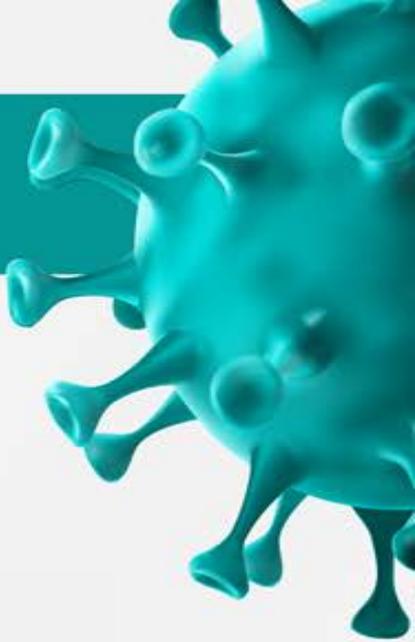


# RESEARCHERS BOOTCAMP



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Education researchers respond to  
the COVID-19 pandemic

## INSIGHTS-2-ACTION

14 April 2020

# #OPENUPTHINKINGLOCKDOWN <sup>1</sup>

Since January 2020 COVID-19 has menaced China and laid a path of destruction in Europe and North America while making inroads in the Middle East, South East Asia and a wide swathe of countries elsewhere around the globe. The onset of COVID-19 on the African continent is still reportedly small though statistics are probably underestimated. There is a window of opportunity for developing countries in Africa to further their preparation and to consider the tactical options for countering COVID-19.

This Insights-2-Action input is based on the contributions of more than 150 educational researchers, comprising a combination of seasoned local and international experts, government and university representatives, and a pool of volunteers from all parts of South Africa as well as a few currently based abroad in countries such as China, the United States, Japan, Ethiopia, Hungary and the Netherlands. A capacity building element is also included to allow novice researchers from various backgrounds seeking experience in the research field to meaningfully contribute.

This document has been compiled during the Researchers' Bootcamp initiated by JET Education Services that will end on 30 April 2020<sup>2</sup>. It represents the first **real time contribution to influence and support the decisions of policy makers and funders at a time when evidence-based and agile decision-making is paramount**. This document represents a work-in-progress, and as such we welcome contributions and comments, and even more, active participation in any of the 12 themes currently in motion. We will be the first to acknowledge that there is much wisdom outside of this initiative.

We also know that this real-time contribution is very necessary, and while it may not be perfect, it will provide an invaluable reference point when important policy and funding decisions are being made, right now. This is also a time when quick fixes that are not solidly grounded may be put forward as silver bullets. This bootcamp represents a collaborative effort from the education sector itself to mitigate this risk. While only in its 14th day at the time this document is being prepared, the collaborative action research underway points to the following insights, some new, while others affirming what needs to be done. The list below is further elaborated on in the subsequent pages.

## EMERGING INSIGHTS

1. Parents can engage positively with their children, listen to them, direct and support their educational activities, encourage reading and creative activity, and support them to manage anxiety.
2. NPOs working in education are better able to support the government during the COVID-19 pandemic if self-organised through an accountability structure, such as [NASCEE](#).
3. There is a dire need for a more coordinated and sophisticated approach to managing and geo-mapping data in the education sector in South Africa, in the short term this should focus on COVID-19 related activities and funding allocations specifically for this purpose.
4. Culture matters in the education sector's response to COVID-19.
5. The ability of a country to test, trace and quarantine (TTQ) is critically important. South Africa has experience and resources that will advance the efficiency and effectiveness of TTQ. There are however institutional resources that if harnessed may contribute to higher levels of success such as schools, colleges, HEIs and ECD centres which are integrated into a large part of the society.
6. Effective communication will help eliminate fake news and the unnecessary distribution of the information that might be causing anxiety, particularly to learners.
7. There is a risk that the data privacy of learners, teachers, lecturers and parents could be abused by the government in the name of managing the pandemic.
8. The nature of exit level assessments for the 2020 academic year need to be rethought.
9. Teaching and learning is more than providing content: a plethora of free online resources are available, but the ability of learners (also teachers, and parents) to engage with these resources need to be supported, also using non-technological approaches.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jet.org.za/research-bootcamp>

<sup>2</sup> Many thanks to all who contributed to earlier drafts of this document, including those not directly involved in the Bootcamp. Thank in particular to Magali von Blottnitz for volunteering time to review an earlier draft.

10. Nutrition matters and very urgent measures are needed to feed underprivileged children.
11. Government can use alternative funding models to leverage and accelerate private donor and investment capital to drive large educational projects during this time.
12. There are few examples of metrics for assessing the effectiveness of different social distancing measures adopted in a shutdown. We need to know more about relative effectiveness of on societal cooperation with and in various measures, such as closing schools, in slowing the infection rate.
13. Teaching practice during and after the COVID-19 pandemic will necessarily be different.

## Brief background

On 13 March 2020, a special JET Bulletin *Extending the capacity of governments and communities to save lives: The role of education systems in responding to COVID-19 and other threats*<sup>3</sup> was published. This preliminary paper set the stage for a 'Researchers' Bootcamp', an opportunity for researchers that want to do something about the threat of COVID-19 and its implications for education.

The subsequent COVID-19 lockdown in South Africa, starting on the evening of 26 March 2020, and recently extended to last until 30 April 2020, spurred JET, and several like-minded agencies working in education, to put out a call to researchers to take part in a research bootcamp to:

- Establish a collaborative effort for researchers from various backgrounds, age groups and even countries, to contribute meaningfully to finding solutions to the pressures being placed on education systems by the COVID-19 pandemic using an evidence-based approach.
- Allow for real-time inputs to be made into other national education processes led by organisations such as the National Association for Social Change Entities in Education (NASCEE), the Independent Philanthropy Association of South Africa (IPASA), the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), and others.

