



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

DRAFT

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
(SADC) MEMBER STATES EDUCATION SECTOR
RESPONSE TO COVID-19- FOLLOW-UP STUDY

Contents

Executive Summary	3
1.0 Introduction	7
2.0 Literature review on Educational Policy Response Plan within the African Context.....	8
2.1 The educational policy responses to the pandemic crisis.....	8
2.2 Impact of COVID-19 on Teaching and Learning.....	15
3.0The Survey and Questionnaire Design.....	18
4.0 Profile and Status of the pandemic in Member States.....	22
4.1 Government Actions/Interventions and Instructional Resources for continuity of academic learning.....	23
4.2 Measures adopted to support disadvantaged students to ensure continuity of learning.....	28
4.3 Support and instructional resources provided to Teachers for their professional development during the pandemic	33
4.4 Funding sources and International Collaboration	37
4.5 Support measures mainstreamed in the National Plan	38
4.6 Status of ICT access and literacy in response to the pandemic	41
4.7 Implementation Challenges	47
4.8 Positive Outcomes, Innovations and Lessons Learned from Covid-19	52
4.9 Monitoring and Evaluation Systems	61
5.0 Recommendations and Best practices	65
6.0 Bibliography.....	73
7.0 Appendix- Questionnaire	75

Executive Summary

This report reviews the measures and actions taken by SADC Member States Education Sector policy makers and other stakeholders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a follow up study to delineate the measures adopted during the 2nd or 3rd phases of the pandemic crisis. Additional elements are considered after the first waves of the pandemic with a new survey being conducted based on the recommendations of the Joint Meeting of Ministers of Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation in June 2021. The salient features of the report are as follows;

- A brief review of the educational responses clearly illustrates a number of wide-ranging measures which ministries, institutions and central governments have taken towards mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector in the African region. The most common issues considered are the health and safety of students and staff, the continuity of learning through alternative non-traditional delivery modes using media and ICT, the plan for school feeding programmes, the measures for disadvantaged and vulnerable students, the empowerment of teachers for remote teaching and coordinating the education sector response.
- While there are common issues which are tackled in the national educational response plan, there is a lack of harmonisation on the approach adopted to ensure the continuity of learning in different Member States. It is recommended that countries follow the OECD's framework as guide and checklist of education response to COVID-19 for a harmonised approach.
- Many Member States have imposed a second full or partial lockdown in 2021 leading to schools' closures. The average number of months/weeks of lost learning opportunity is estimated to be approximately 4 to 6 months for most SADC Member States since the first wave of the pandemic. The lost learning opportunities are indeed much higher than 6 months for some Member States experiencing a third lockdown phase.
- The educational measures adopted during the early phase of the pandemic were generally maintained and were geared towards the use of online learning, diversification of platforms and e-resources, use of TV and Radios for broadcasting programmes, online assessments, compressed syllabuses and training on protocols for resumption of classes. In addition, there were provisions of supplementary budget to improve and consolidate ICT

infrastructure and connectivity during the second phase of the pandemic for some Member States (e.g Eswatini). However, actions were focused on offline materials and as such, there were limited government interventions towards the provision of internet access in some Member States (e.g Zimbabwe, Seychelles amongst others).

- The educational response for disadvantaged learners were related to the provision of internet access to needy families (Mauritius), provision of offline materials (Seychelles), provision of tablets or PCs (Mauritius), school feeding programme (Eswatini), distribution of food to vulnerable families (Seychelles), provision of social grants (Seychelles, Madagascar and Namibia) and access to radio programmes (Malawi).
- The National Plan for the phased opening of schools after the first phase of the pandemic was based on a staggered classroom model across many Member States (for e.g Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, Zimbabwe)
- More than 75% percent of the respondents (e.g Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Seychelles, Zambia, Zimbabwe) mentioned that access to computer or link to internet was a real challenge across the different sub-levels of the education sector. The lack of digital access is further exacerbated by the lack of internet access facility to disadvantaged students during the pandemic crisis and even after the first lockdown for the SADC region.
- When assessing the learners' capabilities in the digital world, more than 80% of the respondents indicated that the knowledge of students on the use of online learning tools was limited, the overall student satisfaction with the online learning tools was lower and there were inadequate educational support disadvantaged students on the use of online learning.
- More than 65% of the respondents indicated that ICT infrastructure in educational institutions were inadequate. In particular, there were a lack of qualified technical staff, low internet bandwidth, limited access to relevant software for online learning and inadequate availability of digital devices in educations institutions.
- The majority of the respondents (more than 75%) indicated limited training on online assessments, scepticism on the use of technology as an efficient tool for teaching, limited incentives to integrate digital devices in teaching methods, limited technical and pedagogical skills to integrate and adapt to online teaching.

- A review of the current ICT access for the year 2020/2021¹ in all Member States highlighted that less than 40% of households have internet access in 11 out of 16 Member States. This is indeed a serious impediment for the implementation of online educational policies during a pandemic crisis. The challenges are more profound for six Member States (Angola, DRC, Madagascar, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia) given that internet is available in not more than 15% of the households
- The implementing challenges highlighted by most respondents were the high internet costs and limited internet connectivity (e.g. Madagascar, Zambia, Zimbabwe), lack of coordination with educational institutions with parents to coordinate the learning process of the learners, access to printing materials (Lesotho and Madagascar), adaptability to online learning (Eswatini, Madagascar, Mauritius, Zambia and Zimbabwe), emotional health of students and teachers (Seychelles, Eswatini) and access to Radio Programmes (Zimbabwe).
- While the pandemic crisis has led to a number of challenges, there were some positive unexpected educational changes. The respondents highlighted the following positive unexpected changes; online learning, production of sanitizers, paperless meetings, online submission of coursework, higher scope for ODL institutions, contribution towards more independent learning, more parental involvement in students' learning processes, and increased health awareness and practices.
- The educational response across Member States had been mostly reactive rather than proactive during the first phase of the pandemic. Given the unexpected rapid evolution of COVID-19 situation after the first phase, knowledge delivery and continuity of academic learning had become an even more challenging task. However, there had been progress being made in terms on innovative practices being implemented by some Member States. These practices were online graduation (Eswatini), Q&A sessions follow-up after media lessons (Eswatini), emphasis on and implementation of, blended mode of learning (Mauritius) and integrated technology in education through the development of a learner management system (Zimbabwe).

¹ Source: Latest figures from United Nations Specialised Agency for ICTs as at 2020, Statistics, available from: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/>

- The M&E framework in many Member States (Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) mainly focused on themes related to sanitary protocols, re-opening of schools, day to day management of the educational institutions and handling of positive cases. However, while these M&E frameworks were vital in ensuring continuity of academic learning, there remained critical issues which the current M&E framework in Member States should urgently address/consider during the pandemic crisis. In particular, there should be an integrated M&E framework which consider salient issues such as academic processes, emotional health of students, inclusiveness, training and IT infrastructure.

1.0 Introduction

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had an unparalleled bearing on the education sector, leading to a period of lost learning for many students, most particularly for those from the socially vulnerable groups. In this regard, countries worldwide have attempted to respond through the implementation of various national strategies and policies in attempt to allow students to make up for the lost period of learning.

However, the effectiveness of these educational responses to the pandemic crisis rest upon whether Member States possessed strong education ecosystems which are flexible and capable of adapting to the unpredictability and uncertainties surrounding COVID-19. At regional level, SADC Secretariat, in collaboration with UNESCO and the Global Education Coalition endeavoured to support SADC Member States in mitigating the effects of the pandemic crisis on education, and in ensuring the continuity of education and learning programmes.

In an attempt to better gauge SADC Member States response to COVID-19 for the Education sector, SADC Secretariat, in collaboration with UNESCO, launched a survey, in June 2020, to collect information on measures taken by SADC Member States to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including specific actions taken to ensure education continuity at all levels, during and after the crisis phase.

The Education Sector Response to COVID-19 in SADC MS Report was presented at the Joint Meeting of Ministers of Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation in June 2021. Ministers welcomed the Report and highlighted the importance of regular reporting on MS initiatives to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. However, Ministers also highlighted that a number of initiatives have been implemented since the survey was carried out and as such, they directed Secretariat to conduct a follow-up study, which besides the issues considered during the first study, should also consider data and information on measures implemented by Member States during the second and third waves of the pandemic.

It is against the above background that the present study aims at undertaking a review of and update on the actions/policies adopted by Member States in respect of the issues considered during the first survey of June 2020 and a review of additional elements after the first waves of the pandemic in Member States. The additional elements focus the status of ICT access in the region, the Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Member States to monitor COVID -19 response to the education sector, the learning capabilities of learners in using online learning tools, the innovations, positive outcomes and lessons learned from COVID-19. To this end, a brief review of the educational responses within the African context as well the review of the literature on the impact of the pandemic on the education systems will be considered. In addition, a new survey was undertaken to assess the educational policy responses, implementation challenges and best practices adopted by SADC Member States after the first wave of the pandemic.

2.0 Literature review on Educational Policy Response Plan within the African Context

The global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has spread worldwide, creating the largest disruption to education systems in almost all countries. More than 90% of the world’s student population has been affected with the closures of schools, institutions and other learning spaces. Lockdown and restrictive movement policies have indeed significantly disturbed traditional educational practices. Within a short span following the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic, there are a number of national emergency educational response plans which have been delineated by different countries.

2.1 The educational policy responses to the pandemic crisis

According to the Lancet Public Health (2020) report, “...the aim of SDG 4 – to achieve inclusive and equitable access to education – also looks likely to be missed, with a projection that more than 200 million children will still be out of education by 2030. Most of the world’s children have been deprived of formal education during the COVID-19 outbreak – a legacy that could threaten the SDGs’ underlying ambition to leave no one behind”. Many countries have reassessed their educational policies and have taken emergency measures during the crisis to allow for continuity of academic learning. The policies below highlight the national educational responses to COVID-19 in different African countries.

Country	Ethiopia
Education Policy	Education Sector Emergency Response Concept Note
Objective	The main objective is mainly to pursue education disrupted by the incidence of COVID 19 pandemic for about more than 26 million students.
Educational Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximize the efforts of awareness creation modalities to reach majority of students, teachers and at large to community to prevent the spread of the Pandemic Virus. • Creating awareness on hygiene, sanitation and healthy way of life on the whole. • Availing digital technology such as e-learning for secondary education. • Utilizing multi-media channels such as TV and radio broadcasts for accessing primary school children. • Undertaking school feeding by selecting the most vulnerable and children living in areas where food insecurity is prevalent. • Establishing support programs for needy children in collaboration with development partners, civic society and community at large.

Country	Ghana
Education Policy	Covid-19 Coordinated Education Response Plan
Objective	This plan aims at forecasting of the associated risk and responses to be taken to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana.
Educational Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote Learning-The infrastructure identified as most appropriate for remote learning for all the grades were Radio, Television and Internet. • Psychosocial Support protection and Prevention/Management of Gender-Based Violence. • Coordinated Approach-The Chief Director of the Ministry of Education will be the focal person on COVID-19. • Improved Communication Initiatives-Intensify Awareness of COVID-19 and Communication, Sensitization and Media Campaigns on The Value of Girls' Education.
Country	Kenya
Education Policy	Kenya Basic Education Covid -19 Emergency Response Plan
Objective	This response plan outlines interventions that will enhance prevention of the spread of Corona Virus and response to educational needs during and after the COVID -19 crisis
Educational Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent the spread of COVID-19 and provide access to quality, equitable and inclusive education to learners through remote learning to ensure uninterrupted learning, • Facilitate production of radios, TVs and online teaching and learning materials as well as extend the existing distance learning programmes, • Provide psychosocial support to learners, teachers and education officials and also information to prevent transmission and spread of COVID -19. • Build the capacity of MoE officers to provide training, guidance, monitoring and quality assurance to teachers facilitating education in future outbreaks and also enhance the capacity of teachers to support distance learning, including monitoring and assessment. • Provide an opportunity of addressing loss of learning opportunities in conflict troubled and remote regions through use of supportive mediums such as livestreaming of education content. • Build the Resilience of Broadcasting of Education Content through strengthening the Kenya Education Cloud. • Provide health, safety and well-being for learners, teachers and education staff. • Develop and implement intervention programmes for the marginalized and most vulnerable learners especially the girls and other learners with special needs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the capacity of the human resource component for effective and efficient response to the COVID -19 and post corona virus.
Country	Lesotho
Education Policy	Education Sector Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) by Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)
Objective	The plan lists the strategies, activities, and estimated costs of ensuring education continues in times of the COVID-19 virus.
Educational Response	<p>In the immediate or short term, the plan is focused on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen awareness on COVID-19 in all educational institutions Radio and Television learning modules development and implementation Development of learner packs for distribution Development of ECD resources Develop MOET COVID-19 guidelines and emergency protocol Provision of WASH services in schools and promotion of water saving techniques, and safe hygiene practices Restructuring school feeding to allow continuation during school closure <p>In the medium-term, the response will focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of Take-Home Rations to vulnerable learners' households Establishment of online platform for curriculum and learning modules Provision of solar radios in hard to reach areas Child Protection and Psychosocial Support Back to school campaign <p>In the longer-term, the recovery will focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying learning gaps Implementation of accelerated learning programs Monitoring of re-enrolment to identify and support children that have dropped out Monitoring and evaluation of COVID-19 in educational institutions and overall response
Country	Malawi
Education Policy	National Covid-19 Preparedness and Response Plan
Objective	The plan caters for the Education Cluster to ensure that teaching and learning continues through innovative solutions and creating an enabling environment in communities with special attention given to orphans and vulnerable children in the school-going age groups.

