EQC in Metro Manila and eventually in the entire Luzon is still very vivid to me. The decision was quite abrupt. We did not anticipate the high restrictions imposed with respect to social mobility, physical distancing, and he suspension of both work and classes. The first thing that came to my mind was, “How will our faculty members and administrative staff survive the two-week EQC without
their salary?” By heaven’s grace, we were fortunate to have a dedicated skeleton workforce who worked tirelessly in order to facilitate the release of the two-week salaries of all PNU employees by the evening of March 16. That was a big relief on my part. Then the second Issue was, “What will happen to the remaining weeks of the term, submission of requirements, interview of PNUAT passers, graduation-related matters, enrolment and other concerns?” These were eventually addressed, albeit temporarily, through the consensus of University officials, who met to discuss the direction that PNU would undertake from then on.

In the days that followed, we saw the number of cases increase and the word “positive” took on a whole different meaning which was the opposite. We knew EQC will not be lifted on April 15, 2020 as it was too much of a risk to allow people to congregate, en masse, all over the country. Prudence dictated that we should prepare for the worst and create scenarios to anticipate the continued impact of the pandemic to the University. In effect, the top management conducted several meetings, face-to-face and online, to do risk-based planning and decision-making related to the impact of COVID-19 to the operations of the University, most especially to the Academics domain. Along with these plans, we thought we have to ensure the economic security of our employees and the safety and well-being of our students, specifically those who were stranded in their dormitories and boarding houses around Metro Manila during the EQC.

Recognizing the needs of our COVID-19 front liners and the vulnerable populations of our partner communities, PNU, including its campuses, consequently launched several donation drives to raise funds from its faculty members, administrative staff, alumni, and other stakeholders. Through the Disaster Emergency Assistance and Relief (DEAR) program, PNU was able to provide cash assistance, food packages, hygiene kits, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to various beneficiaries across the country. Furthermore, PNU launched the web series, PNU TALKS (Teaching and Advocacy for Lifelong Knowledge and Skills) for the continued learning among the students, faculty members, administrative staff, alumni, and other stakeholders. The series provides live and recorded lectures from selected faculty members, administrative staff, and alumni on different topics that keep everyone learning and engaged during the ECQ. More recently, the University also launched the PNU Crisis Helpline to provide crisis intervention services such as telepsychology, medica and economic referral, academic assistance, and online counseling.

COVID-19 has ushered us into the “new normal,” especially in education. Decisions need to be databased, inclusive, realistic or achievable, and effective...

As of this writing, PNU has officially ended Term 3 AY 2019-2020. The Academic Council will now have to decided on the following: (1) grading system of undergraduate students for the
recently concluded term; (2) approval of the official list of graduating students; and (3) planning for Term 1AY 2020-2021 and the succeeding terms of the new academic year. Consultation and meetings among the members of the faculty have already begun in the respective Colleges, Faculties, and Institutes. Meanwhile, the salaries of all PNU employees as well as the stipends of all scholars have already been released in advance. Top management also continues to address government requirements related to the impact of the pandemic to the operations of the University.

After the ECQ (and, hopefully, the “flattening of the curve”)

COVID-19 has ushered us into the “new normal,” especially in education. Because of the pandemic, Education 4.0 has to happen soon in order for us to ensure that our education is free from any form of distraction. More grimly though, this pandemic has also exposed the perennial social inequalities in our society. In reality, poverty has restricted some students from accessing technology as a viable tool for learning further revealing that many homes are not conducive places for learning outside the classroom.

Given these realities, PNU needs to address the continuity of teaching and learning without duly putting the poor students at a disadvantage. As a learning community, PNU needs to promote inclusivity in its policies as it endeavors to offer a more flexible and disruption-free education.

Online surveys, planning meetings, and brainstorming sessions involving PNU officials, members of the faculty, and students are now being done as we search for appropriate approaches to instructional delivery such as online learning, modular learning, flexible learning, homeschooling, blended learning, or other alternative modalities to address the different needs and contexts of students, including the capabilities of the faculty members to deliver alternative modalities of teaching. Decisions need to be data-based, inclusive, realistic or achievable, and effective in realizing the educational objectives set forth in the curriculum. Thus, PNU needs to revisit its Outcomes-Based Teacher Education Curriculum (OBTEC) to consider the lessons and insights from this pandemic and the emerging competencies that need to be developed among future teachers.

Equally significant is to ensure the continuity of operations in the University beyond the EQC. Administrative and academic support services must continue to be delivered in order to respond to the needs of faculty members, administrative staff, students, alumni, and external clients, who seek to avail of these services in the new context where physical distancing has to be observed. Using the new innovations in ICT, PNU needs to level up other programs and automated services such as (1) Digital Library; (2) online Enrolment System in the Graduate School; (3) Register Administration System; (4) Online Application and Admission System; and (5) implementing e-Student Services, among others.
As NCTE it is also imperative for PNU to offer solutions and provide assistance to DepEd, CHED and other TEis on matters relevant to curriculum, instructional delivery, and teacher training as the education system adapts to the challenges of the “new normal.”