Following a call for volunteers on social media, 327 applications were received in three days and following an overnight shortlisting process, over 100 applicants were offered places in the bootcamp which started on 30 March 2020 (the start of the lockdown in South Africa), and will end on 30 April 2020 (the current end of the lockdown period). After starting with four themes, the bootcamp has grown to a more comprehensive set of 12 themes being investigated as the project garnered interest from other stakeholders in the education sector such as the NECT, Equal Education Law Centre (EELC), the Zenex Foundation, the Manufacturing and Engineering and Related Services Sector Education Training Authority (merSETA), Centre for Educational Testing for Access and Placement (CETAP) (at the University of Cape Town [UCT]), the Wits School of Education (WSoE), and the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, as well as the broader NASCEE community of more than 3,000 non-profit entities working in education.

Currently, more than 150 researchers and reviewers are working on delivering 12 strategic reports by 30 April 2020. This work has also attracted 20 peer reviewers (14 South African experts and six International) that include Mary Metcalfe (Programme to Improve Learning Outcomes [PILO]), Sarah Rennie (IPASA), Whitty Green (DHET) and Sebolelo Nomvete (merSETA) amongst others. The quality of the research ideas has attracted reviewers from across the globe from organisations such as UNESCO, European Training Foundation (ETF), the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), North Carolina State University (NCSU) and the intergovernmental Commonwealth Secretariat.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.jet.org.za/resources/jet-bulletin-march-2020-covid-responseweb.pdf/view>

# Twelve interrelated themes

No	Theme	Lead	Peer reviewer(s)
1	A qualitative piece on the different experiences of families during this lockdown, particularly with regards to education	Nick Taylor (JET) <a href="mailto:ntaylor@jet.org.za">ntaylor@jet.org.za</a>	Whitty Green (DHET) Lori Foster (NCSU)
2	The response of NPOs in education to the COVID-19 pandemic to the concomitant uncertainty globally and the announced lockdown of 21 days in South Africa	Rooksana Rajab (JET) <a href="mailto:rooksana@jet.org.za">rooksana@jet.org.za</a>	Duncan Hindle (NECT) Sarah Rennie (IPASA) Nick Rockey (Triologue)
3	The role of culture in alleviating the spread of COVID-19	Zaahedah Vally (JET) <a href="mailto:zaahedah@jet.org.za">zaahedah@jet.org.za</a>	Benita Williams (BWA) Yumiko Yokezeki (IICBA)
4	Looking for ways to effectively govern the pandemic: How governments are positioning and activating public institutions such as school systems in multi-pronged efforts to contain COVID-19.	Andrew Paterson (JET) <a href="mailto:andrew@jet.org.za">andrew@jet.org.za</a>	Melanie Ehren (VU)
5	Unlocking the Lockdown mindset and its untapped possibilities	Milisa Janda (JET) <a href="mailto:milisa@jet.org.za">milisa@jet.org.za</a>	Sebolelo Nomvete (merSETA) Vumisa Mayisela (JET)
6	Fake news impacting school age children (or targeting school age children): Impacts on behaviour, risk, anxiety, and how to ameliorate	Tshepo Motsepe (ZF) <a href="mailto:tshepo@zenexfoundation.org.za">tshepo@zenexfoundation.org.za</a>	James Keevy (JET)
7	Putting the individual at the centre: the role of digital identity during the time of COVID-19	Barbara Dale-Jones (JET/The Field Institute) <a href="mailto:barbara.dalejones@thefieldinstitute.com">barbara.dalejones@thefieldinstitute.com</a>	Eduarda Castel-Branco (ETF)
8	Governance and Management: How higher education institutions respond to COVID-19	Naziema Jappie (CETAP) <a href="mailto:naziema.jappie@uct.ac.za">naziema.jappie@uct.ac.za</a>	Sarah Gravett (UJ)
9	Education innovation in times of necessity – reimagining education service provision in response to COVID-19 and identifying sustainable interventions to address inequality	Rubeena Parker (EELC) <a href="mailto:rubeena@eelawcentre.org.za">rubeena@eelawcentre.org.za</a>	Mary Metcalfe (PILO) Mark West (UNESCO HQ)
10	Post-Disaster Schooling - A study of how countries managed their education system during a disaster and the steps they took to re-establish normality	Deva Govender (NECT) <a href="mailto:devag@nect.org.za">devag@nect.org.za</a>	Yusuf Sayed (CITE/CPUT) Amina Osman (ComSec)
11	Innovations in teaching practice during and after the COVID-19 pandemic	Lee Rusznyak (Wits) <a href="mailto:lee.rusznyak@wits.ac.za">lee.rusznyak@wits.ac.za</a>	Being confirmed
12	Innovative funding models for education during the COVID-19 pandemic	Sue de Witt (Bertha) <a href="mailto:susandew@gsb.uct.ac.za">susandew@gsb.uct.ac.za</a>	Being confirmed
Coordination		Charlene Deacon <a href="mailto:charlene@jet.org.za">charlene@jet.org.za</a>	

