

RESEARCHERS BOOTCAMP

EDUCATION RESEARCHERS RESPOND TO LOCKDOWN



DATE

30 March – 30 April



NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS

11



APPROACH

Desktop research; online survey; key informant interviews and focus group discussions



AUDIENCE

Government and NPOs in Education



PLATFORMS USED

Whatsapp, various Google platforms

THEME 2: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE RESPONSE OF NPOS IN EDUCATION TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE CONCOMITANT UNCERTAINTY GLOBALLY AND THE ANNOUNCED LOCKDOWN

PURPOSE: To investigate how education non-profit organisations (NPOs), particularly but not only in South Africa, are responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

FINDINGS

Working from home is the 'new normal' during the lockdown, but comes with its own challenges such as the high cost of data and a lack of connectivity, devices, electricity or even the capacity or training to work remotely.

There is widespread concern amongst NPOs about how government's proposed education recovery plans will be implemented.

A quarter of NPOs have been forced into complete shutdown, although in some cases this may apply only to the lockdown period.

Most SA NPOs have access to at least 3-6 months' worth of endowments, grants and other financial support.

Despite all the challenges of COVID-19 and lockdown, many education NPOs have devised strategies to continue delivering their services and believe that the current situation is an opportunity to reframe and redirect their efforts.

NPOs least affected are those already delivering their services through non-contact interaction via the internet.

Amidst lockdown, NPO leaders have focused on crisis management, aligning their strategies with government directives, ensuring staff safety and engaging with stakeholders and the public.

Education NPOs need organisational agility, partnerships and new strategies in order to survive COVID-19.

Closer collaboration between NPOs and government is essential in order to systemically address education gaps; and closer collaboration between NPOs can improve their access to resources, financial support and information.

CEOs and directors must prepare contingency plans with regard to how they communicate with their governance structures as well as how they support and guide their staff at short notice.

Strategies for inclusiveness to address inequalities in the distribution of technological hardware, training and connectivity must be put in place; above all, data costs for educational purposes must be radically reduced.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Funders, including government, need to expand grants and funding windows to cover expenses incurred by NPOs for COVID-19 preventative measures, loss of income and increased costs.

NPOs need to assess their core business and operations and investigate how they can automate some of their services in order to better navigate the 'new normal'.

Further research on NPOs that indicated that they had shut down their operations will shed light on the broader consequences of lockdowns.



Project Lead: Rooksana Rajab; **Co-Lead:** Louise Albertyn; **Peer Reviewers:** Duncan Hindle, Sarah Rennie and Nick Rockey; **Researchers:** Abigail Ornellas, Nikisha Singh, Jonathan Banza, Lebogang Pheladi Magolego, Meisie Rasakanya, Mandisa Gila, Tiro Nkadameng, Elise White and Simphiwe Ntuli

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