Lessons learned
There is no constant formula for effective leadership especially during a crisis. Lest we forget, the COVID-19 pandemic is a novel problem among education leaders and managers. In PNU, I do not claim that my management choices and decisions are fool-proof and without impediments. I am certain, however, of the invaluable insights that I have gained to carry on in the future such as: (1) being proactive in difficult or unexpected situations, (2) employing risk-based thinking and foresight in crisis and non-crisis scenarios, (3) welcoming collaborations and dialogue from different sectors, (4) communicating information efficiently and effectively, and (5) leading with care and compassion.

Fast forward to the time when COVID-19 crisis is over, we will all remember that we have survived a pandemic, not because of one person, but because of our united spirits and actions. The crisis should have created better and renewed persons in us and more prepared to face new ones in the unforeseeable future. As Sam Cawthorn, an Australian life coach aptly puts it, “Crisis moments create opportunity. Problems and crisis ignite our greatest creativity and thought leadership as it forces us to focus on things outside the norm.”

The COVID19 Global Toll on Humanity

By Matin Royeen
Educator, Chicago, IL, USA

Introduction: The Coronavirus known as COVID-19 was first discovered in Wuhan, China at the end of December of 2019 and it was declared a global emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) by the end of January 2020.

There is controversy regarding the outbreak of this virus. There is some speculation that COVID-19 was genetically engineered in a lab in Wuhan, China. Some scientists believe it was naturally derived and reject this assumption that it was man made. Recently, a scientist from the World Health Organization stated that Covid-19 comes from bats and can infect cats and ferrets. The speculation is that the virus transmitted to humans through contacts with animals used for food supplies. However, the United States intelligence is still investigating the source of this pandemic. The Washington Post recently reported the concerns of the US embassy officials in 2018 about the lack of adequate safety precautions in a research facility at the Wuhan Institute of Virology where bat virus was kept. I believe the controversy regarding the origin of the Pandemic may continue without any conclusive evidence for a long time.
Despite the mystery surrounding the source of this Plague, the horrific impact of this killer virus on health and finances, have shaken the fate of every institution of the global community with profound psycho-social consequences at present and in the years to come. Let us discuss the details of the damage this disease has caused around the world.

**The Human Toll:**

- Without any discrimination COVID-19, has attacked and killed human beings in every corner of the world. As of May, 11th of 2020, over 4 million cases with more than 283000 deaths have been reported in 213 countries and territories since the initial reporting of the Coronavirus by the World Health Organization (WHO) in December of 2019.
- In the United States alone, more than 1.3 million cases with a death toll of close to 80000 was reported. This staggering figure represents 31 percent of the total global positive cases and 35 percent of total deaths in the world.
- Some other countries with high Coronavirus death toll include the United Kingdom over 31000, Italy, over 30000 deaths, France and Spain over 26000 deaths each.
- Unfortunately, the numbers of both positive cases and the death figures will continue to increase. Nobody knows how long this trend will continue and when the casualty figures will reach a plateau followed by a decline.

**Ethical Implication of COVID19:** Ethics describe a set of moral principles that should be applied and implemented in the action plans of leaders and governments during decision making. These decisions should be the right decisions based on justice, beneficence and the collective good of the global society. The following points related to COVID19 will have some ethical implication.

- There is no cure for COVID19 now. Many countries are working hard to develop a vaccine in order to deal with this pandemic. It may take months for a vaccine to be developed while this disease will continue to kill human beings. We all live in a global village and our survival depends on universal cooperation. It is important for the wealthy nations to allocate some funding for the developing countries to fight this crisis. The entire global community needs to develop safer zones before transportation and other international economic activities can resume.
- After discovery of a vaccine, how long it will take to meet all global needs and how it will be distributed to the poor people around the world? Who is going to assume the financial responsibility for financing the vaccine in developing countries?
- Unfortunately, The Trump administration has frozen funding for the World Health Organization (WHO), after the president Trump accused the organization of “severely mismanaging and covering up the spread of the coronavirus”. The United States has been responsible for 15 percent of the total two-year funding of 893 million for the World Health Organization. The 134 million US contribution will hurt the international
organization’s ability to combat the widespread of the virus. Some criticize the timing of this action by the White House as being irresponsible and political.

- This pandemic serves as a warning sign against any future global problems that may threaten health and well-being of people. The lessons learned from this epidemic can help nations develop a set of coherent collective policies and procedures with allocation of adequate resources that can safeguard the physical, psychological and economic health of citizens of the world by proactive measures.
- Allocation of resources such as Personal Protective Equipment and having access to health professionals and health facilities that can be responsive to the needs of the sick is another important ethical issue that must be discussed among stakeholders.

The Worldwide Financial Crash Related to COVID19:

- According to the International Monitory Fund (IMF), Covid19 will cost the world about 9.1 trillion during 2020-2021. This number reflects one of the biggest financial shocks since the Great Depression of 1930s.
- Loss of jobs, bankruptcies and the shutting down of global community in order to deal with this pandemic have had a profound impact on people’s lives. The airline industry has incurred 314 billion loss, and 25 million out of its 65 million employees have lost their jobs.
- About 49 million people will be pushed into extreme global poverty; Sub-Saharan Africa 22.6 million, South Asia 15.6 million and East Asia and the Pacific 4.5 million.
- According to the Christian Science Monitor, 1.6 billion, half of the world’s workforce are in danger of losing their livelihoods.
- The informal business sectors that depend on daily income for survival in developing countries have no revenues and are in the mercy of the government and other humanitarian organization for food and other basic needs. Unfortunately, their governments are struggling to allocate the limited resources to fight this pandemic and are unable to meet the basic needs of some citizens.
- In the United States, over 33 million Americans have registered for jobless claims as a result of COVID19. The 14.7 percent unemployment figure is the highest in the United States since the Great Depression.