# Insights-2-Action

Insight-2-Action		#1
Insight	<b>Parents can engage positively with their children, listen to them, direct and support their educational activities, encourage reading and creative activity, and support them to manage anxiety</b>	
Action	<b>Assist parents to support their children in educational activities during and after the lockdown period</b>	
Description	<p>Researchers in Theme 1 identified a family they knew, but did not live with, obtained written consent via WhatsApp) and administered a questionnaire, interviewing the person in the family who plays the biggest part in the education of the children, and a maximum of two children. While the research is still underway, it is becoming clear that most middle class parents are willing to assist with home schooling, but feel overwhelmed with the range of online resource available, while the less affluent generally do not have internet access and are limited to very meagre resources to continue with any form of home schooling during the lockdown, and potentially some weeks thereafter. Our preliminary research shows evidence of the limited support provided to learners with disabilities and government's difficulty with adequately guiding organisations in terms of how assistance may be provided. What we also hear from some of the teachers and principals in our networks is that, where the correct information is communicated well, learners are able to access the contents they need. However, they are not able to share their homework with their teachers. They are also constrained if they try to exchange documents as they work in WhatsApp groups among themselves. It seems that we need far more radical thinking if we want to move away from the unidirectional model of content transfer and allow the multi-directional flow of documents. Initiatives underway include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Delivery of educational content through TV, newspaper and radio channels. Contact Deva Govender, <a href="mailto:devag@nect.org.za">devag@nect.org.za</a></li> <li>2. Zero-rating of currently available content. Contact Carol-Ann Foulis, <a href="mailto:carol-ann@dgmt.co.za">carol-ann@dgmt.co.za</a>.</li> <li>3. Provide pedagogical support to parents by harnessing the capacity of one or two education faculties and offering webinars on an ongoing basis. contact to be announced.</li> <li>4. Explore telephonic support like the "Dial a Tutor" service put in place by the Mpumalanga DoE.</li> </ol>	
Funding opportunities	Multiple funding sources are being leveraged through the existing processes outlined above.	
Collaboration opportunities	Numerous, including with DG Murray Trust (DGMT), NECT, DBE, Mpumalanga DoE and provincial education departments	

Insight-2-Action		#2
Insight	<b>NPOs working in education are better able to support the government during the COVID-19 pandemic if self-organised through an accountability structure, such as NASCEE</b>	
Action	<b>Support NPOs through NASCEE</b>	
Description	<p>Non-profit organizations (NPOs) across the world are working tirelessly to counter the learning-gap that will result during this period of lockdown and save the current academic year. To understand the efforts made by the NPOs, researchers monitored regional responses of different stakeholders across the world. As an emerging voice for NPOs involved in education in South Africa, <a href="#">NASCEE</a> with 63 founding members and a database of over 3,000 organisations offered a large selection of non-profit entities the opportunity to share strategies put in place in preparation for the lockdown. NPOs generally face huge sustainability challenges on an ongoing basis and the current crisis compounds these challenges. NASCEE does this by improving members' capacity, effectiveness, collaboration and influence, in order to support and amplify the voice and positive image of NPOs within South Africa. A NASCEE <a href="#">national compact</a> and <a href="#">guidelines for unrestricted grants</a> have been put in place, while the focus is on communicating opportunities for members to contribute during the crisis. The Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) has also made funds available, through NASCEE, to support NPOs during this period. The emerging bootcamp research is finding that emergency funding and financial sustainability of NPOs is under threat. The preparedness of NPOs to deal with crisis conditions– technology, change methodology, connectivity and software, data – is weak, more so for smaller NGOs with very limited resources. Contact Vuyiswa Ncontsa, <a href="mailto:vuyiswa@bridge.org.za">vuyiswa@bridge.org.za</a>.</p>	
Funding opportunities	NASCEE requires approximately R100,000.00 per month to build systems and better coordinate the education NPO sector, more acutely so during the current crisis. Funding does not have to be limited to operations and could include specific capacity building or awareness raising campaigns. Non-profit entities require specific support in providing online learning and ensuring practitioners are geared for future learning methodologies.	
Collaboration opportunities	NASCEE is well established with an elected Board since 2019	

Insight-2-Action		#3
Insight	<b>There is a dire need for a more coordinated and sophisticated approach to managing and geo-mapping data in the education sector in South Africa, in the short term this should focus on COVID-19 related activities and funding allocations specifically for this purpose</b>	
Action	<b>Improve efficient data collection in education</b>	
Description	<p>The education sector, like many others, is overwhelmed with multiple (well meaning) data collection initiatives. There is a dire need for a more coordinated and sophisticated approach to managing data in the sector. The wide range of questionnaires and surveys that are specifically flooding the education sector at this time bear testimony to the weakness in the sector to provide a national view of interventions, and also the funders and development partners linked to each. NASCEE is currently working with RMB to establish this online landscaping and collaboration platform for the education community, namely Edvision. For now, the platform is needed as part of the education sector's response to COVID-19 - to act as both an information source and a platform that drives collaboration.. The RMB-initiated <a href="#">Edvision</a> platform (now due for release later in 2020) has been repurposed by RMB and NASCEE for earlier release in the week of 14 April 2020. While many other initiatives are welcomed and should be supported, it is evident that a more centralised platform has many benefits. The following people can be contacted in relation to this initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RMB, Lauren Pearce, <a href="mailto:lauren.pearce@rmb.co.za">lauren.pearce@rmb.co.za</a></li> <li>• Data Driven Districts managed by the New Leaders Foundation, Giles Gillet, <a href="mailto:Giles@newleaders.co.za">Giles@newleaders.co.za</a></li> <li>• The Learning Trust, Sibongile Khumalo, <a href="mailto:sibongile@thelearningtrust.org">sibongile@thelearningtrust.org</a></li> </ul>	
Funding opportunities	Edvision is funded by RMB, but support is welcomed, more so to accelerate the data collection and analysis process nationally. Between R500,000.00 and R2m can make a meaningful difference to this initiative.	
Collaboration opportunities	This is a technology project with huge scope for further development	