Educational Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and communication: To strengthen coordination with other clusters (Health, Protection, and WASH clusters) and within the cluster (national – district –school levels) in COVID-19 case management. • Awareness raising, behaviour changes and capacity building: To intensify awareness raising and behaviour changes for prevention and management of COVID19 amongst teachers, learners and communities. • Safety and decongestions (when schools are open): To promote safety of learners and teachers. • Continuous learning (when schools are closed): To ensure continuity of teaching and learning during the possible closure of schools.
Country	Maldives
Education Policy	Maldives Education Response Plan (ERP) for COVID-19.
Objective	The overall goal of the ERP is to minimise the loss of learning for students, while simultaneously preventing the spread of COVID-19 from schools into local communities, by providing safe learning environments, and by putting in place appropriate prevention measures in the schools, and conducting awareness activities as per the HPA guidelines.
Educational Response	<p>The following five dimensions under which interventions are grouped are used in the ERP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safety, • continuity of learning, • reaching the vulnerable, protection and wellbeing (of all students, staff, and parents), • building resilience and strengthening coordination.
Country	Nigeria
Education Policy	Education Sector Covid-19 Contingency Plan
Objective	To ensure the school community (learners, teaching and non-teaching staff) are protected from infection and transmission of Covid-19.
Educational Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the continuation of formal and non-formal education in the event of an outbreak of Covid-19. • Provide uninterrupted education in the event of an outbreak of Covid-19. • Provide safe Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities to support prevention and transmission of Covid-19. • Train and sensitize the school community on preventive measures against Covid-19 outbreak. • Provide psychosocial support for members of the school community. • Coordinate Education Sector response

Country	Rwanda
Education Policy	Response Plan of Ministry of Education to the COVID-19 Outbreak
Objective	To support continuation of quality learning while protecting the health and well-being of approximately 3.6 million students and an estimated 96,000 teachers targeted under the parent project in the short, medium, and long term.
Educational Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate coordination of preparedness and response efforts for COVID-19 impact on the education sector in Rwanda, ensuring inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral coordination, engagement, and partner participation, • Mobilise internal and external resources for an effective implementation of the Education Sector COVID-19 Plan, based on potential risks, • Enhance national capacities for planning, implementation, and monitoring of education activities throughout the situation, • Create and raise public awareness for engagement on COVID-19 education activities, ensuring other stakeholder engagement, including parents, • Ensure and facilitate the health and well-being of students, teachers, and education stakeholders • Ensure continuity of learning for all students in Rwanda • Ensure that schools reopen with appropriate services and measures in place and that students re-enter the formal education system • Ensure the health and safety of students, teachers, and other education personnel • Protect and provide for vulnerable populations, including children with disabilities, girls, and children from lower wealth-quintiles • Prepare the resilience of the education system against future shocks
Country	Uganda
Education Policy	Framework for Provision Of Continued Learning during The Covid-19
Objective	This framework outlines the objectives of this intervention, how learning will occur, the lesson delivery, the roles and responsibilities of the parents/guardians/siblings, learners, teachers and District/Municipal Education Officers (D/MEOs) and District and Municipal Inspectors of Schools (D/MIS') and guidance on lesson preparation and delivery for radio and television.
Educational Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure continued learning at home, using the different modes, for all learners when schools have closed due to the pandemic. • Highlight the different modes of lesson delivery to be used for continued learning.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide teachers on how to develop and deliver radio and television lessons for learners at primary and secondary levels during the COVID-19 lockdown. • Guide other stakeholders especially parents on their roles and responsibilities to enable continued learning under the lockdown. • Provide learning opportunities through different mediums of communication i.e. TV, Radio and internet.
Country	Zambia
Education Policy	Education Contingency Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Objective	Response plan to ensuring continuous learning by students during the stay home period of the outbreak.
Educational Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance awareness among children and youth through dissemination of age appropriate messages as supplementary to regular delivery of lessons • Implement continuity of learning through diverse platforms with particular focus on disadvantaged and marginalized children and adolescents • Implement continuity of learning for children with special education needs through development of relevant contents, identification of appropriate platforms and provision of teaching and learning materials • Empower teachers to provide remote learner support on structured lessons delivered through multiple platforms as well as provide guidance on self-directed learning • Community sensitization to enhance usage of continuity of learning • Design and implement strategies for monitoring coverage and access to continuity learning programme • Provision of psychosocial support to teachers, learners and parents • Support feeding programmes through alternative mechanisms focusing on learners from drought/flood affected districts • Planning for remedial programme and accelerated learning • Utilize some already existing interventions and good practices, facilities and human resource in ICT at the two ICT Centres of Excellence
Country	Zimbabwe
Education Policy	COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Strategy
Objective	Respond to the specific needs of COVID-19 and ensure a harmonized response across schools and minimize duplication of efforts across Education Cluster partners.
Educational Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure continuity of learning through the implementation of key activities aimed at maintaining quality learning and

	<p>wellbeing of teachers, learners and school communities during the COVID-19 emergency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support teachers, learners and school communities to prevent the transmission and spread of COVID19 epidemic in Zimbabwe. • Facilitate the safe return to quality learning for teachers, learners and school communities after the COVID-19 emergency.
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Source: UNESCO (2021). *Portal of Education Plans and Policies*; available from URL: <https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/en/search/site/Covid>

The above review of the educational responses clearly illustrates a number of wide-ranging measures which ministries, institutions and central governments have taken towards mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector in the African region. In general, most of the national educational emergency response plans included the following issues;

- Ensuring the health and safety of students, teachers, and other education personnel;
- Continuity of learning through alternative non-traditional delivery modes using media and ICT;
- Planning for school feeding programmes;
- Implementing measures to ensure continuity of learning for children with special education needs and disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Empowerment of teachers to provide remote learner academic support;
- Strengthening and coordinating Education Sector response.

While there are common issues which are tackled in the national educational response plan, there is a lack of harmonisation on the approach adopted to ensure the continuity of learning in different countries. Indeed, there is a need for a holistic approach to the COVID-19 crisis. *“A holistic approach addresses children and young people’s learning, social and emotional needs in an interconnected, rather than a separate, way”*. (Cerna, 2020; WHO-UNICEF-Lancet Commissioners, 2020; Council of Europe, 2020). In this respect, UNESCO has developed a live portal COVID-19 Education Disruption and Response to showcase the daily status of schools worldwide. In addition, the OECD has designed a framework to guide an education response to the pandemic including a 25-point checklist of education response to COVID-19 with 13 priority responses by countries².

² See Reimers Fernando M. and Schleicher, Andreas (2020), “A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020”, OECD report and OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment in 2018.

2.2 Impact of COVID-19 on Teaching and Learning

The pandemic crisis has created one of the largest disruptions in the education systems. Teaching and learning methods have been altered within this short span of the pandemic. The need to innovate to implement teaching and learning in different ways occurred in several schools, colleges and universities. Different studies have been conducted on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on online teaching and learning. According to Dhawan (2020), “...many academic institutions that were earlier reluctant to change their traditional pedagogical approach had no option but to shift entirely to online teaching–learning”. However, Doucet et al. (2020) claimed that there are challenges in digital learning in terms of access to infrastructure, training costs of staff, hardware and software availability, variety of subjects with specify needs to name a few. In particular, no one size fits-all pedagogy for online learning. This generates inequalities in online learning pedagogy. Petrie et al. (2020) commissioned a report captioned Spotlight: Quality Education for all during COVID-19 crises whereby a survey of 150 stakeholders in education from more than 30 countries were undertaken. The key takeaways from this survey revealed that (i) more than 85% of the respondents were concerned with educational inequality following the pandemic crisis, (ii) less than 7% believe that the education system was well pro-active for the pandemic, and (iii) less than 20% of the respondents believe that there was peer learning from other countries’ responses by education leaders. In this respect, it is noteworthy to consider the OECD funded report by Petrie et al. (2020) which highlight the following opportunities as well as challenges in the education systems during COVID-19 crises;

2.2.1 Opportunities³

- This is an excellent chance for teachers to form much stronger interactions with parents. The teacher to parent relationship is said to be especially important for students with disabilities in this emergency (Nadworny, 2020).
- Teachers have the chance to develop creative initiatives that help to overcome the limitations of being physically separated (e.g. play-based collaborative learning).
- There has been a lot of evidence that teachers are actively collaborating with one another and at a local level.
- There are unparalleled opportunities for cooperation, creative solutions, and willingness to learn from others and try new tools (Netolicky, Timmers, & Tuscano, 2020) because educators, parents, and students are sharing similar experiences all at the same time.

³Petrie, C., Aladin, K., Ranjan, P., et.al. (2020, April). Spotlight: Quality education for all during Covid-19 crisis. (Report No. #011). Hundred. Org (OECD). Retrieved from https://hundred-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/report/file/15/hundred_spotlight_covid-19_digital.pdf

- Many education related companies are offering their tools and solutions for free to help support teachers and students.
- Our initial reaction may be to replicate the systems we are familiar with (e.g. school timetables and routines) but digital learning provides the opportunity to learn in new ways that may rethink how we collectively think about the school system. Often the most innovative solutions come from a strong need to overcome a problem (Resnick, 2017) and constraints can fuel motivation to think of creative solutions.
- Students now have the autonomy and agency to take charge of their learning to explore new ideas and experiences like never before. New interests and passions will emerge for many students and teachers.

2.2.2 Challenges⁴

- There are currently few impactful and scalable solutions for regions and countries that have significant problems with a reliable internet connectivity and access to digital devices. We also have an extremely limited understanding of how educators, students, and parents are currently coping in these places.
- There is little to no evidence of cooperation between countries when this is an excellent opportunity to do so. In China, teachers quickly adapted to a new national cloud platform to serve resources to students for free (Schleicher, 2020).
- This readiness in China to use new solutions by teachers enabled the impact of the new situation to be mitigated on learning in schools, which is a strategy that other countries can learn from as they face the rapid spread of the virus (OECD, 2020).
- Educators have been forced into teaching for a system that is not prepared.
- As a result, we are far from using best practices for ‘online learning’ and are scrambling for ‘emergency online home schooling’ (Milligan, 2020; Lehmann,2020; Guzdial, 2020).
- Co-operative and collaborative forms of learning are somewhat restricted. This is especially true for hands-on learning like music, theatre, dance, woodwork etc.

⁴Petrie, C., Aladin, K., Ranjan, P., et.al. (2020, April). Spotlight: Quality education for all during Covid-19 crisis. (Report No. #011). Hundred.org. Retrieved from https://hundred-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/report/file/15/hundred_spotlight_covid-19_digital.pdf

- Intrinsically motivated learners may find they are relatively unaffected in their progress without needing supervision, however, vulnerable groups and those who find themselves struggling to work independently will likely spend time being lost.
- There are valid concerns about the increase of screen-time students at different levels will be now exposed to. Educators need to cater for activities that are offline.
- Whole families are often at home while parents are working. There are practical issues around physical workspaces conducive to different ways of learning.
- It is not clear the best practices for different age groups for their development in emergency online home-schooling. Moreover, how do we best cater for students with learning difficulties and special needs?
- There are a plethora of tools and resources out there, however, there is little understanding of solutions that are the most effective and how to best implement them.

3.0 The Survey and Questionnaire Design

SADC Secretariat, in collaboration with UNESCO, launched a survey, in June 2020, to collect information on measures taken by SADC Member States, that impact on the Education Sector, to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including specific actions taken to ensure education continuity at all levels, during and after the crisis phase. To this end, the Education Sector Response to COVID-19 in SADC MS Report was presented at the Joint Meeting of Ministers of Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation in June 2021. Ministers welcomed the Report and highlighted the importance of regular reporting on MS initiatives to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. However, Ministers also highlighted that a number of initiatives have been implemented since the survey was carried out and as such directed Secretariat to conduct a follow-up study, which besides the issues considered during the first study, should also consider data and information on responses during the second and third waves.

3.1 Objectives of study

The aim of the study is to undertake a review of the actions/policies adopted by Member States in respect of issues considered during the first survey of June 2020. This includes:

1. Measures adopted by MS to ensure continuity of academic experience of students and the instructional resources used thereto; Measures adopted by MS to support disadvantaged students to ensure continuity of learning; Support provided to Teachers and the instructional resources made available for their professional development during the pandemic; Sources of funding in rolling out instructional materials; in ensuring continuity of school feeding programmes and in fostering distance education mode of learning; and ascertain whether and which support measures have been mainstreamed in the National Plan;
2. In addition to the above-mentioned issues, the following elements will be considered:
 - i) Status of ICT access in the region;
 - ii) Use of National Education and Research Networks as platforms for online learning;
 - iii) Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Member States to monitor COVID -19 response to the education sector and that an update needs to be provided on a quarterly basis;
 - iv) focus on learning capabilities of learners in using online learning tools;

- v) other levels of education such as TVET and early childhood;
 - vi) reflect policy measures such as ICT infrastructure and regulations;
 - vii) innovations and inventions which were brought about by higher education institutions in response to the pandemic; and
 - viii) positive outcomes and lessons learned from COVID-19.
3. Delineate the implementation challenges which MS face and highlight any success stories and/or best practices.

3.2 Targeted Profile of Respondents and Data Collection

The questionnaire has been sent through SADC Secretariat to National Contact Points for onward distribution to relevant stakeholders in the education sector. The stakeholders across all levels have been considered and are categorised as Early Childhood Development, Primary, Secondary, TVET and University Level. In addition, private sector entities and government institutions in the education has also been targeted across all Member States.

3.3 Questionnaire Design and Structure

The questionnaire has been adapted following the OECD report on the framework of education response to COVID-19 pandemic⁵. In addition, *an inception meeting was held in August 2021 with educational stakeholders from all Member States to discuss the content of the questionnaire and the methodological approach of the study*. The questionnaire was subsequently amended to reflect the feedback and suggestions of educational stakeholders from various Member States. The table hereunder describes the structure of the questionnaire used in this study⁶.

Section	Issues	Remarks
A	Profile and Status of the Pandemic in Member States	The questions relate to the status of the pandemic in the Member State and the profile of the stakeholder.
B	Measures/Actions in Response to Covid-19	Considers the different educational responses by Member States to ensure continuity of academic learning during the pandemic.
B.1	Government Actions/Interventions and Instructional Resources for Continuity of Academic Learning	Evaluate the different measures by the government through the different phases of the pandemic as well as the

⁵Reimers Fernando M. and Schleicher, Andreas (2020), "A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020", OECD report and OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment in 2018.

⁶ See Appendix 1 for detailed questionnaire.

		type of government interventions such as social assistance, development of online platform amongst others across the levels of education. In addition, the types of instructional resources such as Educational TV or Online materials amongst others used by Member States during pandemic crisis is being assessed.
B.2	Measures Adopted to Support Disadvantaged Students to Ensure Continuity of Learning	The actions such as social grants, free internet access amongst others to support disadvantaged students during the first and thereafter are considered.
B.3	Support and Instructional Resources provided to teachers for their Professional Development During the Pandemic	The professional support/advice such as training or IT support offered to teachers during the pandemic will be examined. In addition, the innovations (e.g digital games) brought in the teaching processes during and after the pandemic will be looked into.
B.4	Funding Sources and International Collaboration	The source of funding such as Private sector or government etc to support education interventions during the pandemic is investigated. The government source of funding to support education interventions is also being considered. In addition, assistance of regional/international partners for financial and technical support in ensuring the continuity of learning and educational access to vulnerable and disadvantaged students is being explored.
B.5	Support Measures Mainstreamed in the National Plan	Measures by government such as amendment to legislation, sanitary protocols etc delineated into a national plan for COVID-19 Pandemic are looked into.
C	Status of ICT Access and Literacy in response to the pandemic	Measures for student access to the digital world, learners' capabilities in the digital world, adequacy of ICT infrastructure in Educational Institutions and the Use of technology and preparedness of teachers are considered.

D	Implementation Challenges	The implementation challenges such as emotional health of students, managing, low capacity of teachers to adapt amongst others are examined during the first and second phases of the pandemic.
E	Positive Outcomes, Innovations and Lessons Learned from Covid-19	The unexpected positive educational changes such as development of distance learning education as well as innovations during and after the pandemic crisis are looked into.
F	Monitoring and Evaluation Systems of Educational Response to Covid-19	The reporting frequency of the M&E systems and the main processes, committees, actions, measures delineated are considered.

4.0 Profile and Status of the pandemic in Member States

There are 11 Member States that responded favourably and the responses were collected during the months of Sept, Oct and Nov 2021. The stakeholders in pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary sector were consulted along with the relevant Ministries. The list of Member States which participated in this survey is summarised in table 1 hereunder.

Table 1- Member States which responded to the survey

Member States	
Eswatini	Namibia
Lesotho	Seychelles
Madagascar	South Africa
Malawi	Zambia
Mauritius	Zimbabwe
Mozambique	

Many Member States have set their lockdown periods at different time intervals given the disparity in the sternness and swiftness of the pandemic in their respective countries. However, while school closures were and are imperative in mitigating the spread of pandemic and in protecting the health of students, extended closures have a negative effect on all students and undeservedly impact on the most underprivileged and vulnerable students. Table 2 below shows the national lockdown and school closures timeframe across the Member States.

Table 2- Lockdown periods, School Closures and Reopening.

Country	First Lockdown Phase		2 nd Lockdown Phase		3 rd Lockdown Phase if applicable	
	Lockdown Date	Resumption Date (Approx.)	Lockdown Date	Resumption Date (Approx.)	Lockdown Date	Resumption Date (Approx.)
Eswatini	17/03/2020	06/07/2020	17/12/2020	29/03/2021	29/06/2021	8/08/2021
Lesotho	27/03/2020	11/05/2020	03/02/2021	08/03/2021		
Madagascar	23/03/2020	22/04/2020	05/07/2020	03/08/2021	31/03/2021	19/05/2021
Malawi	19/04/2020	07/09/2020	18/01/2021	22/02/2021		
Mauritius	20/03/2020	01/07/2020	08/03/2021	05/07/2021		
Namibia	28/03/2020	20/07/2020	15/07/2021	04/08/2021		
Seychelles	04/09/2020	18/05/2020	29/12/2021	15/03/2021	28/04/2021	18/05/2021
South Africa	27/03/2020	15/07/2020	31/12/2020	15/02/2021	01/06/2021	01/08/2021
Zambia	20/03/2020	01/06/2020	18/01/2021	01/02/2021		
Zimbabwe	27/03/2020	30/06/2020	05/01/2021	30/08/2021		

Source: Survey Response from SADC Member States response to COVID-19 for the Education sector, SADC Secretariat, in collaboration with UNESCO.

