



## **Ministry of Education**

# **Concept Note for Education Sector COVID 19-Preparedness and Response Plan**

*3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2020*

*Addis Ababa*

# Outline

1. Context .....	2
2. <b>Objective</b> .....	5
3. Strategies .....	6
4. Justification.....	8
5. Key Activities of the RP .....	10
5.1 Phase One Activities.....	10
5.2 Phase Two Activities.....	12
5.3 Phase Three Activities .....	14
6. Potential Challenges and Opportunities .....	15
7. Scenarios and Mitigation Strategies .....	16
8. Sustainability Issues .....	17
9. Monitoring and Evaluation .....	18
10. Roles and Responsibilities .....	19
11. Cost Breakdown and Result Matrix .....	20

## **Context**

On March 12, 2020, Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was declared by WHO as a Global Pandemic. The next day, the Minister of Health announced that the Ethiopian Public Health Institute had confirmed the first positive CoVID-19 test result in Ethiopia. Three days later, H.E Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered that all schools be closed across the country and banned all public gatherings including sports.

Over 26 million students from over 47,000 schools have been affected by the closure. Students and parents are encouraged to utilize the available media lessons broadcast through radio and TV media, including MoE's TV. Regional initiatives have been encouraging in their usage regional FM stations and TV. Teachers and students' initiative in volunteering to engage in awareness creation, psychological support and continuation of learning through social and the mainstream media is promising.

The Ministry of Education is developing different and innovative strategies to make sure that students stay connected through learning during this season. While e-learning has its own drawbacks in terms of equity and access, it is a great tool in such time when carefully employed as an option and shared through other means when feasible and substituted with equally suitable modalities to assure equity.

A month back, the Ministry introduced its six digital packages that it would like to deploy in enhancing quality of education. The packages are underway and would definitely be a long-term solution for incidents such as COVID 19. As the Ministry addresses the current education in emergency, it is empirical that much of the investment support long term solution.

The Ministry is engaging teachers, school leaders, counsellors, medical personnel and members of education forum and association during this crisis. Leaders of the Ethiopian teachers Association and the Ethiopian Parents Association has been involved in the planning session

from the initial establishment of the command post at the Federal level. Regions have been advised to do the same when they established their command post mirroring down to school level.

Vulnerable and disadvantaged children are being given special emphasis during this time since with crisis like CoVID 19, they will be the most affected. Community awareness and motivation through media is one of the strategies for making sure students stay connected and come back to school when it re-opens.

For the strategies to be timely and relevant, accessible and accurate data is foundational. With the Ministry already finalizing the data dashboard that adapted the EMIS data, digital communication between the schools and the Federal Ministry, giving access to all levels from Woreda up to Region is key. Hence, equipping each school with a digital device and connectivity will allow the Ministry aggregate data of teachers and students for targeting, mobilising, communicating and to be proactive. This is in particular practical for CoVID 19 spread prevention which restrict mobility and physical access.

School standards can be well managed through the developed dashboard where school profiles are described through a set of standards and a continuous follow up to meet standards. Supporting measures will be explored and accelerated including 'Back to School Campaigns' and community mobilization initiatives through media, volunteers and the community as a whole.

## **Objective**

The main objective of Education Sector Emergency Response Concept Note is mainly to pursue education disrupted by the incidence of COVID 19 pandemic for about more than 26 million students. This intervention has a great potential to contain the spread of the coronavirus through an active engagement of students at home by assuring their connection to learning and development of their life skill.

## **Strategies**

The Federal Ministry of Education strategies provide clear and actionable guidance for safe operations through the prevention, early detection and control of COVID-19 in schools and other educational facilities. Using the new education dashboard, the Ministry will work on upgrading school and make informed decision based on a much better and timely data. The Ministry will be able to proactively work on crisis management. The strategies provide recommendations for the continuity of learning at all levels while schools are closed due to COVID19 including the use of digital technology such as e-learning secondary education and multi-media channels for primary schools.

Considering the negative influence, the pandemic will have on the national economy; there will be a significant number of vulnerable students that require economic support from the government. The Ministry of Education intends to support those most vulnerable through school feeding. Vulnerable and disadvantaged children are being given special emphasis during this time since with crisis like CoVID 19, they will be the most affected. Community awareness and motivation through media is one of the strategies for making sure students stay connected and come back to school when it re-opens.