Insight-2-Action		#4
Insight	<b>Culture matters in the education sector's response to COVID-19</b>	
Action	<b>Raise awareness of cultural sensitivity and COVID-19</b>	
Description	<p>We can already tell that the cultures and systems in the various COVID-19 affected countries are very different. The responses of various governments towards the disease are likewise very different. In Japan, a lockdown was not initiated until 8 April 2020, while systems and structures in the United States appear to have resulted in that country's apparently ad hoc and chaotic response to the pandemic. Social media has been awash with images of millennials openly disregarding the lockdown and social distancing measures put in place. This behaviour has not been limited/restricted to millennials only, but the baby boomer generation is also showing indifference towards measures in place to curb the spread of the virus. Such behaviour could represent the cultural norms and practices of the different generations. Emerging case studies being conducted in the bootcamp suggest that there are important impediments to shutdown that must be taken into account including living conditions, cultural practices and traditions and possibilities for working from home. Regarding the first, in South Africa large informal settlements with high densities and dwellings offer limited protection from the elements (in particular, heat from the sun) as well as lack of access to clean water. There are also cultural practices and traditions that counter the concept of isolating households. In conditions of stress civil disobedience and crime have emerged in the south of Italy and serve as evidence that supply of food and basic necessities have become a significant pressure. Approaches that are conducive to engaging society in a coordinated response to COVID-19, including voluntary compliance of citizens to lock-down measures and adhering to the prescriptions of shutdown, are all culture dependent. More needs to be done to understand cultural dynamics in South Africa - the thematic group will need to grapple with culture in a theoretically informed manner and feed this into national processes with urgency.</p>	
Funding opportunities	This contribution fits well by feeding into other themes, as such any support will be appreciated to make sure this softer side of the process is not neglected.	
Collaboration opportunities	Research institutions and assessment specialists are welcomed. A contribution currently being developed, is the beta version of an online tool (COVID-19 SORT) to raise awareness, enhance understanding of the pandemic and support more nuanced implications for education. The tool is specially aimed at policy makers, funders, development agencies and educators generally. A draft tool has been developed and will be piloted in the week of 14 April 2020. Contact Roelien Herholdt, <a href="mailto:rherholdt@jet.org.za">rherholdt@jet.org.za</a> .	

Insight-2-Action		#5
Insight	<b>The ability of a country to test, trace and quarantine (TTQ) is critically important. South Africa has experience and resources that will advance the efficiency and effectiveness of TTQ. There are however institutional resources that if harnessed may contribute to higher levels of success such as schools, colleges, HEIs and ECD centres which are integrated into a large part of the society.</b>	
Action	<b>Support national test, trace and quarantine (TTQ) initiatives by the Department of Health, NICD and the CSIR</b>	
Description	So far, our research shows that countries differ in their approach to COVID-19 based on the stage of the pandemic in the country, resources available, cultural and socio-economic, coordination, political and perceived risk factors. These factors impact on countries capacity to test, trace and quarantine (TTQ). Ability to mobilise an early response is a critical point of departure. The ability of a country to TTQ at high levels of quality, speed, accuracy is critically important. However, this capacity and ability varies very sharply between countries. In a few cases such as South Korea and some smaller South-East Asian states the TTQ has put them in the position of not having to take drastic shutdown decisions. A critical issue therefore is to conceptualise how limited resources in TTQ can best be mobilised to generate best outcomes from this resource. This is an important question for South Africa which has experience and resources (such as related to TB testing) but does not have the capacity of a South Korea for example. Access and utilisation of data from public and private sector and individuals as well as a highly developed technological base in the communications sector and mobile infrastructure, linked to a culturally appropriate approach, are some of the reasons why South Korea did well. (Issues of ownership and privacy are covered in Insight 3 and 7). The critical issue that informs this proposal is to examine how institutions like South African schools can support the TTQ campaign. Schools have access to parents through mobile phones and applications like WhatsApp. There are more than 12 million children in school all of whom will have parent(s) or guardians contactable through schools. This resource may be very useful for design of testing strategy especially under time pressure. Other issues of importance include the question of age-related and poverty related levels of vulnerability of school age children. Innovations related to TTQ must be sustainable and responsive to the South African socio-economic context and should not be limited to technological innovations. The ability of the <a href="#">South African</a> education sector to support the national tracing centre overseen by the <a href="#">CSIR</a> and the <a href="#">NICD</a> should be explored in a more proactive manner. Contact Andrew Paterson, <a href="mailto:andrew@jet.org.za">andrew@jet.org.za</a> .	
Funding opportunities	This action will need to be jointly developed and fast-tracked.	
Collaboration opportunities	With the HSRC, CSIR and NICD, but also supporting organisations.	

Insight-2-Action		#6
Insight	<b>Effective communication will help eliminate fake news and the unnecessary distribution of the information that might be causing anxiety, particularly to learners</b>	
Action	<b>Counter the impact of fake news on youth</b>	
Description	Emerging insight so far focuses on the forms of fake news that directly impact or are targeted at secondary/high school children through social media and reliable news sites, the psyche that accompanies the spread of the message and the legal framework. How high school children encounter and respond to fake news sites/pages has been assessed to check whether children do an evaluation or learn how to assess the validity of the news site or social media pages they view. Given that those who are most vulnerable to the uncontrollable spread of misinformation during this pandemic are young high school children with access to social media, it is important to equip this particular cohort of the population with the necessary tools and critical thinking skills to protect themselves against fake news. This also suggests the need for schools to reinvent their curriculums to incorporate the teaching of the critical literacies. There is a whole host of information that is circulating on social media platforms such as Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram to mention a few. These social media platforms are the drivers that create a sense of panic and anxiety amongst the learners as the messages are passed from one person to the other. The use of the share and the forward button has been opportunely used by the long-chain messages which at the end pose a mini-threat or bad luck message if one does not pass on or share the message. Although a legal framework does exist its impact and effectiveness is yet to be determined as those who are charged might not necessarily be the people who originated or crafted the message that might later be proven to be false. A coordinated effort with organisations such as Africa Check and Media Monitoring Africa should be supported with the aim of monitoring fake news sites and to put counteractive measures in place to equip high school children with skills aimed at identifying fake news material from authentic news sites. Contact Tshepo Motsepe, <a href="mailto:tshepo@zenexfoundation.org.za">tshepo@zenexfoundation.org.za</a> .	