The Psychosocial Effect of COVID19 on Citizens of the World: This virus has drastically affected mental health of individuals and their relationships with other members of society.

- Covid-19 has interrupted the daily routines which include work/study, leisure and rest. Many people have lost jobs while other have been forced to work out of their homes away from colleagues and friends. Students are pursuing their education from their homes. Such changes in human routines which disturb the customary human habits are very distressing to the human system.
• Physical distancing and social isolation have forced people to keep away from family, friends and loved ones. In some cultures, these patterns of human interaction are very important. Such social deprivation creates additional stress and contribute to loneliness.
• Loss of job and income not only contribute to poverty, but also it causes more depression and anxiety.
• Unfortunately, some countries are already facing different forms of violence that include arm conflicts, terrorism, poverty and unemployment. Covid-19 has caused additional emotional harm to the delicate psyche of citizens of these nations.
• This virus has created a great deal of uncertainty and fear and it could exacerbate mental health and force people to substance abuse.
• The coronavirus is holding people in a state of Limbo. Its sudden outbreak shocked the world community and its brutal force has held the world community hostage, condemning human beings to a state of helplessness in a universe of hopelessness. Nobody knows how long its wrath will reign and ruin lives. Nobody has experienced this type of calamity in the last one hundred years.

This Pandemic reminds me of a saying, “there is a time in one’s period of life that regardless of the attitude of the mind, the soul is down on its knees to prayers”. This is the time for humanity around the globe to pick a specific time, and hold the hands of solidarity together, offering prayers for good health, peace and survival. May God bless the noble people of Afghanistan.

Matin Royeen, EdD is an Afghan-American educator in Chicago, USA. He can be reached at: amroyeen@gmail.com

Saint Paul University Philippines (SPUP) ENGAGES Indigenous People (IP) Community in Responding to COVID-19 Pandemic

By Noemi Cabaddu and Cariza Ramos
SPUP Cares Program
Saint Paul University Philippines
Tuguegarao, Philippines

St. Paul University Philippines (SPUP) engaged the Indigenous People (IP) communities in various endeavors promotive of health and well-being as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Community Development Center, working with ChilFund Philippines, initiated
the “SPUP Community Action Responding to Emergency Situation (SPUP CARES) program” as the University’s COVID-19 Response Intervention.

With the assistance of the Local Government Units (LGU), Municipal Police Station (MPS), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Barangay Officials and Community Volunteers, SPUP was able to deliver Food Packs to 1,084 families in the IP communities living in the municipalities of Luna and Flora, in the province of Apayao, since the implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines in February 2020. Moreover, through the program, Home-based Family Activity Kits (HFAK), which contained Activity Guides, Infographic Materials, Municipal Emergency Hotlines and Vegetable Seeds were also distributed. The IP communities were also instructed the proper ways of hand washing, the risks of COVID-19, and possible activities to keep themselves safe, healthy, and productive while staying in their respective homes.

Despite the restrictions and limitations due to community quarantine measures, the collaborative efforts of SPU and the LGUs of the said municipalities, contributed to the success of the program. The Barangay Officials were mobilized during the packing of food items and activity kits while Clustered or zonal delivery and house to house distribution of these in far-flung areas were employed. Local Health Personnel, as well as the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP), ensured the compliance of the activity to health protocols – wearing of masks, temperature checking, sanitation, and physical distancing.
I am a math STEM teacher in the United States in a program that infuses career, technology, agriculture, and engineering (CTAE) in core content. The school population comprises of 99% African American and Latino/Hispanic students of which 84% of them live at or below the poverty line. Our school faced unique challenges during COVID-19 as several students’ needs were met through new school programs. This included a S.A.F.E. center that provided students with clothes, counseling services with our community partners; and weekly food donations from the food bank. These services were in conjunction with the school district’s food program that provided students with breakfast and lunch and two school based social workers. These services were disrupted once the school was closed due to COVID-19.

I remember considering the implications on the students and their ability to continue working given the new challenges. It was hard to know that there would be an inevitable period of more extreme hardship for many of them. The district and school leaders devised a plan that changed weekly to keep up with the new developments from health organizations about maintaining safety. Students and their families could drive by and receive meals for the week. Students were given mobile devices to continue learning from home and the local internet company gave our families 60 days of internet use which was long enough to help them complete the school year. However, these supports were only received by those with the means to get them. So, there were students who were unable to continue school.

The school district follows a semester system of which the spring semester started in January. January not only marked the start of the new semester, but it marked the beginning of the new principal’s first full semester and a new area school superintendent. Our school was experiencing an increase in our graduation rate; improved teacher retention; the growth of the international STEM certified program; and the expansion of work-based programs. By March, when the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in our school district, our school was in a pivotal moment as we were beginning to shift to prepare our students for state and national exams. This made the transition from teaching physically to teaching remotely more poignant as it seemed things were going very well.