In summary, the Ministry of Education is committed to quickly mitigate the current disorder of academic calendar through introduction of innovative technology, creating awareness on hygiene and sanitation and facilitating a support program for needy and venerable children in collaboration with development partners, civic society and the community. To run-out the proper safe school operation requires the establishment of clear procedures and guidelines for schools to deal with COVID19 in preparation for their opening.

## Justification

---

Ethiopia is at the centre of multiple humanitarian emergencies and at a very vulnerable position threatening children's survival, well-being and exposure to harm and abuse. This is further exacerbated when children are not accessing learning opportunities. Communities that were already vulnerable due to effects of drought and conflict (1,733,628 people are internally displaced according to IOM Ethiopia; about 30% are school aged children - <https://dtm.iom.int/ethiopia>) now face increased pressure even as they struggle to recover.

Covid-19 is threatening countries' economies with reduced incomes arising from restrictions of movement as well as interactions. It is also disrupting the functions of schools and educational efforts as a whole. To deal with this, the education sector should continue sensitizing about appropriate hygienic and sanitary practices and providing continued learning opportunities through Digital Technology, Radio and TV lessons and other viable modalities.

Existing data on school drop-out clearly show that when school-going children are subjected to extended periods of absence from schools, they would be at a higher risk of increased teenage pregnancy, early marriage, physical (child labour) and sexual exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, learners in grades 8 and 12 who are preparing to take their national exams could be affected if they don't receive support at home or neighbourhood level.

At the moment availing both home and neighbourhood support have their own limitations. On the one hand, in the Ethiopian context, implementing home based study approach might not be effective for most students since parents could not give academic support for their kids due to a number of reasons. In the list of the reasons are found illiteracy, degree of awareness about the importance of the support and shortage of curriculum materials along with their having not been designed in ways that promote interactive approach. On the other, letting learners move here and there in their localities for obtaining support results in increased mobility and group interaction which might, in turn lead to the spread of the virus at larger scales.

Thus, because of this lack of support at both levels, the disruption of learning is more likely to lead to higher failure rate and consequently to lower transition rate to secondary schools and tertiary education. In general, the education sector would be highly affected if the pandemic could not be contained in the shortest possible time. It is, therefore, important to develop effective strategies to deal with the situation.

### **Key Activities for Response**

---

In order to respond to the emergency created and ensure the continuity of learning at all levels while schools are closed, the Ministry of Education has developed the following strategies:

- Maximize the efforts of awareness creation modalities to reach majority of students, teachers and at large to community to prevent the spread of the Pandemic Virus.
- Creating awareness on hygiene, sanitation and healthy way of life on the whole]
- Avail digital technology such as e-learning for secondary education
- Utilizing multi-media channels such as TV and radio broadcasts for accessing primary school children
- Undertaking school feeding by selecting the most vulnerable and children living in areas where food insecurity is prevalent
- Establishing support programs for needy children in collaboration with development partners, civic society and community at large.

### **Activities**

This concept note considers three modalities for different group of students:

1. **Digital Learning:** technology-based approach, potentially can address few groups of students who have access to internet and private technology equipment. (Digitalized learning content with Computer/tablet/smart phone to access internet-based resources on the web or on social media)

2. **Audio-Video Programs:** which potentially address large group of people, through repackaging all digital and non-digital curricular contents to be transmitted through TV and Radio.
3. **Material Distribution:** Distributing the repackaged digital and non-digital curricular contents for unreached children through connected devices and hardcopies. This includes teachers and educational leaders on home visiting and SMS contacts between teachers and parents to check students are on the right track.

Based on the above modalities the following costed key activities drafted with an estimated cost of 22,013,550,000.00 ETB will be implemented in three phases.

### ***First Phase***

During the first phase of this response the education sector requires an estimated amount of **4.7 Billion ETB**, of which about 7% is expected from education development partners.