Insight-2-Action		#6
Funding opportunities	This action will need to be jointly developed and fast-tracked.	
Collaboration opportunities	With Africa Check and other similar organisations, also research faculties and postgraduate students	

Insight-2-Action		#7
Insight	<b>There is a risk that the data privacy of learners, teachers, lecturers and parents could be abused by the government in the name of managing the pandemic</b>	
Action	<b>Coordinated effort from the education sector to report and advise on data privacy</b>	
Description	<p>As an increasingly large amount of data is accessed and digitised in our digital age, the definition of what constitutes data is expanding (e.g. it now includes social media data). Current and prevailing models of data storage have centralised data controllers collecting vast amounts of personal and user data. There is however a growing view that users should have agency with respect to their data as well as control access to it. The notion of self-sovereign identity (SSI) refers to the idea that individuals should retain control over their personal data and establish (and potentially control) who has the right to access specific pieces of information about them. Aligned to this, new models of data storage are emerging, where data is stored in decentralised systems without a central point that can control access and use. What may seem like a technicality — what kind of technology we use to store our data — has far-reaching implications for the question of who owns our data. An obvious alternative is to save data not in central data stores, but in decentralised data pods or in a decentralised system like the blockchain. Storing data in billions of decentralised blocks or pods will avoid a single entity owning our personal data. But this is not without controversy or complexity. The work underway by merSETA, involving the DHET and many PSET agencies, could be leveraged to provide regular reporting on data privacy during the coming weeks and months. A coordinated response to the pandemic (for which the data is meant in the first place) could involve the one-time use of data or the use of anonymized data. It would be helpful to specify what data is required; assuming for example that it is medical data on who has, or has had, COVID-19 and who is immune with additional contact tracing based on (live) location data.</p> <p>Contact Barbara Dale-Jones, <a href="mailto:barbara.dalejones@thefieldinstitute.com">barbara.dalejones@thefieldinstitute.com</a>, or More Manda, <a href="mailto:MManda@merseta.org.za">MManda@merseta.org.za</a>.</p>	
Funding opportunities	The initiative is already funded but will benefit greatly from partnerships. More explicit communication on data privacy should be encouraged; this should involve the media and can be quite costly.	
Collaboration opportunities	merSETA is the lead agency and several government institutions are being consulted.	

Insight-2-Action		#8
Insight	<b>The nature of exit level assessments for the 2020 academic year need to be rethought</b>	
Action	<b>Develop or support the development of guidance protocols for school, college and university exams in 2020</b>	
Description	<p>With traditional lectures being cancelled and students not being able to travel or being subject to more rigid health requirements, academic institutions should be implementing systems to accommodate everyone who will be affected. The discussions and thoughts are based largely on the risks and impact of COVID-19 on higher education and can be done whilst we “ride the wave of disruption”. In times of crisis, we must have the big picture in mind and maintain a sufficient coordination that will enable institutions, including universities, to respond quickly and achieve shared goals. As much as we prepare for the worst, we must try our best to turn a crisis into an opportunity too and this will mean new ways of thinking for a new future. The global and national lockdown of institutions is going to cause major (and likely unequal) interruption in students’ learning. Given the evidence of the importance of assessments for learning, should universities consider postponing rather than doing away with examinations completely? Is the extension of the academic year going to help or hurt? Key at this point is to work with Universities South Africa (USAf) and the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to develop policies and strategies to support entry of the graduates to the labour market to avoid longer unemployment periods, and to uphold the credibility and legitimacy of (future) qualifications. Contact Naziema Jappie, <a href="mailto:naziema.jappie@uct.ac.za">naziema.jappie@uct.ac.za</a></p>	
Funding opportunities	This action will need to be jointly developed and fast-tracked.	
Collaboration opportunities	Engagement with USAf and the CHE will be prioritised. Umalusi and the DBE and DHET will also be supported in the case of schools and colleges.	

Insight-2-Action		#9
Insight	<b>Teaching and learning is more than providing content: a plethora of free online resources are available, but the ability of learners (also teachers, and parents) to engage with these resources need to be supported, also using non-technological approaches</b>	
Action	<b>Curate online resources in a coordinated manner and monitor usage</b>	
Description	<p>There is an abundance of online learning options and resources already available; however, many of these resources are dependent on an internet connection and a device that can be used to access the content. Moreover, learners don't always have the support or skills to manage their own learning. What is clear from our preliminary research is that learners' access to resources is simply one important aspect of effective education delivery. Equally important is the ability to engage with these resources and to receive adequate support. A large percentage of learners do not have access to basic technologies and amenities, which will ultimately affect what form/mode of delivery any innovative intervention will take to be practical and effective. Ensuring equitable access to education is not about using the latest technologies. It is about utilising the best technologies available and providing universally accessible mechanisms of support, best suited to the environment in which the intervention will be implemented. Many teachers do not have the skills to teach in an online environment, for instance, how to manage a classroom in an online environment, particularly when learners are more online savvy than teachers (examples of problems that could arise are secondary education learners video bombing a teacher's presentation or bullying peers in chat rooms while the teacher is unaware). The process of curation and filtering of the most appropriate online content for those that have access through a process being led by the DBE and involves NASCEE and others should be supported. For more information contact Henre Benson, <a href="mailto:benson@casmee.org.za">benson@casmee.org.za</a>. While this curation is critical, the attention should shift beyond this to support learners (also teachers and parents) to engage with these resources, also using non-technological approaches where more appropriate.</p>	
Funding opportunities	Multiple funding sources are being leveraged through the existing processes outlined above for the curation of content, and even zero-rating of educational platforms. What is missing is an informed and deliberate effort to empower the users of the resources. More thought will have to go into mainstreaming such an effort, perhaps starting with a very focused group that may need to do this more urgently, such as the Grade 12 class of 2020.	
Collaboration opportunities	Yes, in terms of curation, through the DBE, NECT and NASCEE and also the Kwa-Zulu Natal DOE	