The first lockdown periods in most Member States were around March 2020 with the immediate suspension of classes. However, while there was divergence in policy directives to resume classes, there was a general consensus for a phased-out approach for school openings. Many Member States experienced a second lockdown in 2021 where schools were interrupted again before resumption. It is noted that the second lockdown phase was generally shorter than the first lockdown phase in most Member States. However, the average number of months/weeks of lost learning opportunity is estimated cumulatively to be approximately 4 to 6 months for most SADC Member States since the first phase of the pandemic. The loss of learning opportunity is indeed much higher than 6 months for some Member States experiencing a third lockdown phase.

4.1 Government Actions/Interventions and Instructional Resources for continuity of academic learning

Based on the feedback from Member States, the government actions to support the continuity of academic learning during the first wave of the pandemic have been mainly geared towards the following:

- Encouraging schools to use technology to send lessons e.g through creating of class WhatsApp group and any other relevant platforms
- Encouraging diversification of platforms and electronic resources where necessary to ensure continuation of business at the highest standard – adding Zoom, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and Microsoft Office 365 platforms.
- Broadcasting of educational programmes on national TV and Radios
- Setting up of a Student Support Portal (Repository of video lessons)
- Conducting Assessments and examinations online
- Ensuring continuity of learning with alternative modes such as e-learning, blended approaches and learning packages.
- Formulating compressed syllabuses for all subjects.
- Providing Training on Covid-19 etiquette (protocol) in preparation for resumption of classes

These above measures were mainly maintained or reintroduced after the first phase of the pandemic in most Member states (See table 3). In addition, there were also the provision of supplementary budget to improve and consolidate ICT infrastructure and internet connectivity during the second phase of the pandemic for some Member States. To this end, in one Member State (Eswatini), ICT equipment was acquired for online teaching (laptops and desktops) purposes for public institutions. However, it was noted that in many remote areas in some Member States, internet connectivity and/or infrastructure were not adequate. In this respect, limited government interventions were geared towards provision of internet access in some Member States (e.g Zimbabwe, Seychelles amongst others). To this end, some Member States (Zimbabwe, Malawi) indicated that there were efforts towards the common use of offline methods of delivery through TV and Radio programmes and print media to ensure continuity of learning. The other national measures after the first phase of the pandemic related to the compression of the curriculum (e.g Mauritius) to consider the time lost during the first phase of the pandemic.

Table 3: Government strategies for the resumption of schools or other educational institutions

Country	Phase of the pandemic crisis	Government strategies for the resumption of schools or other educational institutions
Eswatini	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting, presenting and endorsement of education contingency plan by February 2020 • Formation of technical working group • Mobilization of resources for media lessons • Introduction of media lessons • Strongly advocating for the reopening of schools at cabinet, parliament and other stakeholders • Preparation of documents/ guideline for reopening schools safely • Capacity building of all education stakeholders on COVID-19 and prevention in the education setup. • Preparation of facilities. i.e., provision of hand washing facilities, sanitizers, water, water tanks, masks, soaps and other COVID related supplies in schools • Inspections on the levels of preparedness of schools • Setup IPC and surveillance systems in schools and tertiary institutions • Monitored and attended to suspected and confirmed cases on a daily basis.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only Classes who were to write external examinations opened • The Ministry of Education and Training, in consultation with the Ministry of Health developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) schools needed to adhere to that included: having water, soap, sanitizers, first responders within the school, isolation rooms, ensuring social distancing, deep cleaning of classrooms, screening and so on. Schools are inspected prior to reopening and regularly inspected for compliance by both Ministry of Education and Training and Health.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a compressed curriculum to catch-up lost time • Preparation of facilities. i.e., provision of hand washing facilities, sanitizers, water, water tanks, masks, soaps and other COVID related supplies in schools • Inspections on the levels of preparedness of schools • Setup IPC and surveillance systems in schools and tertiary institutions • Monitored and attended to suspected and confirmed cases on a daily basis. • Institutions were advised to resume in very small numbers on rotational basis to catch up on lost time and carryout practicals with strong adherence to covid -19 protocols.
	3rd Phase if applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face teaching resumed on rotational basis with strong adherence to covid -19 protocols.
Lesotho	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a Reopening of school's strategy
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To facilitate the development and encourage interactive equitable distance learning modalities • Adjusted and aligned the academic calendar to enable continuity at pre-primary schools. • Developed transition standards from Secondary to tertiary.
Madagascar	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritization of the resumption of exam classes • Enhance the awareness and the application of health measures • Turn the education system towards to the digitization of education and training • Strengthen the skills of teachers and / or trainers in the use of educational alternatives
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize the reopening of establishments for learners who will take end-of-year national exams • Enhance the awareness and the application of health measures • Turn the education system towards to the digitization of education and training

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the skills of teachers and / or trainers in the use of educational alternatives
Malawi	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers were trained on COVID 19 prevention strategies in schools Teachers were trained on provision of remedial lessons to learners who will be slow in learning due to the lengthy school closure Procured hand washing buckets and soap for schools Trained communities in mask making and participation in provision of education within schools. Used double shifting and staggered approach to reduce decongestion in classrooms. The maximum number of learners per class was set to be 40 Established complaints / redress mechanisms in schools
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued monitoring of the pandemic at national level for decision making Developed an education COVID 19 monitoring and evaluation system Developed and broadcasted radio programs.
Mauritius	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After first phase, the schools resumed normally – all students irrespective of grades attended their respective schools. Higher education institutions continue with the online delivery of programmes throughout the academic year.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staggered resumption after the second lockdown – some students resumed schools on 2 days and the remaining on 3 days e.g. Pupils of Grades 1-3 attended school on Tues and Thurs while pupils of Grades 4-6 attended schools on 3 days i.e. Mon, Wed and Fri. Schools are still running on staggered mode. Schools have resumed on a more frequent basis (3 to 4 days) as from 18 Oct 2021. Resumption in higher education institutions is scheduled for October 2021 and will be a mix of online and blended delivery.
Mozambique	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readjustment of the program Reduction in working hours Rotating classes Reduction in the number of students per class to make room for distancing
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotating classes Reduction in the number of students per class to make room for distancing
	3 rd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspension of face-to-face classes and applying online teaching through platform, tvescola and radio school.
Namibia	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the infection rate reduced all school re-opened in stages. The exit grades continued with school during the lockdown.

	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools were on a winter holiday break
Seychelles	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety measures were put in place e.g guidelines and protocols were developed and implemented. Institutions were also assisted with setting up their emergency response team, and building their capacity to respond to the pandemic. The three main components that guided all intervention measures were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heightened vigilance Physical/ Social distancing Hygiene
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Guidelines and protocols were put in place and monitored. Institutions were further supported with setting up their emergency response team, and additional capacity building were provided. More measures were put in place to increase vigilance, ensure physical and social distancing and increase hygiene.
South Africa	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-pharmaceutical measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screening of learners on arrival at school Compulsory wearing of face-masks 1.5m social distancing stipulated (resulted in most learners attending school on a rotational basis) Regular and supervised used of sanitisers and hand-washing Provision of Mobile classroom to allow more learners to attend school.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure maintained as in the first phase
Zambia	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government provided guidelines that were supposed to be strictly adhered to. These guidelines were basically meant to mitigate further spread of COVID-19. Notable among the guidelines were rules on COVID-19 prevention measure, restricting number of hours in class, members of academic could only come to the work place only when appropriate.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government supplied masks to members of staff for use at the work place.
Zimbabwe	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passing on responsibility to the parents and schools
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passing on responsibility to the parents and schools There was limited intervention by government Radio lessons
	3rd Phase if applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervention by way of radio lessons Phased opening of schools

The government strategies in most Member States were geared towards a phased opening for the resumption of school or other educational institutions. Typically, institutions were advised to resume with very small number of students on a rotational basis whilst ensuring a strict adherence to sanitary protocols such as ensuring physical and social distancing and increasing hygiene practices. The concept of staggered classes after the first phase of the pandemic was also adopted. However, the restrictions on staggered classes were gradually lifted as the number of suspicious cases evolved over time. The government strategies were also geared towards additional guidelines on emergency response plan and capacity building of educational stakeholders to reinforce the current sanitary protocols.

4.2 Measures adopted to support disadvantaged students to ensure continuity of learning

Table 4 hereunder highlights the main measures taken by Member States to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Table 4: Actions are in place to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds

Country	Support/Initiative/Actions
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased a compressed curriculum to ensure learners who could not access online and media lessons can be able to catch up. This curriculum has been applied throughout as almost every level was affected. • Provided Sign Language interpretation for all live TV lessons targeting core subject offered at primary and secondary/high school: • Engaged Sign Language Interpreters: 3 in Phase 1 & 2 in Phase 2 • These were qualified teachers with training in Eswatini Sign Language (Levels 1-3) • Teach in our primary and high schools for deaf learners • Selected according to level of proficiency in Eswatini Sign Language • Provided with accommodation, meals and allowance for the service (allowance only in Phase 1) • Provided with airtime to ease of communication • Teachers and learners in special schools and models of inclusion in particular those with visual and hearing impairment, intellectual disabilities and autism have been provided with tablets and software to enhance teaching, learning and communication. • The primary and high schools for the deaf have wireless internet which is fully sponsored by partners for the next ten years. Connectivity makes it easy for the teachers to prepare differentiated lessons and for learners to use a wide range of access arrangement resources. • Introduced a compressed curriculum

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media lessons were archived and given to all schools. Through development partners computers are provided to schools and others providing internet connection. This is however, an ongoing process and not all schools have benefitted from it.
Lesotho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner packs were developed for learners who could not have access to TV or radio lessons. • Food was provided to primary learners, those for whom this is the only meal of the day. Children came to school at lunch time to collect their meals.
Madagascar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolition of registration fees at the level of TVET establishments for vulnerable learners
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government procured and distributed solar powered and battery powered radios to vulnerable learners. • Currently developing materials for learners with special education needs.
Mauritius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantaged students on the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM) benefitted from Free Internet access & Free tablets (Grade 10 to Grade 13) to ensure continuity in education.
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the 2020-2021 school year: reduction of the parental burden by the abolition of registration fees at the level of TVET establishments (LTP and CFP). It is for the initial vocational training • Intensive use of school radio through the partnership between Rádio de Mozambique and the Ministry of Education • Intensive use of video lessons through the partnership between Mozambican Television and MINED
Namibia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoEAC has disbursed thermo-guns and mask for all learners. • MoEAC has since received an additional 500 bunk beds and mattresses that were donated by NamPower. • Other tangible steps by MoEAC is that the Ministry has made available funds in the amount of N\$ 600 million (six hundred million) for the renovation and expansion of school and hostel infrastructure and the provision of clean running water and functional sanitation facilities. • The Ministry the regions have spent N\$ 29 893 595.86 on the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment.
Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance was given to businesses affected in Covid-19 pandemic, thus parents in this group benefitted and were therefore better able to ensure the continued financial support required for their children learning and wellbeing.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the disadvantaged students who could not access technology, get access to printing materials/ study packs to safeguard continuity of learning. • Encouraged internet providers to make provision for reduced internet packages for parents to better support their children learning. Provision was also available to students and staff. • Maintain social assistance given to students from lower socio-economic background/ vulnerable groups/ families
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More resources have been supplied to disadvantaged learners.
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been a challenge since contact is not possible and many schools in rural areas lack requisite ICT infrastructure. Even the radios are limited. So not all can access radio lessons. There are areas that do not receive radio signals. But Government now working through Community Information Centres for use by learners and teachers.

From the above enumeration of actions/policies in favour of disadvantaged students in different Member States, the main issues can be categorized as follows;

- Provision of offline and printed materials to students with disabilities and in remote areas
- Increased a compressed curriculum to ensure learners who could not access online and media lessons can be able to catch up.
- Provision of tablets and software to enhance teaching, learning and communication to Teachers in specialised schools.
- Maintaining school feeding programme
- Distributing relief food to the vulnerable families in communities
- Maintain social assistance given to students from lower socio-economic background/ vulnerable groups/ families.
- Provision of tablets or PCs to socially vulnerable students
- Preferential tariffs for internet access to teachers and disadvantaged students
- Free internet access and Free Tablets to students
- Set up Community Information Centres for use by learners and teachers in remote areas.

In support of the above responses, some specific examples of the actions for disadvantaged learners are highlighted below.

Free internet access

- Free internet facilities for needy families (Mauritius)

Provision of offline and printed materials to students with disabilities and in remote areas

- Ensure that the disadvantaged students who could not access technology, get access to printing materials/ study packs to safeguard continuity of learning. (Seychelles)
- Learner packs were developed for learners who could not have access to TV or radio lessons. (Lesotho)

Provision of tablets or PCs

- Free tablets (Grade 10 to Grade 13) to ensure continuity in education. (Mauritius)

Maintaining school feeding programme

- Inter-governmental collaborations to ensure school feeding programme through the Neighborhood Care Points. (Eswatini)

Distributing relief food to the vulnerable families in communities

- Maintain social assistance given to students from lower socio-economic background/ vulnerable groups/ families (Seychelles)

Provision of social grants

- Disability grants, child maintenance grants in place, and support provided to low income households to keep the children well during COVID-19. (Namibia)
- Social benefits in terms of school meals and other social assistance at schools (pre-COVID) continued to receive such through financial assistance provided by the Agency for Social Protection (Seychelles)
- Abolition of registration fees at the level of TVET establishments for vulnerable learners (Madagascar)

Access to Radios

- Government procured and distributed solar powered and battery powered radios to vulnerable learners. (Malawi)

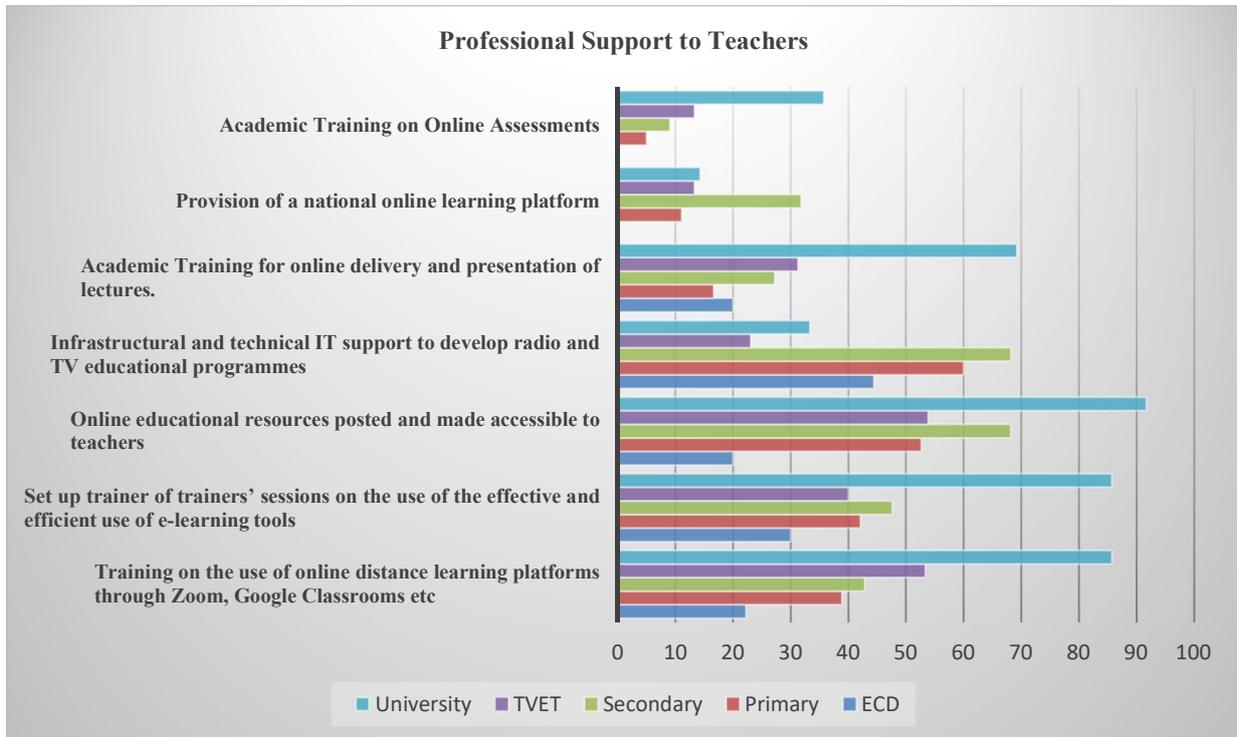
4.3 Support and instructional resources provided to Teachers for their professional development during the pandemic

It is imperative that governments and educational institutions provide professional support to academic staff to allow for the provision of effective online teaching during the pandemic. Some academic staff may still find it difficult to adapt to the new method of teaching if they are not provided with any support, thus impacting on ensuring the smooth continuity of academic learning during the pandemic crisis. The feedback from the respondents are summarized in Table 5 and figure 1.

