RESEARCHERS CHALLENGE

UNESCO SADC JET EDUCATION SERVICES TE|SF Transforming Education for Sustainable Future Education 2030

EDUCATION RESEARCHERS RESPOND TO LOCKDOWN

DATE
3o June 2020

NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS
17 from
9 SADC countries

APPROACH
Mixed Methods Design
(convergent parallel,
one phase)

SAMPLE
295 participants (71
interview and 224 online
survey participants)

PLATFORMS USED
Google forms for on-line
survey, telephonic
interviews, Zoom meetings
for researchers, Gmail,
WhatsApp groups for
researchers.

FINDINGS

THEME 2:
TEACHERS' READINESS FOR REMOTE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY IN SELECTED SADC COUNTRIES

Preparation and training for emergency remote teaching (ERT)
- Limited training was received, especially by teachers, HEI students and learners
- Participants relied on their own experiences mostly
- Training focused on technology and equipment readiness and excluded how to provide psycho-social support to students, learners and teachers
- Majority of students and learners from poor, rural township areas were consistently excluded from remote teaching due to poverty/rural issues

ERT Practices/activities
- Limited online teaching through use of WhatsApp, Moodle, MS Teams, Zoom, Skype, Panopto
- Digital materials uploaded on Ministry or other local Websites, radio and television lessons broadcasts on national platforms
- Hardcopy materials available in national newspapers or through schools
- Collaboration with global and local partners in digitisation of learning content, improving IT equipment and infrastructure, creating digital centres and platforms, ERT training.

Successes
- Some teaching and learning continued
- Staff and students explored and engaged in new ways of teaching and learning
- Many acquired IT equipment; there was improvement in some IT infrastructure; more online learning materials became available
- Partnerships were forged to improve training, digitise content, make available IT centres and infrastructure to address glaring inequalities
- Parents became more involved in their children's learning and education.

Opportunities
- Time is right to make schools and education systems more resilient
- Improve educational quality and opportunity through appropriate technology and address educational inequalities
- Explore new ways of learning and teaching
- Focus on blended and digital learning approaches (including all readiness and support) in teacher education and training
- Closer collaboration among all stakeholders and partners
- Make ERT planning and implementation part of strategic planning in all Ministries of Education and other educational institutions.

Challenges
- Most of the challenges existed before COVID 19 pandemic, now under the spotlight
- Rural/township students, learners and teachers had the least access to IT tools, equipment, infrastructure, internet connectivity, electricity and training to conduct and support remote learning
- Participants experienced a lack of psycho-social, environmental and content readiness support
- On-line assessment and evaluation practices were questioned (legitimacy, validity, reliability of learning assessments)
- Students and learners felt fear, anxiety, feeling "left behind", frustrated, trapped and disadvantaged
- Both teachers and learners felt little motivation and self-discipline to continue remote teaching and learning due to challenges experienced
- Unequal access to educational opportunity (including effective teaching) due to limited electricity supply, poverty and geographical area (rural and township) affected the participants
- Exclusion was strongly felt.

CONCLUSIONS
- A valuable lesson has been learnt by SADC governments on inequality in educational provision
- Technological advances provide the means to address inequalities in education
- Pandemic made us realise how globally connected we all are
- The way our governments manage the future of all their citizens will determine if the benefits of the global world will remain out of the reach of our young people in the SADC region and the African continent
- If this happens, it will deepen the social and economic tragedies in our rural areas and townships
- Moral purpose should drive our efforts to provide all our young people with good quality education.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- National COVID-19 Taskforces should remain in place to ensure attainment of quality education for all as a common good
- Develop a regional framework/strategy for provision of education during emergencies with a focus on poor, vulnerable, excluded/marginalised children, young people and their teachers
- Devise means to develop parents' capacity to support their children
- Focus all training on helping teachers/learners to build psycho-social competencies that help them to cope during times of crisis and motivate them to continue with the academic project
- Adopt and support decentralised models of education delivery that will ensure equal access to quality education for all.

Project Lead: Charmaine Villet (University of Namibia); **Co-Lead:** Gift Masaiti (Zambia); Peer reviewers: Dierdre Williams and Justin Lupele; **Researchers:** Lesedi Matlala (RSA), Arthur Mungalu (Zambia), Chemwi Mutiwanyuka (Zimbabwe), Christa Alexander (Namibia), Duncan Nkolokosa (Malawi), Elizer Kalilombe (Malawi), Leatitia Gabriel (Tanzania), Lemmy Kangwa (Zambia), Nitishah Naugah (Mauritius, Nwabisa Magengelele (RSA), Sakaria Mwashindandje Iipinge (Namibia), Tefo Senabye (Botswana), Gregorio Jorge (Mozambique) and Sergio Afonso Mulema (Mozambique)