Insight-2-Action		#10
Insight	<b>Nutrition matters and very urgent measures are needed to feed underprivileged children</b>	
Action	<b>Support the delivery of nutrition during and after the lockdown period</b>	
Description	<p>Both existing and new initiatives seem to be working hard to help alleviate the issue of food insecurity among learners during this time. A Food and Nutrition Security Coordination Committee (FNSSC) has been set up and is coordinating efforts between the Department of Social Development (DSD), the Department of Health and the Department (DoH) and the DBE in an effort to ensure learners are provided with meals during the shutdown. In countries such as South Africa that do not have existing nutritional support during school closures, interventions such as the grab-and-go and delivery using school buses (where available) are viable options. In cases where learners are located in rural parts of South Africa or where learners have to travel far distances to collection points, business delivery must be explored as an alternative. The DBE has, up to now, resisted using the dedicated school-feeding funding to cover the needs of feeding children during lockdown, arguing that this would impact their ability to respond to needs later in the year. It is now becoming increasingly likely that the number of effective school days in 2020 will be reduced - hence a likelihood that budget will be underspent if strictly reserved for school days. There are considerable gaps in terms of planning for education and related psychosocial and nutritional support mechanisms, which have been addressed through the creation of online resource repositories (stop-gap measures). However, these measures need to be strengthened and structures maintained on an ongoing basis. Pioneer Foods, DBE and the DSD are also to be supported in coordinating some of these efforts. Contact Mondli Mbhele, <a href="mailto:MondliM@dsd.gov.za">MondliM@dsd.gov.za</a>.</p>	
Funding opportunities	Multiple funding sources are being leveraged through the existing processes outlined above, but there are key gaps that require very specific effort and urgent funding.	
Collaboration opportunities	With DSD and Pioneer Foods, there are also others - key is to involve the DBE and the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) programme	

Insight-2-Action		#11
Insight	<b>Government can use alternative funding models to leverage and accelerate private donor and investment capital to drive large educational projects during this time</b>	
Action	<b>Investigate and implement alternative funding models</b>	
Description	<p>Prior to COVID19 there was adequate access but poor performance across the education sector. This is even though education's proportion of public expenditure has not only been protected but has actually increased over the last four years. There are existing innovative financing mechanisms in place or in the design phase already across the education spectrum both locally and internationally; most of these are being tested in order to improve quality of educational outcomes with some in place to address access/infrastructure needs. Despite limited resources the government can use its money to leverage private donor and investment capital to drive large projects during this time. There are models and relationships in place that can be reoriented to address short- and medium-term needs. There are lessons we can learn from foundations and investors who are relatively advanced in their thinking about collaborative and blended finance models. These foundations/investors are currently using different strategies to advance education outcomes. Many of the solutions put forward in the short and medium term will likely be technology related. Although it is key to note that high tech solutions can be combined with low tech solutions already existing in frontline organisations in communities. Innovative funding models can be used to ensure performance outcomes and not just access from high tech solutions. These models may also be able to tap into a different pool of funders than where public education systems are usually funded from. This is a new theme in the bootcamp and will be accelerated in the coming week. Contact Sue de Witt, <a href="mailto:susandew@gsb.uct.ac.za">susandew@gsb.uct.ac.za</a>.</p>	
Funding opportunities	We welcome the involvement of interested partners to fast-track this contribution.	
Collaboration opportunities	Bertha Centre and National Treasury play key roles, but DBE and DHET could also be involved	

Insight-2-Action		#12
Insight	<b>There are few examples of metrics for assessing the effectiveness of different social distancing measures adopted in a shutdown. We need to know more about relative effectiveness of on societal cooperation with and in various measures, such as closing schools, in slowing the infection rate</b>	
Action	<b>Develop metrics for assessing the relative effectiveness of different shutdown measures such as g education in improving the quality or integrity of social distancing</b>	
Description	<p>In every shutdown it is assumed that social distancing will slow down the infection rate. Countries have differed in how they have implemented various measures towards shutdown. As far as we are aware analysis of the relative effectiveness of shutdowns between countries is based largely on circumstantial observations rather than empirical methods. Further, there seems to be limited research in exploring how social distancing measures contribute differently toward social distancing in the society - such as closures of education which can take place as independent strategies or are included within a full shutdown. It is not easy to establish how effective shutdown conditions are. A critical factor is the willingness of the population to comply with the measures or whether there is active resistance to measures. Responses may be related to social customs, mores and practices or to political opposition or pushback from civil society. These aspects need to be explored using qualitative methodologies. We have observed from our case studies that there needs to be adequate preparation and communication with the population regarding the measures for shutdown so that there can be improved buy-in. Further, shutdown involves trade-offs. School closures present an opportunity for envisioning new models of education and for long-term education innovation; however, emerging innovations often run the risk of exacerbating existing disparities and creating unequal learning opportunities. It is clear that a shutdown cannot be viewed as an end in itself since it must effectively buy time for government to improve all options available to suppress the progress of the epidemic. Some attention will be given to comparing shutting down schools in other countries as reference points. What are the metrics for assessing a shutdown? These are questions emerging since shutdowns with low success may force unfortunate countries into more than one shutdown. It is proposed that the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) be involved in the development of metrics and the measurement thereof. Contact Andrew Paterson, <a href="mailto:andrew@jet.org.za">andrew@jet.org.za</a>.</p>	
Funding opportunities	This action will need to be jointly developed and fast-tracked.	
Collaboration opportunities	Engagement with the HSRC will be prioritised.	

