

# GOLA!

GLOBAL ONLINE LEARNING ALLIANCE



ONLINE VIDEO MEETING REPORT – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020

## COHERENT AND RESILIENT EDUCATION SYSTEMS POST-COVID: CHAMPIONING PROACTIVE POLICY MAKING



CAMBRIDGE



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# FORMAT AND PARTICIPANTS



## SECTION 1.

## Format and participants

### 1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this private video meeting for government and civil society officials, organised in partnership with Cambridge, was to address the fundamental approach to policymaking for education ecosystems that is both coherent and resilient. Participants were encouraged to discuss the actions of their governments and institutions, and to make policy recommendations where appropriate.

In the wake of Covid, many countries are now reviewing the need to implement wide-ranging reforms in education, including curricula, assessment, blended learning and teacher professional development. This meeting emphasised how we should not silo such individual component parts but ensure a holistic view of education that brings together multiple stakeholders and builds a natural resilience into the system to cushion the blow of future shocks.

This event followed a natural progression of previous meetings that have highlighted the challenges and interventions in response to Covid. This meeting of officials was a stimulating engagement to share experiences with other countries and to hear from those on the front line of education needing to act, intervene and implement.

During the private break sessions of the meeting, officials were encouraged to address the following questions:

Given your experiences, on the ground, over the last six months, which areas of education and schooling would you say most urgently need reform?

What are your expectations for 2021? Would you say it will be a year in which governments take stock of the education system to assess where needs the most attention?

Equity and access are critical issues and require investment into infrastructure. With the necessity of more blended learning, what investments are needed to avoid the danger of a new digital divide?

What reforms are most needed in your country to ensure that educational outcomes are better aligned with the broader context of global



competencies and real-world skills?

The economic impact of Covid will pressure education budgets worldwide. Are you a champion of ring-fencing education budgets? Accordingly, is your government now proactively looking at development bank and multilateral agency funding for projects in 2021?

Have you seen a growing momentum in your country for a more coherent 'whole government' approach to education, and generally has the Covid pandemic affected education policy and budgets?

Does your government need external support in devising new frameworks for the teaching profession that include online pedagogy and digital competency?

### 1.2 Executive summary and key findings of the meeting

During the break-out sessions, participants were keen to express their thoughts on a wide range of issues from building teacher capacity to blended learning to social and emotional well-being, yet all were keen to express their thoughts on the central theme of building resilience into education systems. The experience of 2020 now requires that the world of education needs heroes, champions of policy reform in what could turn out to be a golden age for re-engineering key aspects of education ecosystems. The discussions were wide and the following, though not exhaustive, are a selection of key recommendations regarding developing coherence and resilience.

Now is the time for departments of education to conduct up-to-date censuses to better appreciate the lessons learnt from the effects of Covid.

Given the expected expansion of online learning, the involvement of parents is essential in what, over time, could develop into varying forms of home-schooling ecosystems.

A whole government approach is essential. The work is too much for ministries of education alone and requires multiple arms of government.

Serious policy commitments are required regarding investment into ICT infrastructures and far more robust partnerships are required with telecommunications operators.

Collaboration will be the watchword of the future – collaboration with parents, local communities, teacher collaboration and even the potential of collaboration between governments to mitigate the large capital costs of ICT.

Budgets are of particular concern given the economic consequences of Covid, and there were calls for the ring-fencing of education and far quicker leveraging of funds available from the multilateral community.

Building resilience in education requires accountability from policymakers and school leaders.

Strong collaboration with the private sector is another essential ingredient in building resilience, including the technology solution providers who will play a role in blended learning of the future.

Flexibility is required in the future, such as in planning academic timetables and determining the content to be evaluated.

Evidence-based policymaking is essential and emergency interventions now need long-term policy solutions with data garnered from the pandemic experience.

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### 1.3 Format of video conference and this report

In section 1.4 we list 77 participants of this video conference on championing resilient education. The most immediate lesson of online video conferencing is to ensure that every participant has a voice. Small groups are essential. So, after opening statements the event was broken into small groups, each with a moderator to take notes and provide a summary.

Prior to the break-out rooms there were opening statements from: Hon Prof Edgar Moyo, Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education,

Zimbabwe; Dr Julius Jwan, Principal Secretary for Technical Education, Kenya; and Vikas Pota, Founder, T4 Education. Although all discussions were recorded and transcribed for the purpose of this report, none of the quotes or what was said during the private break-out rooms is made attributable to any one person.

The following was the video conference format:

**Part A:** Opening statements of Hon Prof Edgar Moyo, Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe; Dr Julius Jwan, Principal Secretary for Technical Education, Kenya; and Vikas Pota, Founder, T4 Education.

**Part B:** Eleven break-out groups were formed, each with a moderator to record discussions and take note of the key points raised.

**Part C:** All participants returned from their break-out groups. A synthesis of key issues and closing presentation was given by Jane Mann, Managing Director, Cambridge Partnership for Education.

The total time of the video conference was 105 minutes.

After introducing the participants in section 1.4, the format of this report is structured around the policy issues and non-attributable quotations. The participants hold senior positions in education from multiple countries and expressed what they are experiencing as well as their own policy recommendations.

In this report we have done our best to identify the main subjects taken from what participants said to provide a report in easily digestible sections.

Covid interventions

Responding to inequality

Learning loss and well-being

Teachers

Future planning and building resilience

## 1.4 Participants

We would like to thank everyone for participating and providing such outstanding contributions. The opportunity for them to openly converse in small break-out groups provides us with a discerning judgement on the key issues, immediate policy recommendations and their own insights into future sustainability. It is an honour for the organisers to host such a distinguished gathering. Participants are listed by country, alphabetically:

**ANGOLA:** Gabriel Boaventura, National Director for General Education, Ministry of Education

**ARMENIA:** Aram Pakhchanyan, Chairman, Ayb Educational Foundation

**ARMENIA:** Sona Koshetsyan, Executive Director, Ayb Educational Foundation

**BANGLADESH:** Syeda Fareha Islam, Senior Lecturer, BRAC Institute of Educational Development

**BANGLADESH:** Dr Manjuma Akhtar, Assistant Professor, BRAC Institute of Educational Development

**BANGLADESH:** Somnath Saha, Lecturer, BRAC Institute of Educational Development

**BANGLADESH:** Sima Sarkar, Lecturer 2, BRAC Institute of Educational Development

**BANGLADESH:** Dilruba Sultana, Lecturer 3, BRAC Institute of Educational Development

**BOTSWANA:** Simon Coles, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Basic Education

**BOTSWANA:** Dr Spar Matthews, Principal Education Officer, Ministry of Basic Education

**BOTSWANA:** Ravi Srinivasan, Pro Vice Chancellor (Internationalisation), Botho University

**CAMEROON:** Dr Luke Ntse Musongong, Regional Pedagogic Inspector South West Region, Ministry of Secondary Education

**CAMEROON:** Dr Lucas Agwe, Regional Coordinating Inspector, South West Region, Ministry of Secondary Education

**COTE D'IVOIRE:** Aboubacar Coulibaly, Director of Information Technologies and Systems (DTSI), Ministry of National Education, Technical Education and Vocational Training

