

RESEARCHERS CHALLENGE



EDUCATION RESEARCHERS RESPOND TO LOCKDOWN



DATE

30 July 2020



NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS

15 from 8 SADC countries



APPROACH

Critical realist systems enquiry using mainly qualitative data



SAMPLES:

136 participants (81 interview and 55 online survey participants)



PLATFORMS USED

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

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PURPOSE

To identify what can be learned from the intersection of water, food, livelihoods and education concerns arising in the COVID-19 pandemic that can inform the transformation of education for sustainable futures (TESF) in southern Africa.

SOME FINDINGS

- COVID-19 is changing the social and economic landscape of local communities around the world, including communities in the southern Africa region.
- The COVID 19 pandemic is not just a health problem. The pandemic is exposing issues of inadequate water supply, shortage of food, unstable livelihoods and poor education, amongst others.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the interrelated nature and intersectional dynamics of the impact of these issues, with many impacts on education and learning opportunities, both formal and informal.
- Most starkly, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased hunger and loss of livelihoods which has had impacts on education, and food security of children and communities.
- COVID-19 responses need to be contextually grounded and fit-for-purpose in responding to the needs of the most vulnerable communities, including the education sector.

CHALLENGES

- Most of the challenges related to water, food, livelihoods and education existed before COVID 19 pandemic and were rapidly exacerbated, and starkly revealed.
- Women and girl children were most vulnerable and suffered some of the front-end impacts worst.
- Food and water issues affected governmental responses in the education sector, especially child nutrition programmes, and provision of safe and clean water in schools.
- Livelihood losses in families affected children's educational opportunities, including their abilities to access online learning.

SUCCESSES

- The seriousness of the crisis led to agency-based responses by communities, parents, learners, and state and civil society organisations
- New partnerships and ways of organising around food, water, education and livelihoods emerged.
- The agency centred approaches have potential to be enhanced and expanded and are emerging as possibilities for re-generative approaches to building forward better, and just recovery.

OPPORTUNITIES

- A diversity and range of intersecting opportunities for 'building forward better' exist all of which have implications for Transforming Education for Sustainable Futures:
- Supporting the organising capability of young people as it is being generated on their own terms,
 - Recognising the power and potential of combining indigenous knowledge and experience of farmers and communities in responding to food system challenges
 - Sustainable infrastructure provisioning (e.g. water systems) for communities and schools,
 - Creating more effective support platforms for women and girl children,
 - Advancing access to e-learning technologies and tools for all,
 - Strengthening inter-governmental partnerships and partnerships between government and civil society, and
 - Valuing community activism in the wider system of transformative change towards more sustainable futures.

THEME 1:

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND COVID-19 IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

INTERSECTING PERSPECTIVES ON WHY WATER, FOOD AND LIVELIHOODS MATTER IN TRANSFORMING EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES



RECOMMENDATIONS

Under an overarching recommendation that proposes a direction for Education for Sustainable Development to be based on just recovery, building forward better together, and embracing transformative and re-generative approaches, we recommended **six Transformative Praxis Pathways** for Transforming Education for Sustainable Futures:

- **TESF Transformative Praxis Pathway 1:** Contribute to re-thinking and re-imagining economic models that are more inclusive and sustainable
- **TESF Transformative Praxis Pathway 2:** Contribute to the emergence of more sustainable food systems for all
- **TESF Transformative Praxis Pathway 3:** Strengthen inter-agency and multi-sectoral partnerships for sustainable development action and service delivery (especially water)
- **TESF Transformative Praxis Pathway 4:** Strengthen quality education in the public education sector and facilitate access to ICTs and stronger parental participation
- **TESF Transformative Praxis Pathway 5:** Strengthen interventions that support the inclusion and safety of women and girl children, and youth agency for change
- **TESF Transformative Praxis Pathway 6:** Strengthen multi-levelled and multi-disciplinary policy interventions to strengthen sustainable development of society at all levels

CONCLUSIONS



The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted an urgent need for better inter-sectoral and joined up multi-level policy to address intersectional issues in education.

There is an urgent need to adopt a inter-sectoral approach to education and sustainable development at policy and practice levels. This should inform interpretations of SDG 4 and its framing of quality education.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in southern Africa should not be conceptualised as a technical or pedagogical process; it should be fully embraced as a **systemic and emancipatory transformation process**. ESD should be constituted as a radical process of **Transforming Education for Sustainable Futures for all**.