Insight	<b>Teaching practice during and after the COVID-19 pandemic will necessarily be different</b>
Action	<b>Innovations for Teaching Practicum in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond</b>
Description	Across the Higher Education sector, arrangements for Teaching Practice (TP) (also called Work-Integrated Learning, WIL) have been plunged into uncertainty following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. After the closure of schools during the national lockdown period, it is unlikely that HEIs will secure sufficient school-based placements for all pre-service teachers during the 2020 academic year. TP is a core component of initial teacher education (ITE) programmes and HEIs must ensure that pre-service teachers can still meet their course obligations. There is an urgent need to develop a theoretically strong, practice-based alternative to school-based TP sessions that may be used across the sector, where required. The rollout of an alternative mode of TP during 2020I also presents a unique opportunity to research how pre-service teachers deepen their insights into teaching practices during their teacher preparation. This action plan therefore has two components. First, to conceptualise an innovative and worthwhile alternative to a school-based Teaching Practice for the 2020 academic year, and possibly beyond. Second, to develop a proposal for a large-scale national research project that investigates how pre-service teachers analyse classroom teaching in the South African context. This would generate invaluable findings for the development of a national framework for Teaching Practice. Contact Lee Rusznyak, <a href="mailto:lee.rusznyak@wits.ac.za">lee.rusznyak@wits.ac.za</a> .
Funding opportunities	This action will need to be jointly developed and fast-tracked.
Collaboration opportunities	Engagement with SACE will be prioritised.

## Next steps <sup>4</sup>

The #OPENUPTHINKINGLOCKDOWN bootcamp will run until 30 April 2020, or for as long as the lockdown remains in force in South Africa. The thematic teams are available for direct engagements (the lead researchers' emails are available on the previous pages). All 12 thematic groups will be focusing on deepening their research building on the insights listed here, but also beyond the initial period. In some cases the research will be concluded by 30 April; in other cases, a foundation will be laid for more longer term work that is needed to influence and support the decisions of policy makers and funders at a time when evidence-based and agile decision-making is paramount.

We are thankful to the many South African researchers, and a growing number of our international colleagues, who are making this initiative possible. Your dedication and rigour are key ingredients in what makes up a very strong collective effort during a time that it is most needed.

James Keevy, [james@jet.org.za](mailto:james@jet.org.za), 082 844 4998

Charlene Deacon, [charlene@jet.org.za](mailto:charlene@jet.org.za), 082 389 9851

<sup>4</sup> Financial support, estimated at R80,000.00 to R100,000.00 per theme will be welcomed and appreciation is expressed to the institutions for the four themes that are already being supported.

# Summary matrix

	Emerging insights	Proposed actions	Funding opportunities	Collaboration opportunities	Key contact(s)
1.	Parents can engage positively with their children, listen to them, direct and support their educational activities, encourage reading and creative activity, and support them to manage anxiety.	Assist parents to support their children in educational activities during and after the lockdown period.	Multiple funding sources are being leveraged through the existing processes outlined above.	DG Murray Trust (DGMT), NECT, DBE, Mpumalanga DoE and provincial education departments	Deva Govender <a href="mailto:devag@nect.org.za">devag@nect.org.za</a> Carol-Ann Foulis <a href="mailto:carol-ann@dgmt.co.za">carol-ann@dgmt.co.za</a>
2.	NPOs working in education are better able to support the government during the COVID-19 pandemic if self-organised through an accountability structure, such as NASCEE.	Support NPOs through NASCEE.	NASCEE requires approximately R100,000.00 per month to build systems and better coordinate the education NPO sector.	NASCEE is well established with an elected Board since 2019.	Vuyiswa Ncontsa <a href="mailto:vuyiswa@bridge.org.za">vuyiswa@bridge.org.za</a>
3.	There is a dire need for a more coordinated and sophisticated approach to managing and geo-mapping data in the education sector in South Africa, in the short term this should focus on COVID-19 related activities and funding allocations specifically for this purpose.	Improve efficient data collection in education.	Edvision is funded by RMB, but support is welcomed, more so to accelerate the data collection and analysis process nationally. Between R500,000.00 and R2m can make a meaningful difference to this initiative.	This is a technology project with huge scope for further development.	Sibongile Khumalo <a href="mailto:sibongile@thelearningtrust.org">sibongile@thelearningtrust.org</a> Lauren Pearce <a href="mailto:lauren.pearce@rmb.co.za">lauren.pearce@rmb.co.za</a> Giles Gillet <a href="mailto:Giles@newleaders.co.za">Giles@newleaders.co.za</a>
4.	Culture matters in the education sector's response to COVID-19.	Raise awareness of cultural sensitivity and COVID-19.	This contribution fits well by feeding into other themes, as such any support will be appreciated to make sure this softer side of the process is not neglected.	Research institutions and assessment specialists are welcomed.	Zaahedah Vally <a href="mailto:zaahedah@jet.org.za">zaahedah@jet.org.za</a>
5.	The ability of a country to test, trace and quarantine (TTQ) is critically important. South Africa has experience and resources that will advance the efficiency and effectiveness of TTQ. There are however institutional resources that if harnessed may contribute to higher levels of success such as schools, colleges, HEIs and ECD centres which are integrated into a large part of the society.	Support national test, trace and quarantine (TTQ) initiatives by the Department of Health, NICD and the CSIR.	This action will need to be jointly developed and fast-tracked.	With the HSRC, CSIR and NICD, but also supporting organisations.	Andrew Paterson <a href="mailto:andrew@jet.org.za">andrew@jet.org.za</a>
6.	Effective communication will help eliminate fake news and the unnecessary distribution of the information that might be causing anxiety, particularly to learners.	Counter the impact of fake news on youth.	This action will need to be jointly developed and fast-tracked.	With Africa Check and other similar organisations, also research faculties and postgraduate students	Tshepo Motsepe <a href="mailto:tshepo@zenexfoundation.org.za">tshepo@zenexfoundation.org.za</a>