Table 5: Professional support/advice given to teachers during the pandemic.

Country	Professional Support/advice
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and material on alternative ways of teaching and learning during COVID-19 is shared periodically with teachers through social media platforms. Schools that can afford have taken the initiative to invest in online teaching and learning.
Mauritius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A YouTube Channel was created for the Ministry. Videos for training and educational lessons were made available. OER (Open Education Resources) training has been initiated. A systematic plan is required. Open Education Resources training has been initiated.
Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some trainings have been initiated. There is a need for continuation in the development and implementation of a systematic training plan. University had to assist certain lecturers with training for online Assessment so as to remain at the international standards expected by our International Partners. Guidelines for learning continuity has been developed but there is a need to have guidelines/ policies in place which seeks to minimise learning loss. University had to establish new guidelines and policies for use of the platforms and online teaching and learning resources. Procured more laptops for academic and non-academic staff to ensure every staff had access and maintain business continuity. University had to invest in new laptops.
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of MOODLE, GOOGLE MEET

Figure 1: Professional support/advice given to teachers across levels of education.



The above responses suggest that there is clearly more academic support provided to academic staff from University. The results above also highlight the limited professional support to teachers at TVET levels relative to University academic staff. In particular, around 30% of the respondents indicated training on online delivery and presentation for staff at TVET levels. On the other hand, the above results indicated that academic support towards pre-primary, primary and secondary teachers was also a serious challenge for educational institutions.

In terms of the type of support provided, most respondents agreed that educational institutions need to provide more training on online assessments, more infrastructural and technical IT support to develop distance learning programmes and more accessibility to a national online platform. In particular, the professional support to teachers were mainly geared towards the followings;

- The provision of Zoom, MS Teams, Google Classroom and WhatsApp to ensure continued teaching and learning (Eswatini, Mauritius, Seychelles, Zambia)
- Training on alternative ways of teaching and learning (Mauritius)
- Training in OER (Open Education Resources) training (Mauritius)

- Provision of online teaching and learning resources (Eswatini)
- Procurement of laptops to allow academic staff to maintain continuity of academic learning. (Seychelles)
- Creation of dedicated YouTube Channel (Mauritius)

In addition to the professional support to teachers, the respondents highlighted some good initiatives and innovation practices (see table 9) which have been adopted during the pandemic crisis. These are as follows;

- Use of software such as Clicker 8, Snap + Core First and Go Talk 32 (Eswatini)
- Financial support to educational institutions to buy Personal Protective Equipment (Lesotho)
- Use of E-assessment (quizzes on Moodle, Google Class) (Mauritius)
- Creation and Use of WhatsApp groups with their students for communication and Teaching/learning as well as correction of exercises set (Eswatini, Mauritius, Seychelles, Namibia).
- Development of education apps and LMS for teaching and learning. (Seychelles)
- Procurement of Infrared Touch Screen Devices (86'') for all the school offering Advanced Subsidiary level. (Namibia)
- Used digital games as part of their teaching and learning in their subjects (Mozambique)
- Use of online platforms that allow the uploading and display of source books and art works for students enrolled in Visual Arts and Design classes. (Mozambique)

Table 9: Actions examples/stories on good initiatives and innovations during this period

Country	Initiative/Actions/Innovations
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of laptops for teachers and software such as Clicker 8, Snap + Core First and Go Talk 32 - to support reading, writing and communication for LSEN. • The use of WhatsApp groups • The use of media lessons • Recording of all radio lessons and using them for teaching • Use of facebook, google classroom, sms, whatsApp, Emails, Youtube; and • Internet links/websites such as Edmodo

Lesotho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Education and Training tasked the TVET institutions on producing face mask for all primary school learners. • The Ministry of Education and Training provided financial support to secondary schools to buy PPE • The local business community provide PPE materials to schools. • Collaboration among government ministry personnel has strengthen • Government budget was redirected to respond to Covid -99
Madagascar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some teacher or private school produce support learning via facebook or mail to provide lessons or exercises, exam for learners
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all Universities both public and private institutions practiced online lessons and most of them used Google class approach. • Some universities started developing their own online learning platform • The Ministry of Education conceptualized the idea of having its own radio station.
Mauritius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of E-assessment (quizzes on Moodle, Google Class) • Use of online communication software for lectures - eg. Zoom ,skype • Use of Social medias (whatapp, facebook) to communicate with learners for coaching and counselling • Shifted to digital technologies and on-line delivery of courses very fast even though many had never used these technologies before • Apart from teaching through Zoom and Google classroom, Oral presentations were done through Google Meet • Open Discussion to share Concerns & Difficulties during Confinement - A panel of experts comprising of qualified psychologists, psychiatrists, healers and life-coaches present to address concerns relating to mental and emotional well-being and share practical advice that could help in facing confinement. • Organise online tests using the MCQs feature of Google Classroom to test if students have learned certain concepts explained during the zoom lectures. • Use of google forms to collect the assignments and reports.
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are municipalities where teachers created and used digital games as part of their teaching and learning in their subjects. Likewise, in Creative Arts for the 12th grade (Visual Arts and Design), the subject teachers/advisors experimented with E platforms that allow the uploading and display of source books and works of art. Likewise, teachers from the Technical School with an emphasis on the Instituto de Telecomunicações have been teaching and providing practical work to students via facebook and whatsapp during the Pandemic period.

Namibia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most teachers used Zoom, MS Teams and WhatsApp to ensure continued teaching and learning • The Ministry procured Infrared Touch Screen Devices (86’’) for all the school offering Advanced Subsidiary level.
Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers’ involvement in televised programmes • Maximising the use of WhatsApp as an effective tool to send lessons given students/ parents’ familiarity with this App. • Some schools have initiated the development of education apps and LMS for teaching and learning in their respective schools. • Schools’ initiative to send lessons on other platforms e.g google classroom, zoom • Some schools were innovative in using recycling materials to produce holders for paper towel hence cutting costs. • A school made more use of recycling materials from the school environment to make art fabrics and designs.
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers now started developing learning materials.

4.4 Funding sources and International Collaboration

Member States have sought financial and technical assistance from international agencies such as UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), World Food Programme (WFP) to support continuity of academic learning for the disadvantaged and vulnerable students. However, these initiatives were undertaken only by some Member States (Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia and Zambia). The table below highlights the type of support received from the international partner.

Table 10: Assistance of regional/international partners to ensure continuity of learning for vulnerable students

Country	Support from International Partners
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eswatini also received a GPE grant of US\$70,000 to support the Ministry of Education with producing lessons for the radio and TV. UNICEF further assisted with procuring some radios for some learners. • In mid-April 2020, the UNICEF office in Eswatini supported the Ministry of Education and training with producing lessons for the radio and TV, as well as print media lessons.
Lesotho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Education and Training has developed and submitted proposals soliciting financial support from GPE, UNICEF and World Bank. In late March 2020, the UNICEF office in Lesotho received a GPE grant of US\$70,000 to

	support the Ministry of Education with producing lessons for the radio and TV, as well as learner packs.
Madagascar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of food and other social grants/services (Grant from OMS, FMI, SNU, USA, UNICEF).
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Grants for provision of offline and printed materials to students with disabilities and in remote areas • World Food Programme Grant for provision of food
Namibia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant from UNICEF for provision of offline and printed materials to students with disabilities and in remote areas
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The commonwealth of learning facilitated the online training of lecturers across all the TVET institutions on facilitating online through the Ministry of Higher Education and TVTC. A total of 640 teacher educators were trained.

In terms of the continuity of funding after the first phase of the pandemic, more than 90% of the respondents indicated that funding for the learning materials, promoting distance learning and food support were mostly maintained. In particular, Member States like Seychelles claimed that government reallocated funds from existing budget to finance the development of learning materials and promoting distance education. In addition, funding from other agencies such as Red Cross and Social Protection Agency were sought to finance food support (Seychelles). Indeed, government interventions are vital to alleviate the negative impact of the pandemic crisis on the continuity of education. However, these education interventions indubitably influence the national budget.

4.5 Support measures mainstreamed in the National Plan

The main measures included in the national plan as a response to the impact of the pandemic on the education sector are delineated under Table 11 hereunder:

Table 11: Main Support Measures and the National Plan

Country	Support/Initiative/Actions
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Operating for Procedures for Preparedness, Detection and Response to COVID-19 in Education Institutions. • Development of the COVID-19 regulation (Education Chapter)
Lesotho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availing Personal Protective Equipment for teachers and learners • Availing water tanks to schools without water.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Education and Training developed a Ministerial Recovery Plan that draws guidelines from the National Command Centre for Covid - 19 pandemic. • Online platforms and radio/tv lessons for primary and secondary learners have been developed and are regularly aired.
Madagascar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government has defined a national plan for the covid-19 pandemic.
Mauritius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated protocols on Sanitary, hygiene standards and Social distancing measures • Amend E-Educational Policy • Staggered resumption of classes • Amended Education Act
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the workload, Reduction in the number of students per class , classes with alternate times and days and Readjustment of the teaching program.
Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to legislation has been made within the Public Health Act • Guidance on Hand Hygiene • Guidance on Physical Distancing • Cohorting (or podding) mitigation strategies that schools can use to limit mixing between students and staff and to limit the spread of COVID-19. • The Ministry of Education has developed a response system, known as the Learning Continuity Emergency Response System (LCERS), which schools can use as an effective communication tool for timely, planned and well-coordinated response to emergency school closures and for learning continuity.
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has put in place guidelines for the nation that do not only respond to educational matters but all sectors of the economy. The Ministry of Health and Ministries responsible for education have been working closely in developing a common approach that would help teaching and learning activities not to be undermined by COVID-19 • Education Contingency Plan for COVID-19 was developed in March 2020 during the first phase which calls for stakeholder support in its implementation

From the above enumeration of the support measures in different Member States and responses from the survey, the main categories of support measures can be identified as follows;

Table 12: Main Support Measures by Categories

Support/Initiative/Actions	Member States
Sanitary, hygiene standards and Social distancing measures	Eswatini Lesotho, Mauritius, Malawi, Madagascar, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Develop E-Learning Educational Policy and Standards	Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Madagascar, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Phased approach for the school openings	Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zimbabwe
Setting Up of a formal contingency Plan during Covid-19	Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Amendment to legislation framework/regulations	Eswatini Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa

The respondents indicated the following support measures within the national plan to mitigate the effects of the pandemic;

- The National Plan for phased openings of schools after the first lockdown with a staggered classroom model was being adopted in many Member States (for e.g. Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, Zimbabwe)
- Sanitary and hygiene standards such as hand washing, personal protective equipment and reviewing class sizes so as to comply with social distancing (more than 70% of the responses).
- The need to develop E-Educational Learning policy and standards (Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Madagascar, Namibia, Zimbabwe)
- Setting Up of a formal contingency Plan during Covid-19 (Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Namibia, Seychelles, Zimbabwe)

4.6 Status of ICT access and literacy in response to the pandemic

The efficiency of the educational responses and national strategies to ensure continuity of academic learning heavily rests upon the IT ecosystems prevailing within the Member States. A good and reliable ecosystem is dependent on students' ease of ICT accessibility and high ability to adapt to the rapid changes operating in the digital world, teachers' preparedness to cater for online mode of delivery, infrastructural ICT coverage within the educational institutions and across the country.

Measures for Student access to the digital world

Figure 2: Measures for Student access to the digital world across all Member States

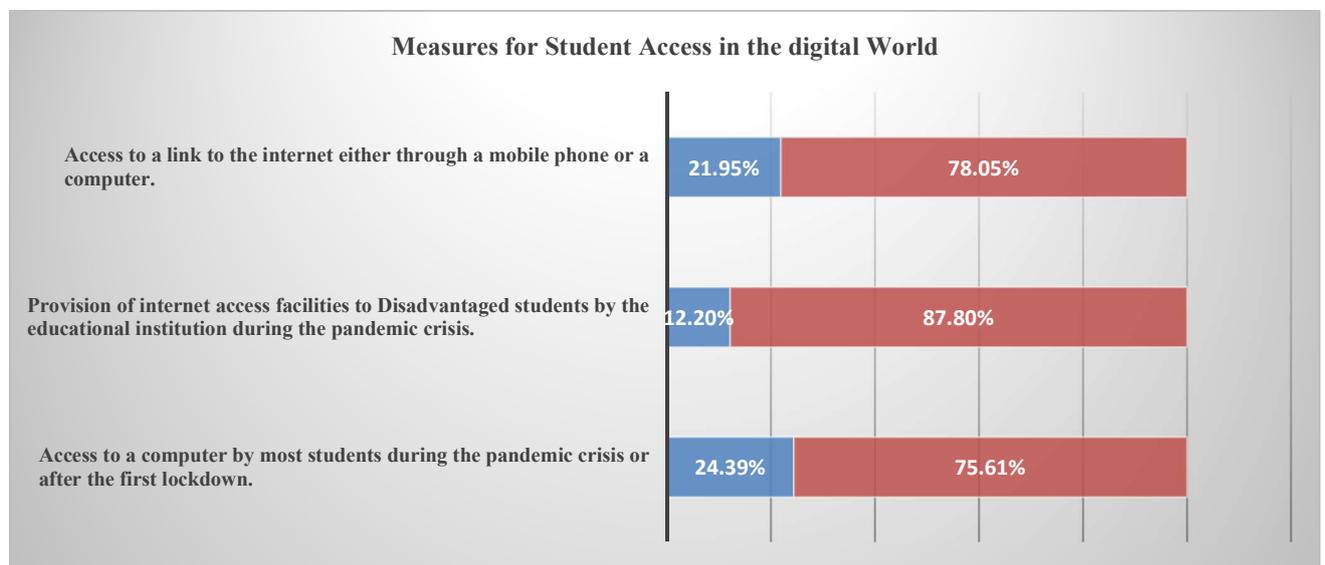


Table 13: Measures for Student access to the digital world across all Member States

Measures for Student Access	Early Childhood	Primary	Secondary	TVET	University
Access to a computer by most students during the pandemic crisis or after the first lockdown.	-	7.7%	7.7%	23.1%	38.5%
Provision of internet access facilities to Disadvantaged students by the educational institution during the pandemic crisis.	-	-	-	7.7%	30.8%
Access to a link to the internet either through a mobile phone or a computer.	-	7.7%	7.7%	15.4%	38.5%

Digital access for the students to ensure academic continuity of learning was indeed crucial during the pandemic. Based on the survey results, the measures supporting digital access to students were insufficient in the SADC region. In particular, more than 75% percent of the respondents claimed that access to computer and/or to internet was a real challenge across the different sub-levels of

the education sector. The lack of digital access was further exacerbated by the limited coverage of internet facilities to disadvantaged students during the pandemic and even after the first lockdown for the SADC region. Furthermore, digital access for students was more of a challenge for learners at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels.