**ETHIOPIA:** Dr Eba Mijena, Director General for Higher Education Academic Affairs, Ministry of Science and Higher Education

**ETHIOPIA:** Dr Zelalem Assefa, Director General, Ministry of Science and Higher Education: Ethiopian Education and Research Network

**ETHIOPIA:** Berhanu Moreda, Director General Teachers and School Leaders Development, Ministry of Education

**ETHIOPIA:** Dr Diriba Eticha, Directorate Director, Transformation and Good Governance, Adama Science and Technology University

**GEORGIA:** Sophia Gorgodze, Director, National Assessment & Examinations Centre

**GEORGIA:** Natia Andguladze, Researcher and Associate Professor, Ilia State University, Education Policy and Research Institute

**GHANA:** Akwasi Addae-Boahene, Chief Technical Advisor, Ministry of Education

**GHANA:** Dr Harriet Amui, Former Principal, The Presbyterian Women's College

**GHANA:** Alfred Ampah-Mensah, Deputy-Director General Academic Programmes and Professional Development, University of Cape Coast, Institute for Educational Planning and Administration

**HUNGARY:** Adam Collis, Co-Founder, Catalyst. *Moderator*

**KENYA:** Dr Julius Jwan, Principal Secretary for Technical Education, Ministry of Education. *Opening Speaker*

**KENYA:** John Kimotho, Director Educational Media, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

**KENYA:** Tom Mulati, Acting Director Technical Education, Ministry of Education

**KENYA:** Mutheu Kasanga, National Chair, Kenya Private Schools Association (KEPSA)



**KENYA:** Teresa Mbagaya, Principal – Investments, Imaginable Futures, The Omidyar Group

**KUWAIT:** Dr Ziad Najem, CEO, KFAS Academy. *Moderator*

**LIBERIA:** Alex Mbolonda, Director for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Education

**LIBERIA:** Johnson Hinneh, Director of School Health and Feeding, Ministry of Education

**LIBERIA:** Leah Zinnah, Director for Research, Education Management Information Systems, Statistics & Demographics, Ministry of Education

**MALAWI:** Nasreen Khonat, Director, Shining Stars Schooling

**NAMIBIA:** Leonard Amunime, Senior Education Officer ICT, Ministry of Education, Arts & Culture: National Institute for Education Development

**NAMIBIA:** Dr Charmaine Villet, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Namibia

**NAMIBIA:** Dr Mathilde Shihako, Deputy Director for Academic Affairs and Research, University of Namibia

**NAMIBIA:** Dr Hertha Pomuti, Senior Lecturer, Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Studies, University of Namibia

**NIGERIA, LAGOS STATE:** Iyabo Seriki-Bello, Director, Ministry of Wealth Creation & Employment

**NIGERIA, OSUN STATE:** Gbadebo Adenle, Special Assistant on ICT and Innovation to the Commissioner, Ministry of Education

**OMAN:** Salim Abdullah Al Karousi, Director of English Language Curriculum Development, Ministry of Education

**OMAN:** Dr Intisar Ambusaidi, Educational Expert, Advisor in the General Directorate of Human Resources, Ministry of Education

**OMAN:** Bahia Al Rashdi, Assessment and Evaluation Specialist – Teacher Training, Ministry of Education

**OMAN:** Fathiya Mohammed Al Maawali, Senior English Supervisor, Ministry of Education

**SENEGAL:** Aminata Lo, Teacher Trainer – SIMEN, Ministry of National Education

**SENEGAL:** Maïmouna Soudé Souare, Elementary School Inspector, Education Planning and Reform Direction, Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Ministry of National Education

**SENEGAL:** Dr Salimata Sène Mbodji, Doctor in Educational Sciences, Head of the IT and Digital Resources Unit, Directorate of General Middle Secondary Education, Ministry of National Education

**SEYCHELLES:** Xavier Estico, Chief Executive Officer, National Institute for Science, Technology & Innovation

**SIERRA LEONE:** Fallah Lamin, ICT Director, Ministry of Information and Communications

**SIERRA LEONE:** Gloria Hassan-Kamara, Manager, Teacher Performance, Teaching Service Commission

**SOMALIA:** Ismail Abdi, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Seliki Tlhabane, Chief Director for Curriculum & Quality Enhancements Programmes, Ministry of Basic Education

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Dr Mark Chetty, Director – National Assessment, Ministry of Basic Education

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Veronica Hofmeester, Director: Continuing Professional Teacher Development, Ministry of Basic Education

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Dr Nokulunga Ndlovu, EDIET Division, School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand

**SOUTH AFRICA, GAUTENG:** Handson Mlotshwa, Director: Teacher Development & ICT Programmes, Department of Education

**SOUTH AFRICA, NORTH WEST PROVINCE:** Dr Jacob Tholo, Chief Education Specialist: Quality Promotion, Department of Education

**SOUTH AFRICA, NORTH WEST PROVINCE:** Nelson Seakamela, Centre Manager – District Teacher Development Centre, Department of Education

**SOUTH AFRICA, WESTERN CAPE:** Chasfrend Ahrends, Deputy Chief Education Special Schools, Department of Education

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES:** Nadine Tarazi, Senior Education Advisor, Cambridge Partnership for Education. *Moderator*

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Vikas Pota, Founder, T4 Education. Opening Speaker

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Jane Mann, Managing Director, Cambridge Partnership for Education. *Moderator*

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Karen Kester, Director of Operations, Cambridge Partnership for Education. *Moderator*

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Steve King, Senior Education Advisor: Central Asia, the Caucasus and Bangladesh, Cambridge Partnership for Education. *Moderator*

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Kagendo Salisbury, Head of Marketing & Communications, Cambridge Partnership for Education. *Moderator*

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Lewis Birchon, Head of Publishing and Research, Cambridge Partnership for Education. *Moderator*

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Megan Thomas, PR Communications Manager, Cambridge Partnership for Education. *Moderator*

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Tracey Ridealgh, Marketing & Events Executive, Cambridge Partnership for Education

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Barry Johnston, Co-Founder, Purpose Union. *Moderator*

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Anja Nielson, Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor, UNICEF UK. *Moderator*

**UNITED KINGDOM:** John Glassey, CEO, Brains Global. *Host*

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Claire Urie, Head of Government & International Relations, Brains Global