	Emerging insights	Proposed actions	Funding opportunities	Collaboration opportunities	Key contact(s)
7.	There is a risk that the data privacy of learners, teachers, lecturers and parents could be abused by the government in the name of managing the pandemic.	Coordinated effort from the education sector to report and advise on data privacy.	The initiative is already funded but will benefit greatly from partnerships. More explicit communication on data privacy should be encouraged; this should involve the media and can be quite costly.	merSETA is the lead agency and several government institutions are being consulted.	Barbara Dale-Jones <a href="mailto:barbara.dalejones@thefieldinstitute.com">barbara.dalejones@thefieldinstitute.com</a>  More Manda <a href="mailto:MManda@merseta.org.za">MManda@merseta.org.za</a>
8.	The nature of exit level assessments for the 2020 academic year need to be rethought.	Develop or support the development of guidance protocols for school, college and university exams in 2020.	This action will need to be jointly developed and fast-tracked.	Engagement with USAf and the CHE will be prioritised. Umalusi and the DBE and DHET will also be supported in the case of schools and colleges.	Naziema Jappie <a href="mailto:naziema.jappie@uct.ac.za">naziema.jappie@uct.ac.za</a>
9.	Teaching and learning is more than providing content: a plethora of free online resources are available, but the ability of learners (also teachers, and parents) to engage with these resources need to be supported, also using non-technological approaches.	Curate online resources in a coordinated manner and monitor usage.	Multiple funding sources are being leveraged through the existing processes.	Yes, in terms of curation, through the DBE, NECT and NASCEE and also the Kwa-Zulu Natal DOE	Henre Benson <a href="mailto:benson@casme.org.za">benson@casme.org.za</a>
10.	Nutrition matters and very urgent measures are needed to feed underprivileged children.	Support the delivery of nutrition during and after the lockdown period.	Multiple funding sources are being leveraged through the existing processes outlined above, but there are key gaps that require very specific effort and urgent funding.	With DSD and Pioneer Foods, and the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) programme	Mondli Mbhele <a href="mailto:MondliM@dsd.gov.za">MondliM@dsd.gov.za</a>
11.	Government can use alternative funding models to leverage and accelerate private donor and investment capital to drive large educational projects during this time.	Investigate and implement alternative funding models.	We welcome the involvement of interested partners to fast-track this contribution.	Bertha Centre and National Treasury play key roles, but DBE and DHET could also be involved	Sue de Witt <a href="mailto:susandew@gsb.uct.ac.za">susandew@gsb.uct.ac.za</a>
12.	There are few examples of metrics for assessing the effectiveness of different social distancing measures adopted in a shutdown. We need to know more about relative effectiveness of on societal cooperation with and in various measures, such as closing schools, in slowing the infection rate.	<b>Develop metrics for assessing the relative effectiveness of different shutdown measures such as g education in improving the quality or integrity of social distancing</b>	This action will need to be jointly developed and fast-tracked.	Engagement with the HSRC will be prioritised.	Andrew Paterson <a href="mailto:andrew@jet.org.za">andrew@jet.org.za</a>
13.	Teaching practice during and after the COVID-19 pandemic will necessarily be different.	<b>Innovations for Teaching Practicum in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond</b>	This action will need to be jointly developed and fast-tracked.	Engagement with SACE will be prioritised.	Lee Rusznyak <a href="mailto:lee.rusznyak@wits.ac.za">lee.rusznyak@wits.ac.za</a>

# Directory of organisations

Abbreviation	Name
Bertha Centre	Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship
Bridge	Bridge
CASME	Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education
CETAP	Centre for Educational Testing for Access and Placement, University of Cape Town
CHE	Council on Higher Education
ComSec	Commonwealth Secretariat
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DGMT	DG Murray Trust
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoH	Department of Health
DSD	Department of Social Development
EELC	Equal Education Law Centre
ETDP SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
ETF	the European Training Foundation
Field Institute	Field Institute
FNSCC	Food and Nutrition Security Coordination Committee
GSB, UCT	Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
IICBA	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
IPASA	Independent Philanthropy Association of South Africa
JET	JET Education Services
KZN DoE	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
merSETA	Manufacturing and Engineering and Related Services Sector Education Training Authority
NASCEE	National Association for Social Change Entities in Education
NECT	National Education Collaboration Trust
NICD	National Institute for Communicable Diseases
NLF	New Leaders Foundation
NSCSU	North Carolina State University
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
PILO	Programme to Improve Learning Outcomes
RMB	Rand Merchant Bank
SACE	South African Council for Educators
The Field Institute	The Field Institute
Triologue	Triologue
UCT	University of Cape Town
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAf	Universities South Africa
VU	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
WHO	World Health Organisation
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
ZF	Zenex Foundation