- Adequate structure will be established, and the necessary ad-hoc structure will be in place to effectively resume learning during the school closed periods **(already in place)**
- Improve the communication channel of the sector through the support Digital Technology ( MoE, REBs and WEOs) to monitor the spread of Covid-19 (5,000,000 ETB)
- Enhancing the capacity of regional education bureau to develop context specific COVID 19 presentation, treatment and psychosocial support by using electronic and printed media. **(1,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Repacking and uploading all curricular materials including digitalized subject content and textbooks on the ministry website and other social media. **(1,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Mobilizing volunteer university professors, primary and secondary school teachers to record subject contents, develop worksheet, assignment and tests with adequate answer keys and explanation. **(500,000.00 ETB)**



- Launching the Radio and TV remote/distance learning program by using the existing digitalized curricular content for secondary education: **(ongoing using existing resources)**
- Enhancing the capacity of regional education bureau to podcast radio program for primary school with progressive approach. **(230,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Providing reading and assignment package for unreached children **(400,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Providing safety kits for home visitor teachers **(75,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Providing the necessary WASH and safety equipment for schools that serves as quarantine center for COVID 19 infected/suspected persons **(4,000,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Providing parental education about how parents/caregivers can help their children **(50,000.00 ETB)**

### ***Second Phase***

During the second phase, the education sector demands **15.9 Billion ETB**, of which 80% the amount is expected to be financed by Safety Net Program.

- Introducing the digital technology for the education system to leverage teaching and learning during and after COVID 19 **(1,880,000,000.00 ETB)**
  - Enhancing the capacity of the education system to improve the data management system to promote evidence-based planning and accountability **(100,000,000.00 ETB)**
  - Renting satellite to broadcast learning via radio and TV **(180,000,000.00 ETB)**
  - Introducing the digital connectivity of 1500 secondary schools **(100,000,000.00)**
  - Procuring and distributing context specific connected devices (Tablets/Radio) for Grade 12 Students, teachers and hard to reach children **(1,500,000,000.00)**
- Preparing, piloting, validating and conducting Grade 12 national school leaving online examination **(20,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Re printing Grade 1-12 textbooks **(6,000,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Providing support for home based student feeding programs (managed by other sectors) **(8,000,000.00 ETB)**

- Support teachers for safe home visiting and SMS contacts between parents and children **(1,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Developing digitalized training content for teachers to adapt curricular materials to suite for accelerated learning pedagogy to fill the gap of the current remote learning when schools are re-open **(2,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Developing and disseminating psychosocial training packages with different mode of delivery approach **(2,000,000.00 ETB)**

### ***Third Phase***

During the third phase, the education sector demands **1.04 Billion ETB.**

- Maintaining the school WASH (toilets, tap-water, and MHM) facilities, providing water tanker and other sanitary materials for schools that served as a quarantine center **(200,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Conducting back to school campaign with particular emphasis on girls and students with special needs **(1,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Conducting mass mobilization to have the WASH facilities in all schools **(1,000,000,000.00 ETB)**
- Conducting make-up classes for all levels of school to fill the gap of remote learning.
- Expanding and strengthening the introduction of digital technology as for secondary schools to leverage teaching and learning **(200,000,000 ETB)**

The following are the scenarios expected and strategies developed to respond to them

#### **Potential Challenges:**

- Inconsistency of the world situation / contemporaries/--- the spread of the virus,
- The political and economic situation of donor countries and economic crises of the country due to inflation
- Capacity limitation of the education sector to deliver the intended activities (preparation of supportive documents, procuring goods and services on time,

transporting and distributing materials... poor data quality management system, supplier's capacity to manage and deliver the required goods and service for students)

- Low commitment of implementers (officers, teachers, parents,) and limitations in capacity and absence of rewards for good doing
- Weak coordination among stakeholders (donors might not disburse budget as of agreed schedule and amount in the pool system)

### **Potential Opportunities**

- Political commitment of the GoE and international community.
- Common interest developed by stakeholders to strengthen the partnership for fighting the pandemic. Donors have expressed consent to pool technical and financial support – from existing projects as well additional ones)
- Common understanding developed about the future impact of virus in the education sector all over the world.
- Awareness on the fact that the case is intertwined with everyone's personal survival and its being a cause for collaboration and working together.
- Introduction of a new adaptable innovation and technology for the sectors by the MOE in the case of which key priorities have been identified and paper work started.