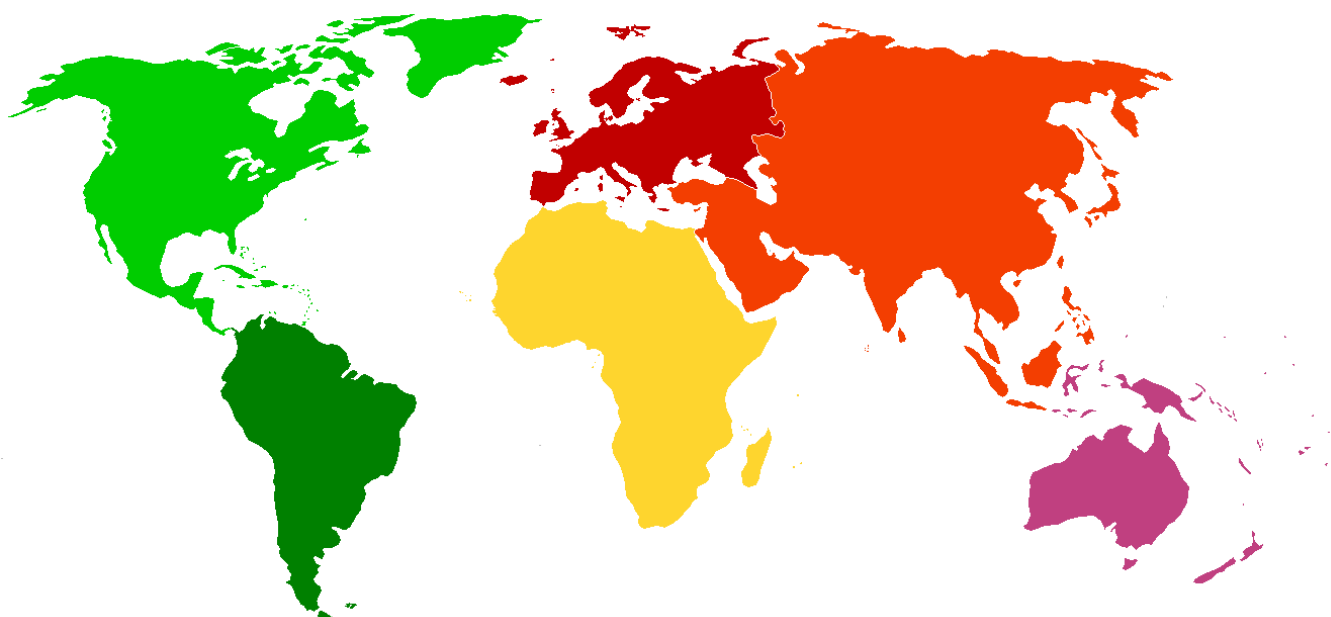
**UNITED KINGDOM:** Victoria Tate, Head of Education Partnerships, Brains Global

**ZIMBABWE:** Hon Prof Edgar Moyo, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Primary & Secondary Education

**ZIMBABWE:** John Dewah, Chief Director, Curriculum Development and Technical Services Department, Ministry of Primary & Secondary Education

**ZIMBABWE:** Peter Muzawazi, Chief Director, Infant, Junior, Secondary and Non-Formal Education Department, Ministry of Primary & Secondary Education

**ZIMBABWE:** Stanginkosi Moyo, ICT Officer, Ministry of Primary & Secondary Education







# DISCUSSIONS

## SECTION 2.

## Discussion

### 2.1 Opening Statements

Hon Prof Edgar Moyo, Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe; Dr Julius Jwan, Principal Secretary for Technical Education, Kenya; and Vikas Pota, Founder, T4 Education.

#### Hon Prof Edgar Moyo

The Deputy Minister started with an emphasis on the role of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) in providing quality and inclusive education. The Ministry caters for over 4.5 million learners in 9,600 schools across the country, managed by directors, inspectors and school heads with over 120,000 teachers. Now in Zimbabwe, they are trying to fast track the full implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in order to cater for the new learning environment brought about by Covid.

During this period, most impact by Covid and in preparation for the future, the Ministry has crafted alternative learning pathways to support out-of-school learning programmes. The Ministry is also developing emergency learning modules utilising multiple media, including radio, TV and e-learning materials. Currently, face-to-face interaction between teacher and student is very limited as part of the overall health strategy, so MoPSE is compressing the syllabus within subjects in line with the available learning time.

While online learning has become a common method, the digital divide and need for more ICT infrastructure investment in countries such as Zimbabwe has meant that a large percentage of learners are still left out. So, they have had considerable success with the introduction of radio lessons and are now preparing their Open Distance Learning (ODL) modules. In June and July, Zimbabwe successfully conducted their national examinations, which also provided important lessons for the re-opening of schools.

As schools re-opened in Zimbabwe, they ensured that learners attended school on alternate days to practise better social distancing and mitigate any infrastructure shortages. For 2021, the Ministry sees the development of teacher capacity as key to



ensuring the effective continuity of education. This includes the necessity for increased teaching capacity using blended learning, ICT and digital literacy skills, and conducting lessons online. The 2020 National Budget made an additional \$465 million available for school re-openings and the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE). The increased budgetary provision during 2020 and in 2021 prioritises the principle that no Zimbabwean child shall be left behind.

Certainly, there needs to be more investment in the ICT infrastructure, and the Ministry is in close and frequent negotiations with mobile operators to offer cheaper and affordable services to support online learning. The Ministry has already developed an ICT policy for schools, with implementation earmarked for 2021. To improve the reach of online learning, this policy aims to have more than 6,000 schools connected to the internet.

Currently, around 30% of primary and secondary schools have internet connectivity and around 60% have electricity. Now there is the MoPSE open educational resources (OER) platform, built in partnership with UNESCO and a learning passport, developed in partnership with UNICEF. The impact of improved ICT network management has boosted the communication between school districts, the Ministry and other stakeholders, with schools able to download supplementary learning materials and the better retrieval of data for ministry managers.

2021 ICT targets include the upgrading of internet bandwidth to an average of 4 Mb/s download per site; to conduct network connectivity assessments; the configuration of an integrated network manager; and the connectivity of 6,300 schools.

Officials in Zimbabwe appreciate that the key to success is a whole government approach, requiring the turn-around of the economy and a holistic approach to education bringing together all

ministries and government agencies to implement their mandates and meet performance targets of the National Development Strategy. The performance of each ministry is then assessed through the Whole of Government Dashboard. The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement is responsible for a clean water supply to schools; the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development will provide budgetary support; and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services will continue to provide radio and television airtime for educational programmes. This then extends to the Ministry of ICT for infrastructure to support online learning; the Ministry of Public Service to provide additional staff; the Ministry of Public Works and National Housing continues to construct schools; and the Ministry of Health and Child Care ensures that health standards are met and PPE is delivered to schools.