Learners’ capabilities in the digital world

The learners’ ability to use online learning tools were vital for the successful transition from traditional to online learning methods. However, as per the chart below, more than 80% of the respondents from different Member States indicated that the knowledge of students on the use of online learning tools was limited, the levels of student satisfaction with the online learning tools was very low and there were inadequate educational support disadvantaged students on the use of online learning. The learning capabilities through the use of ICT tools were indeed a challenge for young and adolescent learners. However, even at University level, more than 45% of the respondents indicated that it was a challenge for students to adapt and cope with online learning during the pandemic.

Figure 3: Learners’ capabilities in the digital world across all Member States

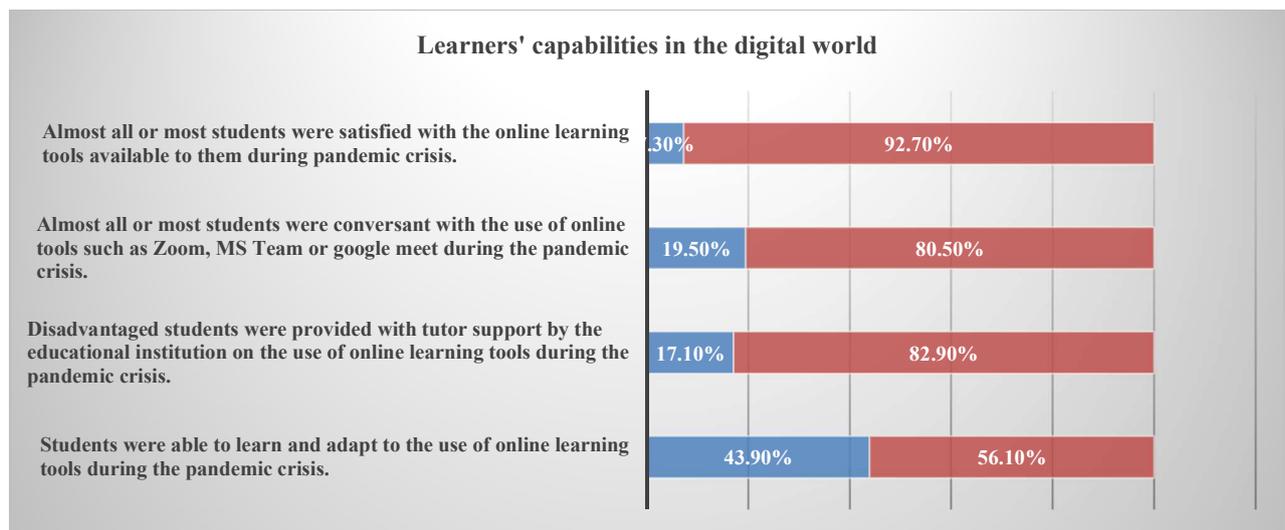


Table 14: Learners' capabilities in the digital world

Measures for Student Access	Early Childhood	Primary	Secondary	TVET	University
Almost all or most students were conversant with the use of online tools such as Zoom, MS Team or google meet during the pandemic crisis.	-	-	15.40%	15.40%	30.8%
Almost all or most students were satisfied with the online learning tools available to them during pandemic crisis.	-	-	7.7%	-	15.4%
Students were able to learn and adapt to the use of online learning tools during the pandemic crisis.	-	23.10%	30.80%	30.80%	53.80%
Disadvantaged students were provided with tutor support by the educational institution on the use of online learning tools during the pandemic crisis.	-	-	15.40%	15.40%	23.10%

Adequacy of ICT infrastructure in Educational Institutions

Online learning programmes were among the first recommendations made to compensate for the school closure during lockdown periods. However, the successful implementation of online educational programmes was crucially reliant on the adequacy of existing ICT infrastructure in Educational institutions. However, more than 65% of the respondents indicated a lack of qualified technical staff, low internet bandwidth in educational institutions, limited access to relevant software for online learning and an inadequate availability of digital devices in educational institutions. More specifically, the appropriateness of the existing ICT infrastructure was more of a challenge for schools, colleges and TVET than for Universities. In particular, it was more difficult to successfully implement online learning programmes in the pre-primary, primary, secondary and TVET education sector. In addition, overall, there was general consensus on the limited internet bandwidth in educational institutions for the SADC region.

Figure 4: Adequacy of ICT infrastructure in Educational Institutions

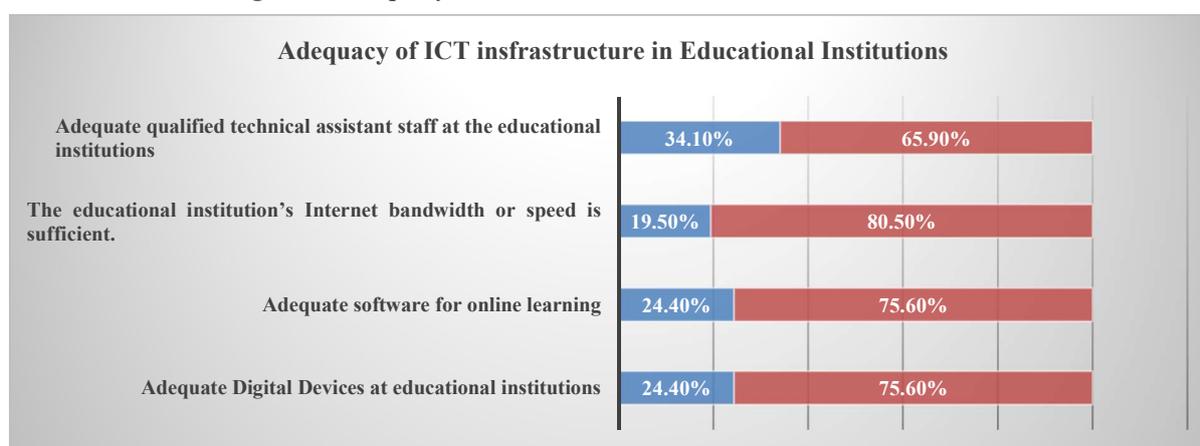


Table 15: Adequacy of ICT infrastructure in Educational Institutions

Measures for Student Access	Early Childhood	Primary	Secondary	TVET	University
Adequate Digital Devices at educational institutions	-	7.7%	7.7%	23.1%	38.5%
Adequate software for online learning	-	7.7%	15.4%	15.4%	30.8%
The educational institution's Internet bandwidth or speed is sufficient.	7.7%	15.4%	7.7%	15.4%	15.4%
Adequate qualified technical assistant staff at the educational institutions	-	7.7%	7.7%	46.2%	46.2%

Use of technology and preparedness of teachers

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed disparities in respect of the digital readiness of teachers to integrate technology in their teaching methods. The use of technology and preparedness of teachers to use ICT cannot be ignored given that it impacts directly on the quality of distance and online learning during the pandemic. The majority of the respondents (more than 75%) indicated the provision of limited training for online assessments, scepticism on the use of technology as an efficient method of teaching, limited incentives provided to teachers to integrate digital devices in teaching methods, and limited technical and pedagogical skills to integrate and adapt to online teaching. The results undoubtedly indicated the need for Member States to mobilize and coordinate resources to ensure the preparedness of teachers in the quest to gear post-COVID-19 education provision towards an increasing use of online and distance learning.

Figure 5: Use of technology and preparedness of teachers

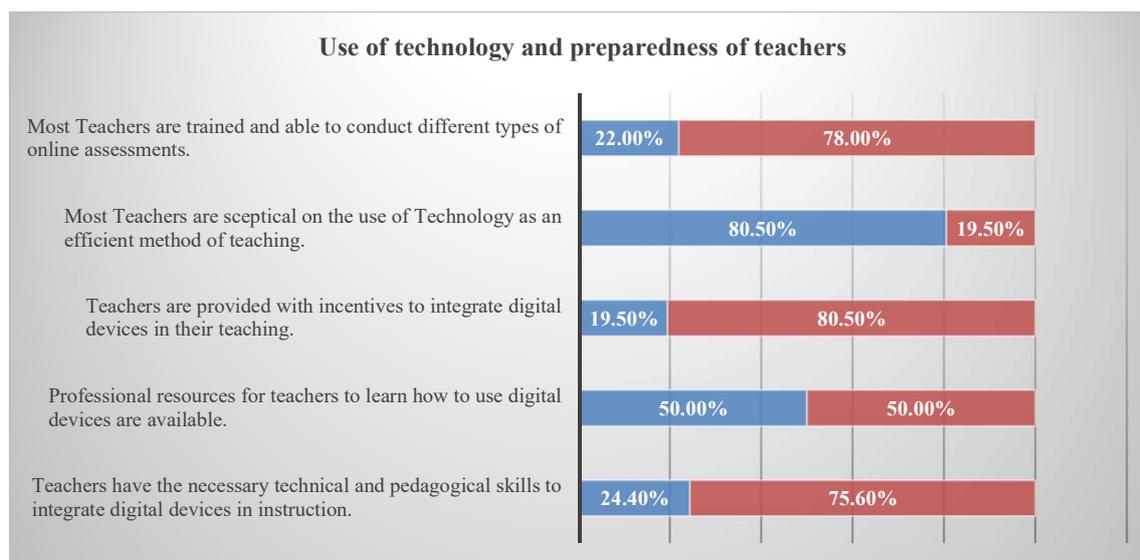


Table 16: Use of technology and preparedness of teachers across all Member States

Measures for Student Access	Early Childhood	Primary	Secondary	TVET	University
Teachers have the necessary technical and pedagogical skills to integrate digital devices in instruction.	-	7.7%	15.4%	15.4%	38.5%
Professional resources for teachers to learn how to use digital devices are available.	15.4%	30.8%	30.8%	38.5%	46.2%
Teachers are provided with incentives to integrate digital devices in their teaching.	-	7.7%	15.4%	15.4%	23.1%
Most Teachers are sceptical on the use of Technology as an efficient method of teaching.	46.2%	61.5%	69.2%	38.5%	38.5%
Most Teachers are trained and able to conduct different types of online assessments.	-	-	-	30.8%	38.5%

ICT Access in SADC Region

Table 17 Current Status of ICT Access across Member States

STATUS OF ICT ACCESS	Network Coverage	ICT Access at Home	Mobile Broadband Subscriptions
Country	Population Covered by Mobile Cellular Network	Household with Internet Access at Home	Active Mobile Broad Band Subscriptions per 100 inhabitants
Angola	90%	15%	21%
Botswana	97%	63%	88%
Comoros	86%	33%	9%
Democratic Republic of the Congo	54%	9%	20%
Eswatini	54%	30%	16%
Lesotho	99%	37%	64%
Madagascar	80%	13%	16%
Malawi	88%	10%	32%
Mauritius	99%	73%	87%
Mozambique	85%	21%	18%
Namibia	100%	70%	66%
Seychelles	99%	59%	92%
South Africa	100%	62%	100%
United Republic of Tanzania	95%	16%	10%
Zambia	87%	18%	51%
Zimbabwe	93%	30%	52%

Source: Latest figures from United Nations Specialised Agency for ICTs as at 2020, Statistics, available from: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/>

From the above table, the results show that most of the Member States, with the exception of Eswatini and DRC, have good mobile network coverage. However, less than 40% of households have internet access in 11 of 16 Member States. This was indeed a serious impediment to the implementation of online educational policies during the pandemic. The challenge was even more

pronounced for six Member States (Angola, DRC, Madagascar, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia) given that internet was only available in not more than 15% of the households. There were also issues with regards to mobile broadband subscriptions which were, on average, less than 53 per 100 inhabitants for more than 10 Member States. In this regard, there were only five (Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa) Member States with more than 55% of its inhabitants having access to internet either at home or through mobile subscriptions. To that end, there is an urgent need to consolidate investments at national and regional level in upgrading the current IT infrastructure and enhancing internet coverage across the SADC region.

4.7 Implementation Challenges

The ability by governments to alleviate the negative consequences of the pandemic and successfully establish measures to support the continuity of academic experiences depended on a number of factors and conditions. In this regard, Member States were faced with a number of implementation challenges.

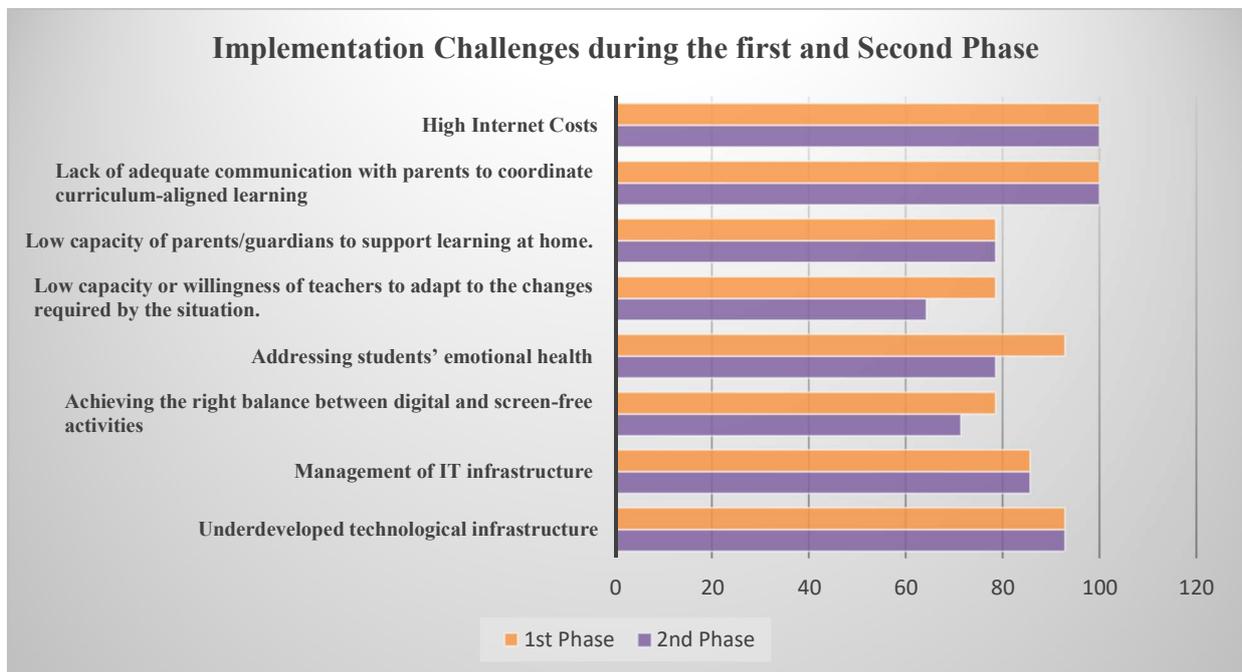
Table 18: IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Country	Phase of the pandemic crisis	Actions to be considered as a challenge to address
Eswatini	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate understanding on the part of senior managers on the demanding process leading to producing media lessons especially for national consumption thus watering down efforts of technicians to make the whole process run smoothly. No efforts to address teacher's emotional health. • No incentivizing those that are involved in the administration and implementation of media lessons especially because the media lessons were an added responsibility over and above the day-to-day admin and teaching and learning responsibilities. • Most learners didn't have learning material at home due to abrupt closing of schools making it difficult to follow lessons. • No evaluation of phase 1 to inform phase 2 implementation. • The major challenge is believing that things will come back to normal and therefore applying the wait and see approach
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The major challenge is believing that things will come back to normal and therefore applying the wait and see approach. This is because of the phases which give a false impression and yet if people are just preparing to adapt to this as a new way of life, it would force people to accept the alternatives that are available to them. • Inadequate understanding on the part of senior managers on the demanding process leading to producing media lessons thus watering down efforts of technicians to make the whole process run smoothly. No efforts to address teacher's emotional health. • No incentivizing those that are involved in the administration and implementation of media lessons