Due to the STEM status of the program, my classroom was structured within a blended learning model before COVID-19 forced the schools to close. I also used project-based learning due to the program. My students were used to having the choice between physical or digital assignments and lessons. I taught three courses that year which meant I taught all four grade
levels. They were all preparing for culminating experiences which included a state exam, case study project with business professionals, an entrepreneurship fair, and graduation. I tried to convince students about how important it was to come to school, work hard, and showcase their diligence. Within one week, all the culminating experiences the students were working for were cancelled. I had one day to prepare for an unprecedented way of schooling in which I would have to teach from home and have no physical contact with students. It was jarring news to learn that I now had to scramble to make sure the students had what they needed.

At first, the transition was easy to withstand since I had a list of learning management systems that my students could access and were comfortable with. Over time, my students became stressed due to the frustration of overwhelmed parents, technical problems with their devices, and their lack of ability to manage their classes online. Several of our students contributed to the family’s income or were their siblings’ caregiver before COVID-19. Given the broad definition of essential workers in the United States, several students had to take on extra hours of work while others had their roles as caregivers expanded. I had to readjust the workload and reorganize how students completed the courses. The assignments focused on providing immediate corrective feedback. I conducted live sessions once a week for students. But this wasn’t always enough for some students had limited access to technology or an outlet to plug the device into. I struggled with staying in consistent contact with some students due to health concerns of their families, COVID-19 diagnoses, and for some students, homelessness. But I am proud to report that many of my students showed remarkable resilience. They formed online networking groups to help each other stay up to date on assignments. They participated in the online discussions and were vocal about their concerns. I used a texting program where students could text me whenever they had questions and I utilized a social media platform to make announcements.

Our school administrators attempted to remind teachers of staying compassionate and flexible. Many high school teachers were used to using what some characterized as tough love, hard deadlines, and rigid standards. The message was pushed that flexibility had to be the standard. They were right. It took flexibility, understanding, and compassion to educate students. It was challenging to stay relevant, provide some level of rigor, and remain empathetic to what was happening around them. I continued to participate in professional learning community meetings and developed weekly goals for students. We developed opportunities for our graduates to safely receive their high school diplomas and graduation regalia. It was a great experience that provided the students and teachers with some sort of closure to the year.

While the year ended with bittersweet terms, it was a great learning experience. I learned more about my students and their personal struggles. I developed better ways of assessing their needs and providing better feedback. More important, I learned of the impact that we had on our students as a community. The students were emotional as they came to pick up their
diplomas. It showed the closeness of our school community and familial connections that were made.

UN Commission on the Status of Women CSW 64

By Dina Pacis
National University
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Annually the United Nations convenes the Commission on the Status of Women or CSW. This past spring the CSW64th was scheduled for March 9-20, 2020. The worlds single largest human rights body dedicated to women, 2020 was a pivotal year. It marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women which signaled the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform focusing on the global rights of women. It also marked five years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. A revisit of the Beijing platform and sustainable goals were the themes of CSW 64. A group of delegates compromised of appointed WCCI members submitted a proposal which was accepted for presentation at the CSW 64 parallel sessions. The parallel session grounded in the CSW 64 theme was entitled Addressing the Impact of Trauma in United States Public Schools.

The parallel session written and spear headed by WCCI members and CSW64 delegates Dina Pacis and Patricia Traynor-Nilsen was developed in collaboration with WCCI member and fellow delegates Emmy Garon, Alexandra Garon-Manusa, and Sonja Arnak, Susan Porter, and Tanya Tarbutton.

This group of interdisciplinary collaborators focused on the work of educational administrators, teachers, higher education faculty and students at all levels to reinforce empathy, care and understanding of a common humanity and interconnectedness founded in the family, society and the world, a tenant which threads through the work mission and vision of WCCI. Unfortunately, as the COVID19 Virus turned into a global pandemic, the CSW64 was canceled. However, the parallel session developed by this group has grown significantly in importance as the pandemic has become a global concern impacting the emotional well-being of the world population. This group hopes to one day soon present their important work.
GLOBAL IMPACT OF COVID 19-THE NIGERIAN EDUCATION RESPONSE

By Benedicta Agusiobo
Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow
International Professional Educational Consultant & Former VP WCCI

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a global pandemic caused by a new strain of coronavirus called Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). Corona viruses are zoonotic, meaning they are normally transmitted between animals and people but has not been previously identified in humans. It was first reported to WHO on the 31st of December, 2019 in Wuhan, China. Since its emergence in Asia late last year, the virus has spread to every continent except Antarctica. Cases are rising daily in Africa the Americas, and Europe. (COVID-19 PANDEMIC) Humanity needs leadership and solidarity to defeat the corona virus.

Countries are racing to slow the spread of the virus by testing and treating patients, carrying out contact tracing, limiting travel, quarantining citizens, and cancelling large gatherings such as sporting events, concerts, and schools. The pandemic is moving like a wave—one that may crash on those least able to cope. But COVID-19 is much more than a health crisis. By stressing every one of the countries it touches, it has the potential to create devastating social, economic and political crises that will leave deep scars for years to come, particularly in countries already weighed down by fragility, poverty and conflict.