### **Dr Julius Jwan**

The impact of Covid on the education sector has many complexities, not least of all the learning loss of students because of time out of the classroom. This is compounded by their own mindset that being at home means not being at school, creating extra burden on families and proving a challenge in maintaining their engagement in educational programmes. These complexities also create a wide degree of variance depending on the level of education and the type of educational content. Parents want their children to be safe, teacher unions want their teachers to be safe and the government has a responsibility to account for all stakeholders while ensuring that students have the opportunity to learn.

Education in Kenya has a mixture of public and private schools, international institutions, universities, and a wide range of technical colleges that provide important TVET programmes for the country. Each category of institution has different resources that can be used on e-learning and ICT for education activities. The talk of blended learning, as we move into 2021, must account for these differentials; it is not a one-size-fits-all situation. They are keen for the return to schooling and accordingly the government has scheduled the re-opening of schools for 4 January 2021.

Universities in Kenya have already organised online education through their existing virtual learning environments, and more is being done with stakeholders to ensure the effective organisation of faculties in the technical and vocational training institutions. For technical education, the Ministry has embarked on a substantial and robust development

of resources and equipment required for virtual learning. One of the technical colleges, Kenya Technical College, has been designated as the national centre for electronic and virtual learning, to ensure a strong training of trainers in virtual learning.

2021 will be a very proactive year, and this includes an increased engagement with international development partners, to support electronic and virtual learning. There is a lot of goodwill in the international community. Kenya sees the implementation of a lot of blended learning early in the year and will complement that with compressing learning within a shorter time period. So, by 2023, with shorter holidays, the recovery and compensation for the loss of learning should be complete. This will definitely come with challenges, and ongoing research throughout 2021 and 2022 needs to closely monitor the effect on learning outcomes and student development.

### **Vikas Pota**

Vikas addressed the question of building resilience into education ecosystems and considered his experiences over the last 15 years, whereby so many discussions across the spectrum of stakeholders addressed the big issues of reforming education and the growth of hybrid learning. What was striking was how little teachers were mentioned, and accordingly it has been essential to focus work on capacity-building in the teaching profession.

Even in normal times, education budgets are under pressure, and now with Covid finances will be stretched even more. So how can investment in resilience be effective? How can return on such investment be measured unless it is directed towards teachers? In discussion during 2020, what we have heard is the consistent recognition that teachers have been at the forefront of dealing with the crisis, like first responders for education. Yet, at the same time, we are not seeing teachers being brought to the table enough to share their perspectives and thoughts as to how they think system leaders should be thinking about post-Covid education.

Hence, it is necessary to strongly encourage policymakers and education leaders to pay special regard to the experiences of teachers during this period. This lesson evolved into the establishment of T4 Education and bringing together over 103,000 teachers from around the world in an online forum to address this question. The final statement was a type of manifesto for teachers that produced five key takeaways to help guide teachers in adjusting to the 'new normal' and to encourage their own self-development.



Firstly, the need to get involved in local communities and learn how to form partnerships. Teachers need to learn how to engage more with those outside of the classroom and to be part of more local collaborations. Secondly, the importance of getting involved in teacher organisations. There is an opportunity for teachers to influence decision-making, to advocate what matters to them, to speak collectively and negotiate what works best for them. Next on the manifesto was the need for teachers to take charge of their own professional development. This includes using the strength of their networks to design their own development, including teaching practice and technology.

This leads to the fourth point of needing to both build the competency of designing the learning experience along with the embedding of technology that embraces the intuitive skills of children as well as ensuring their engagement. Accordingly, every teacher needs to tap into the potential of technology – it is here to stay and is more than just the responsibility of a few colleagues at school. Finally, well-being is critical to the future resilience of education – the well-being of both students and teachers, as well as being more cognisant of the demand on parents at home as we see an increased uptake in online and out-of-classroom learning. We need to teach the values of educating the whole child: physical education, social emotional skills, mental well-being, the arts and music being treated as equals to numeracy and literacy.

These key components, which were learnt during the recent gathering of so many teachers, are essential to building resilience into education systems the world over. The focus should be on teachers. No education system can outperform the quality of its teachers. The best and brightest must be encouraged into the teaching profession and the high standards of teacher development should be continuously invested in.

Following the opening statements, participants were split into 11 break-out groups. Many hours of parallel discussion raised a wealth of important issues and individual anecdotal experiences of educators on the ground.

The private break-out groups were particularly focused on the discussion of lessons learnt from the impact of the pandemic, the responses of policymakers and departments of education, and thoughts about the

future and building resilience into our education ecosystems.

## 2.2 Covid interventions

The Covid pandemic has certainly been an external force, imposing the need for policy reform in education that looks beyond what happens inside the classroom. Infrastructure is now getting far greater attention, with a drive for more equitable connectivity in remote areas. But it is not just about connectivity, it is about the cost of data and Wi-Fi capacity – making sure it is fast enough to take the loads that education demands.

Not to be forgotten is the pre-Covid context of education. Prior to the pandemic, especially in developing countries, we were already seeing activities and reform in curricula, development of 21st century skills, improving learning outcomes and so on. The research and understanding of such reforms is already in place and so Covid has been the fast-track to planning what policymakers already knew. Prior to Covid there were already issues around class size and the increased integration of technological resources in education. The current context is now one of moving from response to recovery to resilience – future-proofing education.

In South Africa they are now adjusting to the changing nature of teacher development from face-to-face to online, and are challenged with the need to convert what happens in the classroom to a virtual learning environment. Regarding the re-opening of schools, they have adjusted the timetable with students rotating between morning and afternoon attendance or some schools adopting rotation on an every-other-day basis, depending on the grade.



Botswana has managed to run their external examinations and will be finishing the academic year. So even though they have faced the disruption of Covid like other countries, they have not lost an academic year. The size of classrooms has been a concern, given the need to implement social distancing. The solution has been to double-shift the timetable in many schools, allowing them to run classes of no more than 30 pupils across the country. Now, teacher capacity-building is high on the list of priorities because of the need for greater ICT integration in learning. In the short term, the Botswana Ministry of Education has produced self-study guides and learning materials, and used educational TV and radio to support teaching. Schools have re-opened relatively quickly, allowing the completion of the academic year, and the end of November marked the completion of examinations.