		<p>especially because the media lessons were an added responsibility over and above the day-to-day admin and teaching and learning responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign Language Interpreters services treated as normal teaching responsibility yet these are teachers who offer interpretation service at a cost. • No evaluation of phase 2 to inform future activities.
Lesotho	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial constrains for printing of developed materials
Madagascar	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty to implement the e learning • Access to the electricity and IT for the rural region • Lack of teaching manuals (books, exercises books, dictionary)
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty to implement the e learning • Access to the electricity and IT for the rural region
Mauritius	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to setup an educational platform that can fully support online teaching/learning. • High Speed Connectivity required in secondary schools. Necessary steps already initiated. • Capacity Building of primary and secondary teachers and education administrators.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity Building • Internet Connectivity • Establish educational platform
Mozambique	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train all teachers in the digital area to become a hybrid teaching • Create conditions for students to master the digital area • Substitute all internet networks, that is, there is a free internet network for schools at all levels
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a teaching platform to manage classes in all schools at all levels • Design digital software with teaching programs and digital library including zoom for online classes • Search for an application for cell phones and tables with use in solar panel or battery to improve vulnerable students • Contemplate applications on platforms and software for students with special needs

Seychelles	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the vulnerable groups • Supporting teachers to adapt to the changes required. • Supporting parents' parent with the closing of schools to adapt and catered for the emerging needs.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce support for the vulnerable groups • Parents who were not able to support children learning. • Parent not willing to support children' learning. • Parents who were not sending students to school.
Zambia	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The faculty and students are at different levels of digital literacy. Some are good whereas others are poor. A common online approach to teaching and learning has been difficult to implement. 20-30 % would successfully follow online instruction leaving the rest no to attend lessons. • Many students do not have capacity to procure a package for online learning.
Zimbabwe	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning has been difficult to complete as there are great differences depending on the location of the institutions. In rural areas radio lessons have not been very useful as some families lacked such gadgets. eLearning has been used largely by private schools, a few mission schools and a few government schools. • Some areas in rural communities are just inaccessible. There would be need for boosters to facilitate connectivity and even accessing radio programmes.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet Connectivity and Access • Access to Radio Programmes

Figure 6- Implementation Challenges



The above highlighted the recurrent challenges faced by Member States during the different phases of the pandemic. More specifically, the challenges can be grouped as follows;

- High Internet Costs and Limited Internet Connectivity (e.g. Madagascar, Zambia, Zimbabwe)
- Access and adaptability to Online Learning (Eswatini, Madagascar, Mauritius, Zambia and Zimbabwe)
- Access to printing materials (Lesotho and Madagascar)
- Emotional Health of students and teachers (Seychelles, Eswatini)
- Access to Radio Programmes (Zimbabwe)

High internet costs, underdeveloped IT infrastructure and the management of same remained serious challenges for many Member States. These undoubtedly impinged on learners' ease of

access to online education during the pandemic. Similarly, access to computers by students to enable them to continue their educational experience during the lockdown period, was another major constraint to sustain continuity of learning. This compares less favourably to, for instance, developed countries such as Denmark, Norway, and Switzerland amongst others where over 95% of students reported that they had access to a computer. Concerns were also raised on the lack of coordination between educational institutions and parents to ensure a seamless learning process and experience for the learners. In this respect, there is a dire need for educational institutions to devolve a preparedness communication plan to ensure that important information is channelled to parents in a timely and effective manner to facilitate the coordination and dispensation of learning to students during any pandemic.

4.8 Positive Outcomes, Innovations and Lessons Learned from Covid-19

The COVID-19 crisis has created many challenges worldwide and has severely impacted on the continuity of academic learning. However, there are underexplored avenues such as online and distance learning which were previously not considered by many educational institutions. Indeed, there were some positive unexpected educational changes, innovations and lessons learned in light of the responses to the pandemic. The unexpected benefits emanating from the pandemic delineated by the respondents mainly relate to online learning, production of sanitizers, paperless meetings, online submission of coursework, higher scope for ODL institutions, contribution towards more independent learning, more parental involvement in students' learning processes and increased health awareness and practices. Some innovative practices adopted by Member States were online graduation (Eswatini), Q&A sessions follow-up after media lessons (Eswatini), emphasis on and implementation of, blended mode of learning (Mauritius) and integrated technology in education through the development of a learner management system (Zimbabwe).

Table 19: Unexpected positive educational action changes and innovations following the pandemic

Country	Phase of the pandemic crisis	Unexpected positive educational action changes and Innovations
Eswatini	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching on media is very difficult but the programme was successful due to follow-up question and answer sessions • Use of WhatsApp and other platforms like Google Classroom and Zoom. • Production of sanitizer, pedal stands for sanitizers instead of using people
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of online learning systems especially at tertiary level • Use of indigenous plants to come up with medicinal cure for covid-19, introduction of online graduations, online task teams
Malawi	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education institutions have been creative in coming up with online platforms. These will likely be going to be used to increase access to higher education even after the pandemic.
Mauritius	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of online educational resources • Online Delivery of Lectures: Moving from face-to-face to online delivery overnight was very challenging but has yielded positive results. Feedback received from lecturers and students have been generally positive. This experience

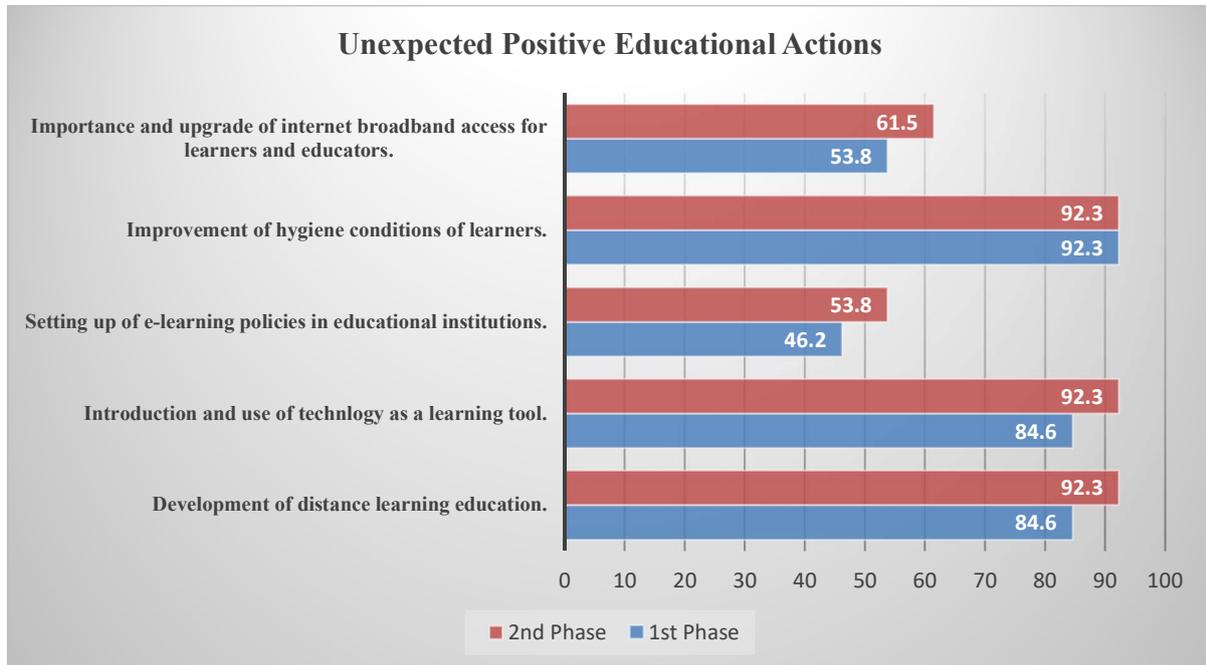
		<p>now allows the Universities to confidently move forward with its plans to introduce a reasonable percentage (up to 50%) of online delivery of all modules as part of its strategy for learning and teaching – i.e. theory parts being delivered online and tutorials, practical and lab work conducted face-to-face.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissertation Submission: Similar positive results have been experienced in regard to the online submission of dissertations through dedicated Google Classrooms by final year students which has been introduced this year due to COVID-19 (instead of hard copy and CD as per existing regulations). With this new measure, there has been very few cases of late submissions of dissertation, proving that students favour online submission to the hassle of having hard copies bound and physically deposited at the Faculty Registry. • Online Meetings very successful – decision to implement paperless meetings across the Universities
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classes shifted entirely online -- was on a blended (35h online + 10h face to face) mode previously. • Shifting to Online sessions was positively received by both tutors and learners -- more scope for an ODL institution like Open University. • Use of innovative pedagogical tool
Mozambique	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational program on TV and Radio • Reformulated the curriculum to incorporate teaching - hybrid
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for learners (cahier d'auto apprentissage, cahier de soutien et de corrigés) • Use of tablettes , USB driver, portable radio station by teacher. • The massive use of distance learning was reinforced, through the e-learning platform.

Seychelles	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant improvement in education attainment in some schools • Formation of different WhatsApp groups within school which eased communication between teachers, parents, students. • Initiated more student's independent learning. • More parental involvement in students learning.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved behaviour changes within the institution compound • Improved class management. • Formation of Health and Safety Committee in some schools. • Improved communication between parents, teachers and students. • Promoted students independent learning. • Some professional Centres had opportunity to increase the number of short courses offered, hence more revenue. • Provision for blended learning /multiple approach to ensure continuity of learning • Some professional centres had the opportunity to launch new products- emerging strategy e.g. selling of masks at the Art & Design Institute. • Reviewed some relevant policies e.g. assessment policy. • More flexible working hours for staff. • Opportunity to better embrace the blended learning approach. • On site practical intensified in Professional Centres. • Opportunity for more capacity building. • People are more aware of their health and that of others. • There has been a general improvement in communication. • A national commitment to integrate technology in education has been stimulated • Increased health awareness and practises have developed. • Acceptance of the need to use virtual/ digital learning platform

Zambia	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of Moodle as a platform for learning was strengthened in those institutions which had it installed. This was because during the first phase, most institutions were using WhatsApp and email as a way of keeping in contact with their students. • A meeting was held virtually chaired by the Permanent Secretary where best practices were discussed. Some trade schools were promised to be given contracts to produce masks for institutions.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of LMSs was promoted among institutions. Training on how to facilitate online and support learners was conducted through TVTC and Commonwealth of Learning (COL).
Zimbabwe	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The move towards online learning was revolutionary. It created opportunities for the modernisation of education.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The production of Sanitisers and Face masks by universities in Zimbabwe was a unique innovation that demonstrated how higher education institutions can contribute to the development of their nations.

There is indeed a general consensus that the pandemic has led to the extensive use of distance education, introduction and use of technology as a learning tool and improvement in hygiene conditions of learners. However, some scepticisms still prevail on whether the pandemic has led to improvement in internet bandwidth and connectivity and to the development of educational e-learning policies.

Figure 7- Unexpected Positive Educational Actions



From the above discussions, the first and second wave of the pandemic had challenged the entire education system across Member States and forced all educational stakeholders to think and operate under a new normal environment. The educational response across Member States had been mostly reactive rather than proactive during the first phase of the pandemic. Given the unexpected rapid evolution of COVID-19 situation after the first phase, knowledge delivery and continuity of academic learning had become an even more challenging task. While there is no perfect proactive educational response, there were some important lessons (see table 20) which Member States could learn and share to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. The major lessons to be retained by Member States are the importance of online learning, the setting up of a national online learning platform, development of a smart school opening policies, the use of blended learning, curriculum review and parental participation.

Table 20: Lessons learnt following the pandemic by Categories

Lessons Learned	Member States
• Importance of national online learning platform	Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius, Seychelles, Zambia
• Development ICT facilities and Importance of technology in Education	Eswatini, Mauritius, Seychelles, Zambia
• Policies towards limited School Closure- Platooning model (different shifts for grades within the same day) or rotational model can be used.	Eswatini, Malawi, South Africa
• Access and Educational support to Vulnerable Students	Lesotho, Seychelles
• Review of Curriculum Design	Mauritius
• Parental involvement should be considered.	Lesotho, Namibia
• Blended learning mode should be considered.	Eswatini, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles

Table 21: Lessons learned following the pandemic

Country	Phase of the pandemic crisis	Lessons Learned during the pandemic
Eswatini	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of national online education learning platform • Need for education channel on radio and TV • Need for National Emergency Fund (Education allocation) • Use of ICTs and cleanliness
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of research and development to inform which sectors to close during emergencies such as COVID • Use of ICTs, planning ahead, embracing change, working with partners, never making assumptions, taking risks, and caring for institution community • We have learned that schools should not be closed for prolonged period of time. • Blended learning and working should be the way to go.
Lesotho	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper engagement of parents and communities is important. • Installation of Tip-Taps in primary schools for hand washing. • Online learning
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility for e learning is important for learners and teachers to continue to provide education during pandemic. • Supporting vulnerability learners is necessary to prevent school drop-out.
Madagascar	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All countries must have learning and teaching programs to prevent another pandemic or crisis.
Malawi	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder involvement including communities is key in providing education within the pandemic. • Enforcement of the rules and regulations at school level requires innovative approaches.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools did not close in general. COVID cases were being managed at as school level and all boarding schools had isolation centres.
Mauritius	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of having the infrastructure for blended mode of teaching/learning and the importance of teacher training in the delivery of online lessons.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A need to review the curriculum design process and pedagogy adapted to online teaching and learning as well as assessment. • Appropriate preventive sanitary measures to counteract widespread of Covid-19 cases.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of having a proper e-learning platform (LMS)
Mozambique	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associating education with technology • When designing the curriculum plan, should provide for a hybrid teaching at all levels, including vulnerable and with special needs.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of teaching being questioned. • Mass dropout in schools
Namibia	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental involvement in education • Appreciation for the work that teachers are doing
Seychelles	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The necessity to ensure provision of blended learning to ensure continuity of learning • The need to ensure more health awareness and better sanitation practises • The necessity to ensure continued improvement in hygiene practises • Creating awareness of the importance of virtual/ digital learning platform
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The power/ Importance of technology in education • The need to integrate technology within the education system, venture in new learning approaches/ methods and integrate more blended mode of teaching and learning. • The need for better access to internet facilities and making internet affordable for all. • The significance of parental involvement and the wider community in children's learning. • The necessity to capacitate staff for to be more techno savvy in teaching and learning. • The value of having small size class for more effective class management and provision of individual attention. • The importance of ensuring sustainable use of resources

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of ensuring a holistic approach to education (not just academic but other aspects e.g health and safety) • The need to intensity effort and ensures strategies that seek to: • Improve access and quality of internet • Review internet packages in an effort to make it more affordable and accessible • Reinforce and where relevant initiate support structure for disadvantage students to ensure equal access to education. • Prepare and support learners and staff for virtual; education through capacity building • Develop relevant policies, guidelines, standards to ensure minimal loss to learning and to better address issues of the new normal. • Rethink training for educators to consider online aspect (pedagogy) • Seek funding/ donation for international organisation to assist. • Relook at assessment of learners. • Leverage learners’ creativity and innovation in project-based learning • Promote the good practises and lessons learnt
South Africa	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some rotational models are more effective than others. In this country it was found that the platooning model (different shifts for grades within the same day) was the most effective.
	2nd Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation phase learners needed to be prioritised to attend, because they cannot learn basic numeracy and literacy skills remotely.
Zambia	1st Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great deals of lessons have emerged from the pandemic. Technology has been recognised an alternative choice for confronting challenges that might impede traditional methods of teaching. There is need to advance resource allocation to ICT investment for the future.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is also need to invest in continuous professional development toward ICTs. Further, we need to recast our curriculum so that ICT lessons become a dominant feature at all levels of education.
--	--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