COVID-19 virus that spreads through droplets released when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A person can become infected with this new coronavirus by being in close contact (within 2 meters) with a person infected with COVID-19. Infection can also spread by touching a surface that an infected person coughed or sneezed on. It enters the body through nose, mouth, or eyes and attaches itself to cells in the respiratory tract (airways from nose to vocal cords), and can spread to lungs and can lead to death. COVID-19 has affected over 200 countries, areas and territories of the world.
As of 9th July the number of confirmed cases and deaths, globally, in Africa and Nigeria are as shown below:

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<th>No of Confirmed cases recorded</th>
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**Situation of Nigeria Education System Before COVID 19**

Nigeria is a Federal republic located in Sub-Saharan Africa, has a population of over 200 million. The country comprises has 36 States and its Federal Capital Territory, and 774 local governments. The states are grouped into six geopolitical zones, the North Central (NC), North East (NE), North West (NW), South West (SW), South East (SE) and South (SS). Nigeria covers an area of approximately 923,768 sq. miles.

The Nigerian education system is presently lacking the required resilience, effectively providing inclusive quality education; a necessity for driving and sustaining economic growth and national development. It seamlessly supplies the required manpower with requisite knowledge, skills and competencies to meet the challenges of sustainable development, inclusive social welfare and societal wellbeing. The nation’s Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020, a medium-term plan, envisions inclusive economic growth and accelerated national development. The ERGP prioritizes educational development to stimulate innovations and investing in people to achieve the objectives of social inclusion, food and energy security to evolve a globally competitive economy. The achievements from the long-standing efforts to strengthen the sector over the years have been eroded in recent years, by some serious and significant challenges: insurgency and insecurity, an estimated 10 million out of school (OOS) in Nigeria (representing approximately 20% of global population of these marginalized groups), a Learning crisis and Nigeria being among the least-achieving in education key performance indicators. In the past few years, national and international interventions and coalition have
been deployed to address the adverse effects and impact of insurgency and insecurity on the nation’s education sector. Several of these interventions are already yielding results.

**Nigeria’s Response to the Pandemic**

The immediate effects and long-term impact of the raging COVID-19 pandemic pose a huge threat and challenge to the education. An effective response should also seek opportunities inherent in COVID – 19 challenges for leveraging to broaden and strengthen coalitions as well as to upscale innovativeness in redressing the age-long weaknesses of the Nigerian education sector.

The Federal Ministry of Education, which main mandate is to provide policy direction and leadership in collaboration with the states, coalition of all key stakeholders and development partners, together developed the Nigeria Education Sector Response Strategy. The strategy was designed for a dynamic and effective response to ensure that all education is not completely halted at any time but supported. The purpose of the initiative is to provide the modality for a coordinated, systemic and appropriate response to COVID – 19 that will involve all stakeholders. The objective is aimed at mitigating the immediate effect and impact of the pandemic on the education sector, and to enhance the sector’s responsiveness and resilience in providing inclusive quality education at all levels. It provides the enabling framework for well-coordinated and effective planning, implementation, performance monitoring and feedback to ensure:

- Lesson delivery, assessments and learning continue remotely during the period of the pandemic without putting the health and safety of learners, teachers and education managers at risk;
- Accelerated recovery and restoration of the education sector as well as quick regaining of the system’s pre-pandemic capacity for education provision;
- Seamless reintegration of learners at all levels into the conventional school system post-pandemic;
- Quick normalization of the system and timely closing of the gaps in the education cycle as a result of the unscheduled long shut-down of schools; and that
- Lessons and capacity developed from education response to COVID – 19 are institutionalized and deployed for building and strengthening resilience of the education system in delivering quality manpower training and human capital development for sustainable national development.

**Education Sector COVID 19 responses so far include:**

- Recognizing the need to urgently prepare, respond and recover to the pandemic becomes critical in a country like Nigeria.
- Developing a concise and robust Education Strategy COVID-19 Response
• Supporting FME in taking the lead for collaboration with key stakeholders and set up a coordinated Covid 19 task team for a coordinated COVID -19 responses.


Upon receiving approval for the closure of all schools for a period of one (1) month, to prevent the spread of the Corona virus (COVID19), each State in North-East Nigeria has contextualised the circular. In Borno State, on 20th March 2020, the Governor immediately appointed the Deputy Governor to head Borno’s response team and asked the team to tighten IDP camps and directed that schools to close in one week.

The closure of schools will affect close to 46 million students throughout the country, 4.2 million students in BAY States (Borno, Adamawa and Yobe), these are most vulnerable groups of children targeted by the education partners through the mechanisms of the Nigerian Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) are likely to be impacted the most. About 400,000 IDP children attending some form of learning in the camps and host communities will be affected by the stoppage of learning activities. Planned activities for the first and second quarter of 2020 will not be completed as planned. The education system in North East was already stretched before the coronavirus pandemic as a result of multiple crises and population displacements.

In order to limit the impact of school closure COVID 19, NE strategy response targets IDPs, host and the entire community( host or not) considering the impact that school closure has on the entire communities where all school children will not be accessing to Education. Most important, all accessible LGAs with teachers and learners in the BAY States were included (i.e. Using radio messaging/radio education programming) as all schools, community, teachers and learners are similarly at risk and affected by the crisis; including also all type of school (Formal and non-formal).

**New Education Directions Using Remote Learning Systems**

The goal of Nigeria Education In Emergency working Group remains preparedness and response plan and three strategic objectives: 1) prevent spread and transmission of COVID-19 among learners, teachers and schools stakeholder SBMC in North East Nigeria, (2) mitigate minimize the school closure negative impact on children learning and teacher wellbeing and (3) ensure effective, inclusive and safe return to quality learning for learners, teachers and SBMCs. EIEWKG members have implemented activities such as development of awareness materials by different actors at National and international levels.