In Oman, online learning has been a long-term strategy of the Ministry of Education and Covid has certainly accelerated the movement towards e-learning. However, the country has many remote areas and more needs to be done between the government and the operators to ensure connectivity is equitable across the country. The Ministry has implemented two online learning platforms – one for primary education and one for secondary, using Google Classroom for Grades 5 to 12. Learning materials have been uploaded onto the ministry portal and coordination with the Ministry of Information has helped utilise TV channels to broadcast lessons. Teachers themselves have been strengthening their communications with parents, and messaging services like the forming of WhatsApp groups have encouraged parents to get involved in the learning process.

South Africa has seen a trimming of the curriculum to ensure learners have time to prepare for exams, and teachers have had to adapt key concepts of the curricula for evaluation. The primary challenge has been regarding resources – the availability of devices and the high cost of data in the country, causing concern over a digital divide and those in rural areas not being able to participate in learning. The country also faces a lot of challenges with comorbidities amongst teachers and learners who are thus high risk for Covid infection, requiring more back-up teachers and support mechanisms for those having to stay at home.

In Cameroon they returned to schools on 5 October, with the Ministry of Education reviewing the curriculum and with teachers assessing what content can form part of a blended learning system. The schools are now running a rotation system for students – mornings and afternoons, with school

times for one group being 07:30 to 12:30 and 13:00 to 17:30 for the next group.

Oman saw the return to schools on 1 November, but now the school year will be just one semester not two. They have reduced the curriculum and are producing new assessment criteria appropriate for the circumstances. Exams will start on 6 June, followed by the all-important Grade 12 exams that set students up for university qualification. With the expectation of many challenges, the Ministry of Education set up two committees – one for educational support and the other for technical support.

Bangladesh is in the midst of a very long period of school closures and so many in the education system are focusing on parents and the local community. The key here is for teachers and parents to keep in touch. Teachers are influential members of the community and many parents are facing economic and financial pressures which impact their well-being. Daily counselling and frequent communications are essential in making sure parents are coping with the situation and checking on the well-being of children who have not attended school in many months.

In the Ministry of Education in Senegal, the ICT for Education division has morphed into one of the biggest departments leading the support of government policy in ICT for education and the digitising of content. Teachers have been using well-known tools such as Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom, while the Ministry of Education has a portal with a briefing of available content. The tele-education project has helped in the production of lessons for broadcasting and the content is available on the ministry website.

In the North West Province of South Africa, they adjusted assessment depending on the grade, whereby summative assessment remained for movement to other classes, but in other classes the decision was made to focus primarily on formative assessment. South Africa is currently busy with its important Grade 12 examinations, and the amount of work has been cut down with the exams being adjusted to cover the critical aspects of the curricula. What has been noticeable is how resources, such as those provided to schools from ministries of ICT or communication, borne out of a universal service agreement, were available pre-Covid, but since the pandemic there has been an upsurge in demand for these resources from schools. To meet this demand, the Department of Education has partnered with universities that already have access to learning applications.

## 2.3 Responding to inequality

Covid has really highlighted the inequalities in the provision of education. Those from poorer communities and rural areas have not benefited from online education resources. How do we narrow the gap? It is possible by utilising blended learning, but there must be the political will to ensure there is investment in the ICT infrastructure. We should be thinking how we make this kind of learning available and accessible to all based on moral purpose and not led by just proprietary technologies. The pandemic exposed societal weaknesses whereby the poor have been unable to access devices and the internet, but the wealthier could, and governments did not have any national frameworks in place to deal with this effectively.



In Oman, schools re-opened in November and blended learning was implemented. The immediate challenges faced by the government were teaching capacity and the ICT infrastructure. As well as equitable connectivity, the crisis also showed the divide between students from different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, along with special needs students. Ensuring digital equity requires more robust partnerships with technology and ICT providers, and upgrading teacher skills in digital literacy.

In South Africa's North West Province, they tried to engage learners by introducing 'dialect tutors', who are specialist educators who can help students when they encounter difficulties. This proved successful as a short-term fix. In the long term the Province is now planning a massive teacher training development programme around the use of ICT.

One notable point about internet resources is the

predominance of English and French language online content, and this represents a challenge for those countries not teaching in English or French, for example Georgia where the language is unique and teachers are severely limited in the high-quality educational content available. Parents expect that if their children are attending online lessons then they should be of comparable standard to in-classroom lessons. How to transform traditional educational materials into an online format is an even bigger challenge for those countries where learning is in a local language not widely spoken.

Not forgetting, in many developing countries there are diverse communities with their own access to education – some areas maybe not providing the quality of education of others. With the proper infrastructure in place, blended learning has the ability to solve such problems and level the playing field. Yet what remains a challenge is the social aspect of learning as such interaction is severely limited in the virtual learning environment. The unregulated online world will demand education systems to account for more social emotional learning, to ensure student safety and well-being while online.

In Kenya, there is a large private school sector – some 9,000 schools alongside a public system of around 28,000 schools. The digital divide that has been exposed in the public sector was also apparent in private schools, with an unexpectedly large number not online. Parents and unions expressed their concerns about online education if there is not equity across the board, as it would just widen the divide further. Generally, and as confirmed by a report from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), learning loss was far less in private schools, which means the recovery period will be less – maybe eight months at most. In Kenya, schools closed in March. Only exam classes were opened in October, with the full return to in-classroom schooling beginning again in January 2021.

The South African government has a committed budget to increase capacity in response to Covid. This includes an additional 300,000 employees in schooling – 200,000 will be for education assistance to support teachers in the classroom and 100,000 for more general assistance in schools. Like Kenya, they noticed a divide between the public and private schools, whereby the latter were quick to respond with online and digital learning resources for their



students. To narrow that divide, apart from the obvious funding requirements, will also need better partnerships with private players in ICT for education and the operators to zero-rate educational content.

Angola has found the impact of Covid particularly challenging. Latest estimates of children out of school are around 1.2 million and the recent re-opening of schools has seen as little as 37% of students returning. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of nationwide connectivity. At the beginning of the year there were no formal regulations for distance learning, but they do have that regulation now in place and approved by parliament. This should start to help schools address the problem from January 2021, though teachers will need to be better prepared with online learning competencies and there remains the challenge of inequitable power supply across the country.

Bangladesh has experienced similar problems. Prior to the pandemic there was no approved online learning in the country at all. Teachers and educators have been adapting, using platforms such as Facebook Live, but these are relatively informal. Across the country all schooling has been closed since March – from primary up to university level. Online classes have taken place, but the lack of infrastructure has been exposed and furthermore there has been a noticeable socioeconomic divide between rich and poor parents. Some education stakeholders have been trying to help at the community level, especially parents who are having to cope with their children being at home, getting no education for such a prolonged period.