4.9 Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report (UNESCO, 2020) recommended that governments follow a preventive approach and do a constant monitoring for early and rapid actions to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. In this respect, the establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation system to measure the progress achieved in relation to measures implemented by governments in the region in response to the Covid-19 pandemic is fundamental. The main measures included in the M&E framework as a response to the impact of the pandemic on the education sector are delineated hereunder:

Table 22: Monitoring and Evaluation Systems on Educational Response to COVID-19

Country	Initiative/Actions
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the Education Technical Working Group which is tasked to deliberate, action and advise the Ministry of Education and Training on strategies to implement during the COVID-19 era. The committee meets usually weekly or on request of the Chairperson. • Submission of weekly report on the covid-19 infection rate in educational institutions • Not many students were affected, however educators were affected especially those who had comorbidities. The numbers of students were reduced in the hostels and once a student or lecturer was identified to exhibit covid -19 symptoms, they were isolated and removed from the hostel and fumigation conducted to disinfect the institution. Affected individuals were availed time to recover. • Students and lecturers were affected by the sickness and loss of life in some instances. Even though institutional support was availed to students and staff, need for external psychosocial support for both students and staff has been raised but has not been well attended to.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions have covid-19 response committees that are responsible for ensuring that there is monitoring of the Covid-19 guideline.
Lesotho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are committees at district level composing of line ministries and community representatives. They monitor compliance and adherence to the school Covid -19 guidelines developed by the Ministry of Education and Training. They have reporting mechanisms where there is need to act.
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The education sector has COVID 19 has a monitoring dash board. • Data is provided on weekly basis and the report is presented to the Presidential Task Force on COVID 19.
Mauritius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reporting from schools to zonal directorates and Quality Assurance Division. • National Coordination Committee setup to monitor schooling and policy decisions as regards education as well as school closure and resumption. • Compulsory Vaccination of all school personnel and students aged above 18. • Setting up of committees at school level to promote sanitary measures and hygiene. • Survey carried out by school inspectors and administrators regarding level of completion of syllabus.
Namibia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Namibia Covid-19 Occupational Safety and Health Guidelines- Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation framework on COVID-19 situation.
Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education put in place an Emergency Operations Centre (Command Centre) to take up positive cases and organise contact tracing with the Ministry of Health and organize for students, staff and parents to receive their quarantine certificates. • More systematic mechanism is required for the monitoring and evaluation related to the education aspect to minimise education loss of students. • The Ministry of Education created a Task Force for Primary and Secondary, Early childhood, Tertiary and headquarters each, to handle the COVID-19 matter. • Forms were created for filling out information of cases, data of contacts of positive cases, these were given daily as cases arose and attendance related to COVID-19 forms were filled in and sent through every end of week.
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly meeting with the Provinces to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the schools in each province. This was followed up by an on-the-ground survey to verify the provinces reporting.
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry has inspectors who monitor COVID-19 adherence within the ministry. Institutions which do not comply are temporarily closed down until they conform. Guidelines are shared with all institutions and district officers carry out

	<p>physical checks on conformance as well. Ministry of Health are on hand to fumigate, vaccinate and test as and when required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspectors from the ministry come at the beginning of the term. Health inspectors come periodically (unannounced) to check compliance.
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Operating Procedures guiding day to day operations of all registered public and private schools. The SOPs are reviewed as and when deemed necessary.

From the responses gathered, Member States (Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) have established guidelines and steering committees at different educational levels to monitor and evaluate the status of the pandemic crisis in the education sector. The M&E framework mainly focused on themes related to sanitary protocols, re-opening of schools, day to day management of the educational institutions and handling of positive cases. However, while these M&E frameworks were vital in ensuring continuity of academic learning, there remained critical issues which the current M&E framework in Member States should urgently address/consider during the pandemic crisis. These are as follows;

- **Monitoring of academic learning processes**

There should be a framework which monitors and evaluates the learning needs of students under the new normal environment where continuous and synchronous learning is not possible. The M&E framework should monitor the status of curriculum completion and alignment with the core competencies at different levels.

- **Effectiveness of Distance and Online learning education**

The use of distance and online education has been one of the commonly used alternatives in different Member States. Member States are continuing to use these alternative modes of delivery even after lock down restrictions have been lifted. A national M&E framework on the effectiveness of this particular mode of delivery is essential in order to assess learners’ adaptability and difficulties.

- **Monitoring status on the Emotional Health of Students and Teachers**

While the focus of the M&E framework in many Member States has focused on the operating guidelines of educational institutions, it is vital to conduct national surveys to monitor and evaluate the emotional impact of the pandemic on learners and staff during the different phases of the pandemic.

- **Monitoring of Academic Staff training on online teaching pedagogies**

Many academic staff have not been trained adequately with regards to online teaching delivery. The Member States need to have a strategic plan to monitor and evaluate the status of academic training at national level on online teaching pedagogies.

- **Status of access of academic resources to vulnerable learners**

Access of academic resources whether online or print materials have been a challenge for many Member States. While governments have undertaken a number of initiatives to mitigate the disruptions of academic learning for vulnerable students, an M&E framework should be setup to oversee the status on accessibility and inclusivity of all learners, irrespective of their social backgrounds.

- **M&E framework on the development of ICT infrastructure in the education sector**

The measures taken with regards to the implementation for broader internet connectivity and improvement as well as access in ICT facilities need to be embedded in the M&E framework. It is imperative that Member States oversee the progress made in ICT infrastructure since the first phase of the pandemic since investment in ICT and ICT infrastructure is critical for the development of a resilient system of education.

5.0 Recommendations and Best practices

The protracted effect of the current pandemic had undeniably impacted on the continuity of academic learning and will continue to disrupt the learning opportunities for many students worldwide. Since the first phase of the pandemic in early 2020, Member States have developed educational responses to ensure continuity of learning. However, the resurgence of the number of cases after the lifting those lockdown restrictions meant an ever-greater challenge for many Member States to ensure an effective education response in protecting the learning opportunities for many students, most particularly for those vulnerable and disadvantaged students.

Some Member States (e.g. Malawi, Lesotho, Mauritius, Zimbabwe) have developed national educational emergency response plans to mitigate the impact of the pandemic crisis. In general, most of the national educational emergency response plans included the following issues;

- Ensure the health and safety of students, teachers, and other education personnel
- Continuity of learning through alternative non-traditional delivery modes using media and ICT
- Plan for school feeding programmes
- Measures to ensure continuity of learning for children with special education needs and disadvantaged backgrounds
- Empowerment of teachers to provide remote learner academic support
- Strengthening and coordinate Education Sector response

The survey revealed a number of best practices adopted by some Member States. These ranges from online graduation (Eswatini), Q&A sessions follow-up after media lessons (Eswatini), emphasis on and implementation of, blended mode of learning (Mauritius) and integrated technology in education through the development of a learner management system (Zimbabwe).

In addition, Member States (e.g Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) have established guidelines and steering committees at different educational levels to monitor and evaluate the status of the pandemic crisis in the education sector. The M&E framework mainly focused on themes related to sanitary protocols, re-opening of schools, day to day management of the educational institutions and handling of positive cases.

However, with second lockdown restrictions having been imposed in nearly all Member States during 2020 and 2021, there were a number of implementation challenges hindering MS ability to respond in a more effective manner. In light of the findings emanating from the survey, the main implementation challenges were as follows;

- Limited Internet Connectivity (e.g Madagascar, Mauritius, Zambia, Zimbabwe)
- Access and adaptability to Online Learning (Eswatini, Madagascar, Mauritius, Zambia and Zimbabwe)
- Access to printing materials (Lesotho and Madagascar)
- Emotional Health of students and teachers (Seychelles, Eswatini)
- Access to Radio Programmes (Zimbabwe)

The high internet costs, underdeveloped IT infrastructure and the management of same remained a serious challenge in many Member States. This indeed have impinged on the access by learners to online education during the pandemic. To this end, a review of the current ICT access for the year 2020/2021 highlighted that less than 40% of households have internet access in 11 out of 16 Member States. The challenge was even more profound in the case of six Member States (Angola, DRC, Madagascar, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia) given that internet is available in not more than 15% of the households.

Furthermore, the survey also highlighted some salient features on the students' ease of ICT accessibility and their ability to adapt to the digital world, teachers' preparedness to cater for online mode of delivery, infrastructural ICT coverage within the educational institutions. These were as follows;

- More than 75% percent of the respondents (Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Seychelles, Zambia, Zimbabwe) mentioned that access to computer or link to internet was a real challenge across the different sub-levels of the education sector.
- When assessing the learners' capabilities in the digital world, more than 80% of the respondents indicated that the knowledge of students on the use of online learning tools was limited, the overall student satisfaction with the online learning tools was lower and

there were inadequate educational support disadvantaged students on the use of online learning.

- More than 65% of the respondents indicated that there was inadequate ICT infrastructure in educational institutions. In particular, there was a lack of qualified technical staff, low internet bandwidth in educational institutions, limited access to relevant software for online learning and inadequate availability of digital devices in educational institutions.
- The majority of the respondents (more than 75%) indicated limited training on online assessments, skepticism on the use of technology as an efficient tool for teaching, limited incentives to integrate digital devices in teaching methods, limited technical and pedagogical skills to integrate and adapt to online teaching.

A review from the previous study conducted during the first phase of the pandemic highlighted a number of recommendations in terms of policies which should be considered to improve the educational response during the pandemic crisis. While Member States were/are much better prepared to cope with the pandemic than during the early phase of the crisis and have to some extent adopted some good initiatives, there remains the following number of actions which urgently need to be addressed.

1) Technology and Innovation

Invest in Technological Infrastructure

Since the first phase of the pandemic, the issue of the limited and underdeveloped IT infrastructure was highlighted and this remains a serious concern in the SADC region. The policies to broaden internet connectivity within the different segments of the population have been so far ineffective given that less than 40% of households have internet access in 11 out of 16 Member States. The challenge of broadening ICT access is becoming a pressing need for countries to mitigate not only the impact of COVID-19 but also to strengthen their education systems' resilience.

Developing an online national platform

Disruptions to the education system as a result of the pandemic has undoubtedly led to a greater use of online learning by MS. While efforts have been done by some Member States (e.g. Zimbabwe) to set up a learner management system, government actions for a national online

integrated system to cater for the needs to learners under a pandemic crisis are required. The survey highlighted that coordinated actions to initiate efforts after the first phase of the pandemic for an alternative system of learning are important to the changing conditions. The efforts have been primarily geared towards the resumption of schools and institutions rather than creating online platforms to support learning from Early Childhood education till University level for a prolonged period.

Enhancing the Technological Infrastructure in Educational Institutions

Following the first phase of the pandemic, educational institutions have faced a number of challenges in their attempt to implement and encourage online learning. In particular, more than 65% of the stakeholders indicated that educational institutions have low internet bandwidth, limited access to relevant software and inadequate availability of digital devices. This is a serious impediment towards the successful implementation on the use of online learning. Government policies should promote and enhance the technological infrastructure in educational institutions. To this effect, government grants or loan facilities to educational institutions to invest and upgrade their technological infrastructure should be made available.

2) Educational Policies

Specific Policies for vulnerable learners

A number of Member States have launched their national COVID-19 Educational Preparedness Plan to mitigate the effects of the pandemic crisis. However, a review of the literature on the main elements of the educational plans suggest that there is not enough focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. In addition, the results from the survey suggest that access to education for learners in remote areas is still a challenge even after the first phase of the pandemic. The educational response should be geared towards a more inclusive approach where all learners' needs and difficulties are considered.

Policies on Academic Assessments

The policies on academic assessments during the pandemic have not been addressed in most cases even after one year following the first phase of the pandemic. In particular, more than 75% of the

respondents from the Member States indicated limited training on online assessments. The mode of assessments conducted during the first phase and second phase of the pandemic remain a serious concern not only for the educational institutions but also among students and teachers. In addition, some Member States (e.g Mauritius) have implemented an automatic promotion system with students graduating to the next grade for primary and secondary learners to ensure continuity of academic learning. However, the students' future academic attainments might be impacted without a reliable and adequate mode of assessment. Member States need to formulate a new national strategic policy on assessments under the new normal environment.

Policies curriculum design and delivery

With further lockdowns or partial restrictions in 2020 and 2021 in many Member States, the normal time available to complete the curriculum has indeed been curtailed. There has been ad-hoc policies to focus on core areas of the curriculum. While the new normal environment may justify such actions from educational institutions, there should be a policy to review and reformulate the curriculum contents and planning as the pandemic evolved over time. This is indeed essential in ensuring an efficient and effective coverage of the core curriculum elements within a limited time period.

Policies on academic support to young learners

The national educational preparedness plan essentially focuses on health and operational issues. However, a dedicated policy on academic support to younger learners is required with special considerations to their needs. Younger learners are undoubtedly the most vulnerable groups with disruptions in the education process throughout the year. The second phase of the pandemic created more uncertainty in terms of an adequate in-person academic support from educational institutions and unfortunately, the needs of younger learners are highly dependent on the guidance and support of teachers. The development of a dedicated plan for early and young learners is imperative to mitigate the risk of a lost generation due to the lingering crisis.

3) Funding and Collaboration

Funding from International Partners

The Global Education Coalition could be a key support to all Member States. In this respect, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay claimed that. "...partnership is the only way forward. This Coalition is a call for coordinated and innovative action to unlock solutions that will not only support learners and teachers now, but through the recovery process, with a principle focus on inclusion and equity." The survey highlighted that some Member States (Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia and Zambia) have sought international funding to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on their national education system. However, there is still limited evidence on the call for funding from international partners by other Member States. The funding from international organizations can be very helpful to set-up specific projects dedicated most particularly to vulnerable learners.

Regional technical and financial support

Member States have adopted different ad-hoc approaches on school openings. Technical assistance from the SADC Secretariat on policies and models of school openings and operations within the region can be shared among Member States. The role played by regional economic communities can help in harmonizing educational practices and help to pool competencies and financial resources to smooth out disruptions in Member States. Since the first phase of the pandemic, a dedicated steering committee for pedagogical continuity and education working groups at regional level may have proved critical.

Use of OERs and MOOCs

The survey reveals a limited use of OERs and MOOCs among Member States. While developing online materials might be time-consuming, the use of OERs and MOOCs can be considered as one potential solution to set-up a national online learning platform. Partnerships could be explored with a number of international institutions such as Commonwealth of Learning (COL) for greater access to digital learning resources which can be useful and of benefit to learners.

4) Capacity building strategies for stakeholders in the education sector

Capacity building for teachers

During the early phases of the pandemic, many teachers were required to improvise on the use of online learning tools with no proper academic support on online teaching methods. After the first phase of the pandemic, the traditional mode of teaching was again reverted to with the resumption of schools and educational institutions in many Member States. However, with the subsequent partial restrictions and lockdowns due to the resurgence of the number of cases, the continuity of academic learning was again disrupted in many Member States. Given the experience gained during the first phase of the pandemic crisis, it was expected that most teachers would be able to cope with the requirements of digital teaching. However, the survey reveals that more than 75% of the respondents stated their skepticisms on the following: use of technology as an efficient method of teaching; limited incentives to integrate digital devices in teaching methods; and limited technical and pedagogical skills to integrate and adapt to online teaching. In this respect, it is urgent for Member States to review and consider a more robust capacity building strategy for teachers to be trained in digital pedagogy to cope with the current and future pandemic. In addition, there should also be capacity building strategies in enhancing the skills and competences of academic and non-academic staff for their effective involvement in the development of digital and audio-visual resources and teaching kits.

Digital Preparedness of students

The impact of the pandemic has encouraged the development and use of online learning as an alternative method to ensure continuity of academic learning. More than 80% of the respondents indicated that the knowledge of students on the use of online learning tools was limited and that there were lower levels of student satisfaction with the online learning tools. It is recommended that the national education preparedness plans cater for capacity building strategies on the use and management of online learning tools.