On scale up response Education sector partners are able to implement programmes in almost all accessible LGAs in North East if given additional funding. Not all children will have access to the digital platforms, therefore alternatives need to be developed to make education available for hard to reach children, vulnerable children and youth. Partners will be able to develop and adapt other material for remote learning and radio school program. Also, self-learning and
family/community-based education learning programme are utilizing best practice from leading agencies and guided by the FME allow learners to access learning when not available.

All the planned activities will target all accessible LGAs with teachers and learners in the BAY States (i.e. radio messaging/radio education programming) as all school community, teachers and learners are similarly at risk and affected by the crisis; including also type of school (Formal and non-formal) all children that will be out-of-school due to this COVID19 crisis. The COVID 19 Strategy NE response is a living document and will be revisited on drastic change of context.

A task team made up of the Federal Ministry of Education(FME) Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Ministry Departments and Agencies (MDAs), and Development Partners with technical support provided to the Task Team by UNICEF) responsible for coordinated e-Education response to COVID-19 pandemic. The team provided information, guidance, and resources to the 36 States and FCT for the continuing education and individualized learning of children at home.

Powered by FME and UBEC, a Web page developed by the Task Team FME and UBEC provide real-time guidance on learning resources and monitoring children at home in the period of the crisis. Also, the technical team is constantly updating information on webpage. A Learn at Home Programme (LHP) for ensuring the continuity of learning for all students through the crisis worked out and provided by task team. The implementation of the LHP involved: online resources and options available for uniformity and equity; advisory on the choice of channels, which will be left solely at the discretion of States and Systems for monitoring and tracking performance of utilization of resources are made available at contact, broadcast, and delivery levels only for Unity Schools such as federal government owned schools.

- FME and UBEC in collaboration with National and State governments upload context-appropriate strategies and content for continuous learning that allow pupils, teachers, and schools to utilize flexible and remote/home-based learning, which may include homework assignments, reading material. Radio, TV, online content, and internet-based learning. The webpage will constantly be updated for ongoing support through this crisis and beyond.

- The closure of schools nationwide. All schools and Universities, and other service agencies have been formally closed from March 20th, 2020. Teaching, learning and all other supporting activities are on hold. Children are forced home to parents and communities, most of which are not equipped to play host to children outside of planned holidays. Since most young people congregate in schools and other institutions to study and therefore, they are very vulnerable as victims and COVID-19 carriers are some of the main reasons why schools have been closed. Many schools have opted for e-learning making use of available technology for learning and teaching hoping that the COVID 19 ends soon.
Online learning materials have been provided by sources including the FME and UBEC. E-learning resources for teachers and learners, mobile classroom applications, unity schools virtual learning platforms for Junior Secondary Schools, Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) and Education First TV, States e-Learning, Radio, and TV.

The task team planned with three scenarios indicating various responses to be implemented: 1) if schools are closed for one month, 2) if closed for more than 3 months and 3) if closed for an extended period. The goal of Nigeria Education In Emergency working Group remains preparedness and response plan to mitigate or minimize the school closure negative impact on children learning and teachers well-being to ensure effective, inclusive and safe return to quality learning for learners, teachers.

A National COVID-19 Education Response Centre at the Federal Ministry of Education doubled as the service base for the Ministerial Task Team and the central operational hub for the education sector response to COVID – 19 to keep the public abreast of strategic progress with Nigeria’s response and emerging developments regarding preparedness and response. Under the PTF The Minister of State for Education provides educational updates through daily briefings to the public via the television news program and also provides information through newspaper, interviews, twitter, mails, recordings etc. – As situations arise, responses are made for example on the critical issues on reopening of schools and Guidelines for reopening schools. Overall, public education is likely going to experience financial hurdles, while education enterprises are experimenting with attractive educational innovations. Perhaps COVID-19 is highlighting some deficiencies in public education, and authorities in Education should re-evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of education systems. Education should necessarily adopt a broad outlook rather than a narrow focus on examinations and assessments.
Critical Emerging Challenges

The COVID 19 Crisis is preventing children and adolescents across all countries and Nigeria including those affected by conflict and displacement from fulfilling their right to quality safe and inclusive education. With UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, the global community has committed to realizing the right to quality education for all children and adolescents by 2030. The COVID 19 Crisis puts this promise into jeopardy more than ever before.

A cost-effective system of instruction independent of time, location, pace and space must be sought to be used for a variety of learning situations: primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and non-formal education with emphasis to enhance education for all and life-long learning initiatives and using modern instructional and communication technologies Political will and good governance in our educational system, well-being and safety of our children, best interests to continue ensuring quality education and trying to recover the gains lost in the system working towards the SGDs. Goal 4.

In homes and family settings, the mothers, young children, adolescents and caregivers are all adapting to new ways of life, new ways of learning, to creative and innovative ways of doing things and new teaching and learning modes through e-learning modes, hygiene and safety practices have been enhanced.

The need for good parenting is on the front burner; parents are getting to know more about their children, their spouses and their needs and issues and problems. Parents got more involved in home-schooling their children more than ever before since everyone is at home on lockdown. Using radio, phones and television modes of learning to reach more children especially in poor communities and remote areas have been intensified for continuous learning, providing assistance from parents.