In those parts of Namibia where internet connectivity is poor, families have found it very challenging to cope. Local measures may include teachers working on lessons, producing notes and sending copies to the homes of learners or making an announcement on the radio such that parents could collect the lesson notes for their children. The return to schooling in September could not have come quickly enough because, generally, online working simply did not work. The schools are now having to increase the number of lessons and use rotating systems to divide up learners such that the schools are not congested. The challenge for the government right now is coping with this 'new normal'. This shows the tension between short-term mitigation of learning loss and attempting to build long-term resilience into the system.

In South Africa they already have a well-established deployment of ICT programmes in schools. This programme started with a digital learning framework that spoke specifically on the integration of ICT in

the process of teaching and learning. Although the framework is in place, up until now, most of the teacher training has been device oriented and not necessarily the pedagogical practices incorporating technology. So, the policy is in place, policy that includes digital competencies, but apparently more needs to be done when it comes to creating digital content and adapting pedagogy to hybrid education.

There is a hope that Covid is a catalyst for change. Being able to do this online, many have found that they have reached more teachers than previously with face-to-face courses. Still work needs to be done with the service providers to make educational content and services zero-rated. Many countries are paying high costs for data. The big expense is data – these online courses use a lot of data and it is a problem that needs an urgent solution.

## **2.4 Learning loss and well-being**

In the coming year some areas of focus for government will include the mental well-being of students, particularly the effects the pandemic has had on children, and of course the psychological health of teachers who are facing demands and challenges never seen before. With the effects of social isolation, one method is to focus on learning through play, emotional intelligence, and a wide range of skills other than just an emphasis on knowledge content in curricula.

What is still unknown in many countries is the amount of learning loss due to Covid. Most governments are lacking the metrics and research to calculate how much has been lost and what remedial action is required. There is a sense that governments responded quickly to the consequences of school closures with the delivery of content through multiple media channels and teachers finding ways to do lessons online, but as schools have re-opened, the issue of learning loss has not received the attention it deserves. Much of the current discussion in schools has become operational: how to adjust timetables, how to organise classrooms and schooling. A possible solution is to reduce centralisation and encourage school leaders to come up with local solutions, with local stakeholders, which account for loss of learning and the impact on students' well-being.

Given the impact of Covid, a lot of talk has been about well-being and the need to provide psychosocial support for teachers and students. What remains unanswered is the system and resources for providing such support. This is a whole new area for the education sector to deal with and ministries of education cannot do it on their own.

Yet centralised planning of psychosocial support will not meet local needs, so this needs to be done at a community level with central government providing guidelines and additional resources where possible.

In Liberia, they too have been looking at how to bring in more psychosocial support. Schools re-opened on 12 December with a new academic year that will run until August 2021. Yet, of course, many parents are concerned about their children's safety when returning to school, so the government has a challenge in giving confidence to teachers and students that school will be safe. This involves a strong programme of promoting behavioural changes regarding social distancing and hygiene.

A crucial matter for education providers and policymakers concerns the fact that students will be moving up an age group into a higher grade in newly rescheduled academic years but have not fulfilled all the learning requirements of their current year due to learning loss. How will learners cope with the demands of a higher grade while having missed out on some key foundational work? Students, for the most part, will be adept at adjusting, so the real pressure comes to bear on policymakers who need to look at their assessment system in a manner that accounts for the loss of learning caused by the pandemic. Policymakers need teachers to bridge the gap, and the preparation and training of teachers cannot be separated from adjustments to curricula and assessment, both in response to Covid and in terms of more long-term reforms.

Regarding learning loss, the general view is that it cannot be made up in one year; it is probably going to take at least three years to recover the curriculum losses. During such recovery time this will lead to a debate of how much to return to old curricula, which some view as being already overloaded and biased around just knowledge content. The impetus is certainly with modernising curricula and if so implemented then assessment will surely follow – particularly the change of emphasis from high-pressure end-of-year exams to project-based evaluation.

Given the experiences over the last eight months, some comment was made on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the dangers of misinterpreting a focus on numeracy and literacy. As many participants mentioned and as much research in educational development shows, there is a need to develop not just the basic skills, but extended skills including emotional knowledge. Singularly focusing on subject goals is not relevant to the modern world.

## 2.5 Teachers

The feedback from many teachers regarding training programmes is that they would like to be equipped with skills and knowledge in developing materials because of their concern over students at home who are not learning. In fact, some teacher groups have said that the emphasis on digital skills is not so much the priority because these can be learnt over time, but it is the need to produce the necessary materials for students. Teachers are central because they provide the basis for the inspiration that we need

to give children. Teachers will always be the ones facilitating learning, so how do we adapt the role of the teachers to blended learning and yet make sure they can do the different things they need to do to inspire students?

Many have realised that their strength is in the classroom – in face-to-face learning. Yet, to stay relevant one needs to embrace ICT training for the teaching profession. Even though the vast majority of countries have re-opened schools, the view is to look

forward in terms of resilience, and there is the need to ensure all teachers are skilled in ICT and at least have the minimum level of digital literacy.

In South Africa, they realised that the resilience of teachers was an issue that came to the fore. Teachers have their own fears and anxieties: the new in-school health responsibilities coupled with a changing education ecosystem that will put more emphasis on student well-being, social emotional learning and the need to assist them in becoming global citizens. With blended education, teachers will need more competencies in setting up learning environments, which involves being cognisant of the contexts of different learners. How does one ensure that teachers are able to use the indigenous



knowledge of learners and utilise it to achieve the desired outcomes? Covid has forced us to think differently, forced us to look at how things were done in the past and how to ensure continuity in the future with equitable access for all learners.

At the end of November, Kenya started a substantial in-service teacher training programme that accounted for the experiences over the last seven months and uses a cascade approach to deliver on capacity fulfilment. District directors will have refresher courses, and parallel programmes are being run in the use of educational technology and digital pedagogy. This will cascade to 20,000 teachers in the 10 provinces made up of 72 districts. To overcome difficulties with access in rural areas, teachers will utilise local centres with connectivity and reliable power. At the peak of the crisis, using multiple media, Kenya was able to reach about 80% of learners. What became apparent is how many, along with their local community of teachers and families, were in fact ahead of policy, especially in using social media. So, what are the implications of technology and interventions being ahead of policy and how do governments make policy that is going to be more sustainable? The policy of curriculum delivery thus needs to account for both learner-teacher interaction in the classroom and the learners' interaction with technology.

Such questions then have implications for the self-development of teachers and feeding back into the system of how their initiatives can be appreciated at the policy level. Different teachers may well employ different interventions in different regions based on their own selection and the availability of educational resources and technology. Clearly, the right infrastructure is required to prepare a more resilient system and, in the future, this will involve not just the building of teaching capacity inclusive of evaluation skills, but absolutely ensuring no learner is left behind.