5) Integrated M&E framework

Many Member States have setup processes and committees to monitor and evaluate the educational responses during the pandemic crisis. However, the M&E framework mainly focuses on operational in terms of schools opening and health issues and the sanitary protocols to be followed.

There should an integrated M&E framework which considers academic processes, emotional health of students, inclusiveness, training and IT infrastructure. An integrated M&E framework should be adopted to enhance the educational response to the pandemic.

6.0 Bibliography

Cerna, L., 2020. Coronavirus school closures: What do they mean for student equity and inclusion? OECD Education and Skills Today. www.oecdeditoday.com/coronavirus-school-closures-student-equity-inclusion

Council of Europe, 2020. ECRI webinar on Inclusive Education in Times of Covid-19. Strasbourg: European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/newsroom/-/asset_publisher/U2IwxehB054o/content/ecri-webinar-on-inclusive-education-in-times-of-covid-19

Dhawan, S., 2020. Online learning: A panacea in the time of COVID-19 crisis. Journal of Educational Technology Systems, 49(1), pp.5-22.

Doucet, A., Netolicky, D., Timmers, K., & Tuscano, F. J. 2020. Thinking about pedagogy in an unfolding pandemic (An Independent Report on Approaches to Distance Learning during COVID-19 School Closure). Work of Education International and UNESCO. www.issuu.com/educationinternational/docs/2020_research_covid-19_eng

Guzdial, M. (2020, March 30). So much to learn about emergency remote teaching, but so little to claim about online learning. [blog post].

Lancet Public Health, 2020. 'Will the COVID-19 pandemic threaten the SDGs?' The Lancet Public Health, 5 (9), e460. doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30189-4

Lehmann, C., 2020, March. "Doing School" In the Time of Coronavirus. [blog post].

Milligan, I. ,2020, March 20. Emergency Remote Teaching: A Post Secondary Reality Check. [blog post].

Nadworny, E. 2020, March 27. With Schools Closed, Kids with Disabilities Are More Vulnerable Than Ever. [blog post].

Netolicky, D., Timmers, K., & Tuscano, F.J. ,2020. Thinking about Pedagogy in an Unfolding Pandemic. [blog post].

Petrie, C., Aladin, K., Ranjan, P., Javangwe, R., Gilliland, D., Tuominen, S. and Lasse, L., 2020. Spotlight: Quality education for all during Covid-19 crisis. HundrED and OECD. [hundred-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/report/file/15/hundred_spotlight_covid-19_digital.pdf](https://cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/report/file/15/hundred_spotlight_covid-19_digital.pdf)

Resnick, M.,2017. Lifelong kindergarten: Cultivating creativity through projects, passion, peers, and play. Boston, USA: MIT Press.

Reimers Fernando M. and Schleicher, Andreas ,2020. A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020, OECD report and OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment in 2018.

Schleicher, A., 2020. 'Education disrupted – education rebuilt: Some insights from PISA on the availability and use of digital tools for learning' OECD Education and Skills Today. oecdeditoday.com/coronavirus-education-digital-tools-for-learning

Schleicher, A., 2020. 'How can teachers and school systems respond to the COVID-19 pandemic? Some lessons from TALIS' OECD Directorate for Education and Skills. oecdeditoday.com/how-teachers-school-systems-respond-coronavirus-talis

UNESCO,2021. Portal of Education Plans and Policies; available from www.planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/en/search/site/Covid

United Nations, 2021. United Nations Specialised Agency for ICTs as at 2020, Statistics. www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/

WHO-UNICEF-Lancet Commissioners, 2020. After COVID-19, a future for the world's children? The Lancet, 396 (10247), 298–300. [www.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)31481-1](https://www.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31481-1)

7.0 Appendix- Questionnaire

Survey – Follow-Up Study on SADC Education Sector Response to COVID-19 Pandemic⁷

Dear Sir/Madam,

The COVID-19 crisis has resulted in massive closure of schools, colleges, TVET and tertiary institutions affecting more than 1.5 billion learners and youth across the planet. Countries have put in place a number of measures to respond to the crisis and to mitigate its effects in the education sector. At the regional level, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SADC Secretariat agreed to work with UNESCO, leading a Global Education Coalition to support SADC Member States in mitigating the effects of the coronavirus on education, and in ensuring the continuity of education and learning programmes. In this respect, an initial survey was launched in June 2020 to collect information on measures taken by SADC Member States to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including specific actions taken to ensure education continuity at all levels, during and after the crisis phase.

The Education Sector Response to COVID-19 in SADC MS Report was presented at the Joint Meeting of Ministers of Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation in June 2021. Ministers welcomed the Report and highlighted the importance of regular reporting on MS initiatives to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. However, Ministers also highlighted that Member States have implemented a number of initiatives since the survey was carried out and as such directed Secretariat to conduct a follow-up study, which besides the issues considered during the first study, should also consider data and information on responses in the second and third waves. Furthermore, following feedback from the Ministerial meeting, there are additional areas of investigations which need to be considered.

It is thus against such a background that SADC Secretariat and UNESCO have agreed to work together to undertake a survey which will review of the actions/policies adopted by Member States. This questionnaire will serve to collect information on measures taken by SADC Member States not only in the first waves of crisis but also after second or third waves of the pandemic to ensure academic continuity.

Information gathered during this exercise will enable the SADC Secretariat to delineate the development of common response strategies and best practices in ensuring the

⁷This Questionnaire has been adapted from 'A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020', *OECD*, 2020.

continuity of academic learning during the on-going pandemic crisis by Member States and the region as a whole.

Completed questionnaire should be sent to educationalresponse@gmail.com at latest by 30th September 2021.

SECTION A: PROFILE AND STATUS OF THE PANDEMIC IN MEMBER STATES

1. Please state Name of Member State

2. Stakeholder Education Profile:

Education Stakeholders	Kindly tick as appropriate
ECD- Early Childhood Development	
PRIMARY	
SECONDARY	
TVET	
UNIVERSITY	
Ministry/ Government Institutions	
Others- Pls specify.....	

3. Lockdown Status and Interruption of academic learning

Pandemic Waves	Lockdown Date	Lifting or First Partial lifting of Lockdown restrictions	Dates Classes suspended	Face to Face Resumption Date
First Lockdown				
Second Lockdown if applicable				
Third Lockdown if applicable				
Fourth Lockdown if applicable				

SECTION B: MEASURES/ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

SUBSECTION B.1- Government Actions/Interventions and Instructional Resources for continuity of academic learning

4. What has been the government actions to support the continuity of the academic experience of students?

Education Sector	First Lockdown	Additional Measures during the Second Lockdown if applicable	Additional Measures during the third Lockdown if applicable	Additional Measures during the Fourth Lockdown if applicable
ECD- Early Childhood Development				
PRIMARY				

SECONDARY				
TVET				
UNIVERSITY				

5. Type of Government of Interventions which are most commonly used in your Member State (A score of 1 indicates least commonly used while a score of 5 indicates most commonly used).

Type of Government Interventions	Not Used	1 Least Commonly Used	2	3	4	5 Most Commonly Used
Development and use of online materials and platforms						
Developing alternative offline methods of delivery- TV, Radio or print Media						

Social assistance to parents						
Setting up of structures and taskforce						
Partnership with Other Stakeholders						
Providing Internet Access						
Training of teachers						
If Others, please specify						

6. What are the government strategies for the resumption of schools or other educational institutions?

1st Phase of the pandemic crisis

2nd Phase of the crisis

3rd Phase of the crisis if applicable

7. What instructional resources have been used or are still being used to support the academic experience of students while they are unable to physically attend school? Please indicate Yes or No for each lockdown phase

Instructional Resources	Education Sector	Resource used during the 1st Lockdown (Indicate Yes or No)	Resources still being used or only used after the first waves or during the 2nd Lockdown if applicable (Indicate Yes or No)
a. Printed Instructional packages	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
b. Radio education	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
c. Educational television	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
d. Using existing online distance learning platform/resources	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		

e. Develop new online platforms (virtual classrooms)	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
f. Partner with private education platforms	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
g. Other, please specify			

SUBSECTION B.2- Measures adopted to support disadvantaged students to ensure continuity of learning

8. What specific actions are in place in the following areas to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds during the time when school operations are suspended? Kindly fill in the table below.

Support/Initiative/Actions for disadvantaged students	Education Sector	Actions taken during the 1st Lockdown (Indicate Yes or No)	Actions taken during the 2nd Lockdown if applicable (Indicate Yes or No)
Provision of offline and printed materials to students with disabilities and in remote areas	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Maintaining school feeding programme	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Distributing relief food to the vulnerable families in communities	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Provision of social grants	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		

	University		
Provision of tablets or PCs	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Free internet access	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Others, please specify			

9. What has your government done to address the growing inequality among learners during the pandemic crisis? Please stipulate any practices/lessons which can be shared to other Member States.

SUBSECTION B.3- Support and instructional resources provided to Teachers for their professional development during the pandemic

10. What professional support/advice is being offered to teachers during the pandemic? Please fill in the table- Indicate Yes or No where applicable

Support provided to Teachers	Education Sector	Support during the 1st Lockdown (Indicate Yes or No)	Support maintained or implemented after the 1st lockdown or during the 2nd Lockdown if applicable (Indicate Yes or No)
Training on the use of online distance learning platforms through Zoom, Google Classrooms etc	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Set up trainer of trainers' sessions on the use of the effective and efficient use of e-learning tools	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Online educational resources posted and made accessible to teachers	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Infrastructural and technical IT support to develop radio and TV educational programmes	ECD		
	Primary		

	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Academic Training for online delivery and presentation of lectures.	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Provision of a national online learning platform	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Academic Training on Online Assessments	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Others, please specify			

11. What innovations were brought about in your country to support teachers during the first lock down or after the first waves of the pandemic?

Innovations to support Teachers	Education Sector	Innovations during the 1st Lockdown (Indicate Yes where appropriate)	Innovations after the 1st lockdown or during the 2nd Lockdown if applicable (Indicate Yes where appropriate)
Introduction of WEB Educational TV	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Setting up of an national online platform for teachers to post their learning materials	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Provision of free data/ IT / PC equipment subsidies to teachers	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Design and distribution of exercise books for students who cannot access the telecasts and audio classes	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		

	University		
Development of new national guidelines/policies for teachers to deliver under the new normal conditions.	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Procurement of educational tablets for Teachers	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Others, please specify			

12. There are counties where teachers created and used digital games as part of their teaching and learning in their subjects. Likewise, in the Creative Arts for grade 12 (Visual Arts and Design) , the teachers / subject advisors have experimented with E platforms that allow for the upload, display of source books and art works. Likewise, Technical School teachers with emphasis on the Institute of Telecommunications have been teaching and providing practical work to students via facebook and whatsapp during the Pandemic period.**Please provide examples/stories on how teachers have innovated in your country.**

Good Practices during the first phase

Good Practices during the second phase

SUBSECTION B.4-Funding sources and International Collaboration

13. What are sources of funding in response to the pandemic and whether the sources of funding have been maintained after the first waves?

Source of Funding to support education interventions	Education Sector	Type of Funding during the 1 st Lockdown (Indicate G-Government, U-UN, P-Private Sector and O-Other)	Funding maintained or implemented after the 1 st lockdown or during the 2 nd or 3 rd Lockdown if applicable (Indicate Yes or No)
Development of Learning materials	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Development Distance learning mode of education	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		
Financing Food support	ECD		
	Primary		
	Secondary		
	TVET		
	University		

14. Could you kindly indicate how your Government is supporting/funding the above-mentioned Education Interventions? (please tick as appropriate).

Government Sources of Funding	Sources of funding during the first lockdown (Indicate Yes or No)	Sources of funding after the 1 st lockdown or during the 2 nd or 3 rd Lockdown if applicable (Indicate Yes or No)
a. Government Stimulus Package		
b. Loans contracted from local financial institutions		
c. Loans from International Institutions such as World Bank and IMF;		
d. Support from Donors;		
e. Support from International Cooperating Partners		
f. Other, kindly specify:		

15. Has your government seek the assistance of regional/international partners for financial and technical support in ensuring the continuity of learning and educational access to vulnerable and disadvantaged students? If yes, please elaborate on the partners involved and the nature of support. *For example, in late March 2020, the UNICEF office in one Member State received a GPE grant of US\$70,000 to support the Ministry of Education with producing lessons for the radio and TV, as well as learner packs.*

Nature of Support to vulnerable and disadvantaged students	Assistance of regional/international collaboration during the pandemic crisis (Indicate Yes where applicable)	Name of Regional/International Partner/s
Free internet access		
Educational Loans		
Provision of IT equipment/Tablets.		
Provision of food and other social grants/services.		
Provision of offline and printed materials to students with disabilities and in remote areas		
f. Other, kindly specify:		

SUBSECTION B.5- Support measures mainstreamed in the National Plan

16. Kindly indicate whether your Government has delineated a National Plan for COVID-19 Pandemic?

17. If Yes, kindly enumerate some of the main measures which has been included as a response to the impact of COVID-19 on the Education Sector.

Support/Initiative/Actions	Measures mainstreamed during 1 st Phase (Indicate Yes where appropriate)	Measures mainstreamed during 2 nd Phase (Indicate Yes where appropriate)	Measures mainstreamed during 3 rd Phase (Indicate Yes where appropriate)
Sanitary, hygiene standards and Social distancing measures			
Develop E-Learning Educational Policy and Standards			
Phased approach for the school openings			
Setting Up of a formal contingency Plan during Covid-19			
Amendment to legislation framework/regulations			
Others, kindly specify:			

SECTION C- Status of ICT access and literacy in response to the pandemic

18. Measures for Student access to the digital world

Measures for Student access to the digital world	Education Sector	Indicate Yes or No
Most students have access to a computer for their schoolwork during the pandemic crisis or after the first lockdown.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
Disadvantaged students were provided with internet access facilities by the educational institution during the pandemic crisis.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
Almost all or most students were able to have access to a link to the internet either through a mobile phone or a computer.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	

19. Learners' capabilities in the digital world

Learners' capabilities in the digital world	Education Sector	Indicate Yes or No
Students were able to learn and adapt to the use of online learning tools during the pandemic crisis.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
Disadvantaged students were provided with tutor support by the educational institution on the use of online learning tools during the pandemic crisis.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
Almost all or most students were conversant with the use of online tools such as Zoom, MS Team or google meet during the pandemic crisis.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
Almost all or most students were satisfied with the online learning tools available to them during pandemic crisis.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	

20. Adequacy of ICT infrastructure in Educational Institutions

Adequacy of technology in School	Education Sector	Indicate Yes or No
Digital devices at school are sufficiently powerful in terms of computing capacity	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
Do educational institutions have adequate <u>software</u> for online learning?	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
The educational institution's Internet bandwidth or speed is sufficient.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
Are the educational institutions equipped with sufficient qualified technical assistant staff?	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
Most Teachers are sceptical on the use of Technology as an efficient method of teaching.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
	ECD	

Most Teachers are trained and able to conduct different types of online assessments.	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	

21. Use of technology and preparedness of teachers

Use of technology and preparedness of teachers	Education Sector	Indicate Yes or No
Teachers have the necessary technical and pedagogical skills to integrate digital devices in instruction.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
Professional resources for teachers to learn how to use digital devices are available.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	
Teachers are provided with incentives to integrate digital devices in their teaching.	ECD	
	Primary	
	Secondary	
	TVET	
	University	

24. Are there any lessons learned during the pandemic or after the first waves or second lockdown if applicable?

First Phase

Second Phase

25. Are there any innovations and inventions which were brought about by higher education institutions in response to the pandemic? If yes, please elaborate.

First Phase

Second Phase

SECTION F: MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS OF EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

26. Kindly indicate whether your Government has delineated a monitoring and evaluation system to monitor the COVID-19 response to the education sector?

27. If Yes, kindly indicate the reporting frequency of the M&E systems and enumerate the main processes, committees, actions, measures amongst others which has been included as a response to the impact of COVID-19 on the Education Sector.

THANK YOU