At the school level, COVID-19 has opened avenues for equipping schools, learning resources, teaching and learning facilities and infrastructures that was never there before COVID, opportunities for on line learning has been brought to the front burner e-learning is now becoming a new normal way to go. Teachers and students now look out for how to learn about new technology platforms such as Zoom, Go to Meeting and others. Students who never owned computers are now buying or looking for opportunities to own one. Parents around the world and in Nigeria are anxious about the learning loss of their children due to the extended closure of schools. Faced with increased demands from home schooling, parents fear their children will be overtaken by those whose children have better online learning opportunities.

There are Issues of inequities in learning-for those who have computers versus those who do not have them. While most private schools have facilities for online teaching and learning when
compared to most public schools where there are no computers, no level of online learning equities and inadequate facilities is acceptable. Children at home who are not schooling and have no opportunities for online learning like some of their peers are exposed to being exploited by the male folks in their neighborhoods or in urban and rural communities. COVID-19 intensified gender issues—the girl child challenges at home, domestic and sexual violence increased became rampant to the extent that Newspaper reports daily carry news of rape of elder and older men raping young girls even as young as 3.months - 6 months to 18 years.

A Task team made up of the Federal Ministry of Education Universal Basic Education Commission, Ministry Departments and Agencies, and Development Partners with Technical support provided to the Task Team by UNICEF) responsible for Coordinated Education response to COVID-19 pandemic.

**Conclusion**
The COVID 19 Crisis is preventing children and adolescents across all countries and Nigeria including those affected by conflict and displacement from fulfilling their right to quality safe and inclusive education. With Sustainable Development Goal 4, the global community has committed to realizing the right to quality education for all children and adolescents by 2030. The COVID 19 Crisis puts this promise into jeopardy more than ever before. According to the United Nations assessment, as at March 15, 2020, more than 770 million learners are now being affected by school and university closures all over the world as a result of COVID.

The Global impact of COVID 19 is numerous both good and bad which will definitely create a new normal in educational practices and our livelihoods. The Education system need to learn lessons from COVID 19 both impacts and responses and integrate them into our new normal, new expectations and new education engineering practices, adoption and adaptation into the new ways of teaching and learning, reskilling and retooling our teaching workforce through massive training to be able to work in the digital space see new normal; changing their attitudes and mindsets is necessary.

The Nigeria Education system therefore requires and must invest in open and distance learning. A cost-effective system of instruction independent of time, location, pace and space must be sought to be used for a variety of learning situations: primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and non-formal education with emphasis to enhance education for all and life-long learning initiatives and using modern instructional and communication technologies (Jegede, 2020). Education must be declared an emergency and be put on the front burner so that priority attention will be focused on Education.

*Prayer is that God should remove Corona Virus from our world.*
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RESOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

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Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the suffering and pain inflicted on human beings worldwide, including some 10.2 million coronavirus cases and over 500,000 deaths, has been enormous. Furthermore, the severe negative impact on the global economic system has disrupted almost all activities and displaced many millions of people from livelihoods and employment, leading to hunger and deprivation of other basic needs in especially global South countries. Schools have been closed in some 144 countries affecting over 1.2 billion learners and
nearly 68% of total enrolled learners, yielding urgent and complex educational challenges as our WCCI members are now experiencing as shown in the articles in this Special Issue of the WCCI Newsletter.

These resources on the COVID-19 global pandemic have been compiled as an initial and concise list of articles, reports, commentaries and analyses which hopefully will be helpful to WCCI members in facing the crisis. However, these sources of information, findings of research and critical analysis will not be focused only on how COVID-19 has impacted on the education system and constructive policies and strategies to respond to the impact. Through integration of COVID-19 issues and themes in curricula, pedagogies and whole school practices, educators also have a responsibility to promote among their learners a critical understanding of this new coronavirus, so that as active global citizens, they are motivated to engage in personal and social action to address the multiple dimensions of this global health crisis, including economic, social, political, cultural, scientific and environmental. A critically educated citizenry will be enabled to assertively and constructively advocate their Governments and other relevant agencies to implement policies that not only save lives but also avoid accentuating existing systems of discrimination, inequalities, injustices, environmental destruction and unsustainable paradigms of development and globalization. In sum, COVID-19 education is most relevant and timely for WCCI’s vision as a transnational educational organization committed to the building of a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

A few caveats, however, should be stated before presenting this list. Given the huge pool of literature, both in popular and scholarly formats, that has appeared since January, 2020, it is necessarily selective. Only a small number of country experiences are included, especially to show lessons from more successful containment or “elimination” as well as missteps or mistakes. Secondly, the choice of articles and reports is based on my own fields of professional and academic interests in peace education and various other fields of transformative education such as human rights education, intercultural education, global-local justice education, sustainable future. The choice does not represent an official WCCI view. Finally, the sources sometimes reflect different or opposing views and opinions, including among scientists and medical specialists. In accord with transformative pedagogical principles, learners need to be aware of such differences, lack of consensus or controversies.