The building of capacity and supporting teachers should also encourage greater peer-to-peer collaboration within the profession; the formation of working and focus groups to share experiences to augment regular professional development and that lessons learnt can be included in future continuing professional development (CPD) policies. Teachers very much lie at the heart of solving the challenges opened up by Covid, and central to supporting them is to equip teachers with more skills and develop robust standards for the certification of digital competencies. Policymakers need to establish new frameworks for online learning and accordingly invest more in teacher training to build capacity.

## 2.6 Future planning and building resilience

Expectations for 2021 include the opportunity for policymakers to re-assess the education ecosystem. Several ministries of education are now conducting their census of the 2019/20 school year, overlapping with the start of the pandemic. The outcomes of recent studies by governments will provide the basis for many reforms expected in the education sector. Governments will certainly be taking stock in 2021, not only in terms of pedagogical content but also the duration of forthcoming academic years. Then if blended learning is to become the norm with more schooling at home, departments of education will need to see how to involve parents – this will be a real challenge. A mistake is to believe that online learning is close to the typical in-classroom system, whereas it is much closer to a home-schooling ecosystem, and there is a world of difference between a ministry giving out instructions to schools and giving out instructions to parents.

Of course, education is not just about acquiring and assimilating academic knowledge but is a social activity, and already young people have pointed to how much they miss that interaction with their school friends. The structure of the school day, the playing of games, the learning of human behaviour and social skills are all part of growing up that the school system provides the backbone for – none of which can be matched in a virtual learning environment. How much of the socialisation can be replicated by families and a system of online home-schooling?

Several participants discussed the issue of content in curricula and how Covid has exposed what many already knew about content needing to be more focused on essential knowledge and real-world skills, which contributes to bridging the gap between work and the education system. This will impact assessment with a more formative approach that incorporates authentic project-based learning that connects knowledge with skills.

South Africa has also seen schools and parents starting WhatsApp groups and using community radio stations, with parents assisting students to pay attention to broadcast lessons. Noticeably, Covid has inspired creativity amongst everyone, and the Department of Basic Education wishes to bring the best resources and examples of digital content together in the first quarter of 2021. This will enable the department to create a digital library with resources available to all teachers to download from the ministry portal. For example, if one has content for mathematics then all mathematics teachers can be connected in a professional learning community



to share lesson content. This will be supplemented with an addendum to the professional development guidelines allowing for online training as part of the points system.

Ghana has equally been addressing the need to build a resilient system that can withstand future disruptions, considering the complexity of education along with the importance of local communities and the role of new technologies. What has been exposed is the inherent inequality in the education system that has often been overlooked. As well as the current interventions, future measures need to be innovative and flexible, whereby the education delivery chain embraces creativity amongst system leaders and teachers. This will include a strong emphasis on self-learning, both of teachers and students. A major policy requirement going forward is the investment in ICT infrastructure and, connecting schools and providing the technology to deliver educational content.

Stakeholders working together is a central theme: parents, schools, communities, telecommunications operators and the whole government approach bringing in many ministries. Education must be both meaningful and resilient, and ministries of education cannot work in isolation. Collaboration amongst partners is essential.

The issue of ICT infrastructure and the development of virtual learning platforms did raise the question about countries pooling their resources and sharing with neighbours. Can governments cooperate by connecting their platforms? Could such a system work within a UNESCO monitoring regime for example? Most importantly, a blended approach to education with students using online platforms more frequently out of the classroom changes their own

personal responsibility – an obligation they need to be taught and mentored in as they access more and more online content, shifting the role of the teacher in the process.

Sector management was raised as an important issue and this relates to the whole government approach, whereby ministries of education have been trying to take the lead from health ministries in an environment of uncertainty. Several countries announced school re-opening dates and then had to change them or needed to develop nuanced solutions that involve partial re-openings, class size reduction and the rotation of students in attendance. Policymakers have been learning on the job while school systems have been exposed as inefficient in giving a coordinated response amongst teachers and school leaders.

Expectations for 2021 do seem to indicate optimism, but the dark cloud hanging over education in every country is how budgets will be negatively impacted as governments take on a greater burden of debt alongside reduced economic activity. In the education sector, teacher training and in-service CPD are, historically, the first to be cut when budgetary constraints kick in. Certainly, reforms in 2021, investment in infrastructure and capacity-building will be incremental as governments adjust during a year that will be one of transition and reflection.

In 2021 in Zimbabwe, for the first time they will be introducing a formative assessment regime unique to the country whereby 30% of marks will come from the evaluation of skills. This means giving teachers the capacity in 21st century skills and for the learners to have more problem-solving skills and creativity. The big focus is on re-skilling teachers such that they can play a bigger role in designing the learning environments online.



As well as the necessary investment in ICT infrastructure, there is a sense in many African countries that it still requires willingness amongst users. Teachers and school leaders should be encouraged to support an overall ICT for education strategy that accepts the new reality of blended learning and the greater use of digital technologies. Ministries of education must lead the way by showing the advantages of ICT for education and to give practical examples of implementation that benefit the learning outcomes of students. Overcoming long-standing resistance to learning new computer and digital

skills is a critical task and certainly will be best achieved with the support of teachers' unions and, if possible, some for incentivising from the ministries of education.

Funding remains a major challenge. For most ministries of education, the vast majority of the budget (often more than 90%) is on wages – teachers, staff and officials – and budgets have been static for the last few years. For new money, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, there are World Bank investment projects and grants from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). So, for example, in Sierra Leone the World Bank is funding a smart classroom project that includes teachers recording their lessons to be available for broadcast. Education is still a top priority and where possible budgetary increases have benefited the sector, but concerns remain over what to expect in 2021 and addressing the pandemic in schools, where providing new health and social distancing facilities has placed an increased pressure on finances.

An important point was made about the difference in accountability between policymakers and school leaders. Reforming policies may look good on paper, but they must be implemented locally, and it is the teachers and leaders who then become accountable for the effectiveness of policy changes. Strong policy commitments in building a resilient education ecosystem need both the investment and robust coordination with schools and educational institutes, to ensure there is accountability at all levels and that teachers are trained in new methodologies that come about as a result of policy changes. Political will and strong monitoring of results are critical ingredients to achieve resilience.

An important component in building resilience is the importance of the private sector supporting the public sector – particularly if there are new waves of a pandemic and education is forced more into adopting remote learning environments. Particularly, how can the industry and the private sector help ensure the digital divide does not continue to grow? This is about having more stakeholders invested in education. In a blended learning future, it is the telecommunications operators that will lie at the heart of providing scale and capacity for the delivery of online education. Their role and social responsibility now need to be proactively given serious attention amongst national political leadership as the reach of online learning will be so critically dependent on these operators and the investment decisions they make behind closed doors.

The education ecosystem in Somalia is a special

case, given the long-term effects of prolonged civil conflict and the lack of resources with so much money spent on security. For the last 30 years they have not had a proper teacher training infrastructure and many older trainers have now left the system. The government is now turning to new investment whereby so many areas of the education system need strengthening: the training of staff as well as teachers, of new curriculum developers and the training of those underpinning the support infrastructure – district education officers and quality assurance officers.

With many curricula being adjusted in response to the impact of the pandemic, some participants spoke of the need to pause for thought when reviewing curricula. What if there is another pandemic a few years from now? Will it mean more curriculum adjustments? The answer lies in a systemic approach that empowers teachers to deliver their lessons, and any reform of basic curricula should be in the context of the entire education system that is producing young people with the skills and competencies in line with a sustainable national strategy.

Looking forward to planning in 2021, for most countries it will be near impossible to achieve social distancing in schools given the already large class sizes. It is suggested that this should be an opportunity for government officials and ministries of education to show a bit of flexibility and creativity in what the school calendar looks like or to rethink their examinations culture. 2021 should not just be about focusing on getting young people to sit exams but how to support them, engage them and teach them in multiple settings at different times with flexible schedules. Is it possible for the 2021 school calendar to be in the service of the learners and their health? Or is that just wishful thinking?

Any digital transformation strategy in education must be built around the needs of the learner and this requires a few major areas of focus, including the capacity-building of teachers, data management, content management to enable digital repositories and device management. The student is the end user in the education ecosystem and in the same way that large tech companies create products by being very user-centric, equally a resilient education system must have a deep understanding of the learners. With learners comes the extended role of parents, especially as blended learning is being embraced more.

The experiences of this year mean policymakers are now considering a global approach that considers what their education systems will look like over the coming 10 to 20 years, including the need to

re-engineer teaching and learning with a hybrid approach that will impact the structure of the school day. In the future, learning will be 'anytime and anywhere' with possibly smaller group sizes rotating in classrooms.

Going forward, the consensus of a blended approach to education should be considerate of medium-term planning of effective e-learning solutions, social interaction in schools, social and psychosocial support, learner development and the guidance of teachers. Now is the time to be planning the use of current infrastructure, where resources can be better directed to ensure the infrastructure reaches more remote families, and with that the timetabling of how to facilitate children into smaller classroom groups.

## 2.7 Closing synthesis

Following the break-out sessions, the meeting closed with a synthesis provided by Jane Mann, Managing Director of Cambridge Partnership for Education.

Firstly, Jane Mann pointed out the common agreement that the most effective policymaking is based on evidence. However, the contradiction that has been shown by Covid is that just when we need that meaningful change more than ever, we also have limited suitable research and evidence to tackle the new challenges policymakers are facing. If we are going to produce the best policies in the future to recover and thrive, it is completely understandable that, of course, much of this year has been dedicated to finding rapid solutions to mitigate the impact of the school closures. The pandemic was a very urgent and unexpected event. So, there were emergency interventions, but the need to work quickly has meant that sometimes there has not been enough time to consult with wider stakeholders or consider research-based approaches.

Ten months into the crisis, we have the opportunity to take a step back and consider the broader view of what is working and what is not. Meeting in events like today is a critical part of the listening and learning process to generate the bases of understanding. We have already talked about how we can share, practise and collaborate more, but it is important to generate this base of common understanding. Along with other international conversations and primary research worldwide, this approach is helping us to build a bigger picture that can be used to shape effective education policy and practice moving forward.

So, we have our suspicions confirmed that school closures have had an impact on the attainment and engagement of learners. An example of this is the

Cambridge Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM), which is undertaking initial analysis of assessment data for UK primary schools, and comparing that with UK independent schools to see what the possible effects of school closures might be on people attainment and for reception pupils in England. We already see that there has been a decline in progress for children educated in the state system, which is not reflected for the children in independent schools. It is important to recognise from such data that, in general, the previous research by CEM found that children in English state school reception classes made slightly better progress than children in independent schools. So, this trend has reversed markedly in 2020. Thus, we are seeing that the impact of the school closures is not the same for all pupils, even within one country.



Moving forward, the following are suggestions of some principles that may help with proactive policymaking for coherent and resilient education systems post-Covid. Firstly, we are hearing that it is so important to gather a clear picture of the impact of the pandemic on education from the widest possible group of stakeholders. It is critical to make sure that we are looking at perspectives from all groups, particularly those who are hardest to reach. So, research around the world is pointing to the importance of considering rural and remote communities, gender equality, and special educational needs and disability, i.e. those for whom this crisis could potentially increase existing inequalities in a very worrying way. The speed and disruption of the pandemic have obviously made it more challenging to gather that broad range of perspectives. Our future plans have to be informed by a wealth of voices, and not only will that improve



the quality of policies and practices, but it will also help to ensure that they are well received, that they are widely supported and that they are more easily implemented.

The second point is to seek an understanding of the impact of those solutions that have already been put in place. A lot of these interventions were created and designed at a very fast pace without mechanisms for assessing their effectiveness. Thus, before moving forward, we must stop and understand what worked and what did not.

Thirdly, is to look at how government departments need to work more closely together. Everybody is talking about infrastructure issues, and we know that the scale of the crisis spans every aspect of economies and societies. So to understand the full impact of this pandemic, we have to liaise across departments and disciplines, in particular, those involved in health and social care and in labour, and coordinate the design of solutions to build the most coherent and resilient features. At Cambridge, there is the Wealth Economy Project at the Bennett Institute for Public Policy. They research policymaking for a sustainable 21st century world. Their recent report, called Building Forward, gives an insight into how the health, environmental, economic and social challenges that we are now facing are deeply intertwined and how investing in people holistically is a key component of resilient recovery.

Lastly, we need to design solutions based on these lessons. Our solutions must be directly informed by a thorough understanding of immediate context, as well as further relevant research and evidence that we can get hold of. So, working through principles like these and the others raised during this meeting brings important questions, and through these questions, we are likely to come up with much better, best fit as well as best practice policies. Hence this will probably include questions around inclusion and equity, progression of curricula from primary to pre-tertiary and beyond-hybrid models of learning, rethinking the delivery of teaching, how to support our teachers more effectively, and the role of community and parents. So, by looking at these key pillars, we will then start to understand the nuances and their priorities in our own national contexts. It is hoped that all the discussions during this meeting will help to provide some guidance on the journey to championing proactive policymaking. This is obviously not an easy task, but there is so much potential now to build resilient education systems for the future, which not only support recovery, but societies too. So, thank you very much to everyone for joining us today, I very much support us meeting again

- End -

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