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(I) EDUCATION

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Torn safety nets: How COVID-19 has exposed huge inequalities in global education
Nikita Sharma, IGC and VoxDev, 05 Jun, 2020

COVID-19 Impact on International Higher Education: Studies & Forecasts
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Schools’ readiness for digital learning in the eyes of principals. An analysis from PISA 2018 and its implications for the COVID19 (Coronavirus) crisis response
Juan Manuel Moreno & Lucas Gortzar, Education for Global Development, April 08, 2020

Startling digital divides in distance learning emerge
UNESCO, 21.04.2020

How will COVID-19 change our schools in the long run?
Douglas N. Harris, Brookings April 24, 2020

Pandemic politics, pedagogies and practices: digital technologies and distance education during the coronavirus emergency
Ben Williamson, Rebecca Eynon & John Potter, Learning, Media and Technology Volume 45, 2020 - Issue 2
Equity-Focused Approaches to Learning Loss during COVID-19
Karen Mundy and Susannah Hares, April 16, 2020

Coronavirus: Remembering the value of school in a time of crisis
Neil Selwyn, Monash University, 19 Mar, 2020

UNITED NATIONS HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM - SDGs (2020)

"The meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2020 will be held from Tuesday, 7 July, to Thursday, 16 July 2020, under the auspices of the
Economic and Social Council. This will include the three-day ministerial meeting of the forum from Tuesday, 14 July, to Thursday, 16 July 2020.

The theme will be "Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development ".


As an NGO with special consultative status with the U.N. ECOSOC, WCCI was invited to submit a written statement for inclusion in the program. Below is the statement prepared by Toh Swee-Hin, President of WCCI:

Founded in 1970, the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction (WCCI) is a transnational educational association committed to the building of a just, peaceful and sustainable world community. A key dimension of WCCI’s vision hence lies in implementing the principles of sustainable development through transformative education for peace, global citizenship and sustainable futures.

There is worldwide recognition of the challenges of living together in ways that do not threaten the survival of humanity and all other species on our shared planet. The environmental crisis is reflected in escalating pollutions, deforestation, destructive mining, overfishing, soil degradation, biodiversity loss and disastrous climate change.

WCCI educators have responded to this crisis by developing curricula and pedagogies whereby learners understand the causes of unsustainable development and globalization and to then act to build sustainable futures. Individual and institutional members have integrated education for sustainable development in their curricular programs and motivated learners to participate in “greening” their schools and communities and in commemorating World Environment Day and Earth Day. Our members have undertaken educational projects in collaboration with indigenous communities striving to practice sustainable development for their cultural survival. WCCI members have also co-sponsored programs and practices in “green theology”.

However, the goal of building sustainable futures cannot be limited only to environmental sustainability. Development needs to share planetary resources in ways that promote social and economic justice for all citizens within and across nations. Despite many decades of “development” and “globalization”, a majority of peoples remain marginalized, lacking basic needs while a rich minority enjoy over-consumerism and heavy ecological footprints. The UN 2019 Sustainable Goals Report of 2019 concluded that “the world is not on track to end poverty by 2030”. Such continuing poverty and hunger rooted in structural inequalities often leads to
violent conflicts causing more human suffering and diversion of scare national resources to militarization.

In pursuing our vision, WCCI therefore also advocates for the development of curricula in educating for global and local justice. Such programs encourage learners to query if the dominant paradigm based on economic growth, over-consumerism, the free market and a highly competitive global economy will create a just, compassionate, and sustainable world? In contrast, can humanity seek to promote an alternative paradigm that is participatory, equitable, appropriate (in values and technology), and environmentally sustainable which embrace values and practices more consistent with WCCI vision? In this regard, the current global COVID-19 pandemic shows how global and local injustices can further marginalize poor communities due to unequal access to healthcare, employment and other basic needs.

Hence, educational programs and projects of WCCI members have endeavoured to raise the awareness of learners of how existing policies of development and globalization have accentuated marginalization, and poverty. They are then motivated to engage in individual and social actions for a building a more just and compassionate world. Such curricula also seek to cultivate a spirit of compassion, justice and engaged responsibility among the affluent citizens to practice solidarity with the marginalized.
An Open Letter to WCCI 18th World Conference held in Rome, Italy

I would like to thank WCCI officials for the good co-ordination that had led to the successful execution of the WCCI conference, 2018. Equally, by appreciating the little donations for bazar, it will motivate the members to donate more items that can be utilized to sponsor WCCI in the future conferences.

Again, irrespective of the communication breakdown beyond anyone control, the role played by the WCCI officials for proper co-ordination and members particularly the Nigerians who were filled with surprise about the incidental visit by the Ministers of Embassy in Italy, that is hoped to be improved by all those concerned against future conferences is worthy commendable.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to thank the Nigerian Embassy in Italy for initiating the visit to welcome the Nigerians who attended the WCCI conference at Hotel Villa Maria-Regina, Rome, Italy on 19thJuly, 2018.

The visit which had established link between the Embassy and WCCI members across the globe is hoped to be sustained In order to promote unity and diversity.

Therefore, may I please remind the WCCI contact officer not to relent in the goodwill as usual, to forward as requested the followings:

- The list of all Nigerian attendees, attached with communicate or resolutions of the 2018 conference. That the Embassy requested to further process the sponsorship of the Nigerians in the forthcoming conference in America.
- The WCCI contact person should liaise with the Minister at the Embassy to discuss some related issues of interest to the WCCI as an organization.

May the bond be strengthened, hope to meet again at San Diego.

Warmest regards,

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PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2020
AT WWW.WCCI-INTERNATIONAL.ORG

THANK YOU!