### **Sustainability Issues**

- Data system capacity will be improved from the investment on technology and experience gained on crises management and response mechanism
- Investment on technology will have positive impact on the future outcomes of the education sector
- The system will be strengthened and readied to meet any future occurring emergencies
- The time of learning lost to the pandemic will be compensated; this will contribute to the improvement of internal efficiency of the system and consequently student learning outcome.
- Lasting behavioral change with regard to health and healthy practices

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

A system of monitoring and evaluation which would help the achievement of the emergency plan of action will be put in place. This includes the following:

- Regular monitoring of the activities planned to be undertaken
- Provision of feedback on strengths and limitations as a basis for better accomplishment of tasks at hand
- Periodic evaluation of progress towards the implementation of the plan
- Provision of direction and support to enhance degrees of implementation

## **Risk Mitigation Measures**

---

Based on experience with other public health crises, it is anticipated that schools would be closed for an extended period of time. During this time, it is important to look for ways of keeping children learning to the extent possible and support the well-being of children, families, caregivers, and service providers. Following the closure of schools, the MOE set-up task forces to develop scenarios and organize data on the number of schools that are closed/opened, number of children who are back to school etc and keep concerned bodies updated on how the situation is evolving overtime.

Moreover, the MOE is taking the lead in developing a responses strategy in collaboration with the Education cluster and its members to mobilize efforts and resources for timely and effective response to the emergency. The MOE is looking at ways to make up for not having completed the school year compounded by likely learning loss as well as the effects of the stress of the crisis. This can place enormous burdens on all actors as well as the children themselves. Whether schools remain closed for an extended period or return to normal after two weeks, developing mitigation strategy is important through the identification of risk factors.

Anticipating that schools will reopen after a month, there will likely be a learning loss, stress and high dropout rates among school children. The following strategies should be implemented to mitigate such effects:

- Disinfecting schools and rehabilitation of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene system of schools

- Working with partners to reach children and families with key prevention and psychosocial support messages through TV, Radio and mini-media outlets at all levels including community and school level
- Conducting make-up classes on weekends or/ and after-school hours during week days to compensate missed classes
- Equipping schools with washing facilities and detergents, and continuing school feeding programs in order to minimize dropout rates arising from fear and anxiety

**The following table provides a summary of the scenarios.**

No	Scenario	Risk factor	Mitigation strategy
1	Schools reopen after a month	Stress	Age and culturally appropriate messages targeting school children should be developed and transmitted through TV, radio and mini-media outlets at community and school levels.
		Learning loss	To minimize the learning loss among pre-school, primary and secondary school children, catch-up classes should be organized on the weekend/extra hours during week days to compensate missed classes.
		Dropouts	To increase the chances of children returning to school, provide hand washing facilities, school feeding and ensure schools are safe for children to resume normal

			schooling. Ensure teachers are supportive of children and provide psychosocial support to encourage continued attendance and learning.
2	Schools remain closed for an extended period beyond a month	Learning loss	As children remain at home and are disengaged from learning, there is high likelihood of stress and boredom that may result in lack of interest in learning. The MOE and all concerned should devise ways to mobilize resources to start e-learning through TV broadcast using the national and regional TV channels, However, given that Ethiopia is a country with 85% of its population living in rural areas with limited access to TV broadcasting, education should be provided through radio where huge resources will be required.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

**Education Sector:** - Overseas, executes and ensures the proper utilization of mobilized resources.

**Other Sectors in the Government:-** Are responsible for collaborating with the education sector on selected activities.

**Education Development Partners:-** Are responsible in collaborating with the government in filling the funding gap and providing the technical assistance.



### Cost Breakdown and Result Matrix

Activity	INDICATORS	TARGET	Budget	Means of Verification / Source	March	April	May	June	July	Responsibility	Assumptions
<b>Phase 1 (4,707,550,000.00 ETB)</b>											
Activity 1.1 Adequate structure will be established and the necessary ad_hoc structure will be in place to effectively resume learning during the school closed periods (already in placed)	No of established taskforce	12		MoE and REB Reports and Feedback							
Activity 1.2 Enhancing the capacity of regional education bureau to develop context specific COVID 19 prevention, treatment and psycho social support by using electronic and printed media.	No Media Spot and Campaign conducted	100	1,000,00 0.00	MoE and REB Reports and Feedback							



Activity 1.3 Repacking and Uploading all curricular materials including digitalized subject content and text books on the ministry website and other social medias	No of Curricular Materials uploaded	200	1,000,00 0.00							\	
Activity 1.4 Mobilizing volunteer university professors, primary and secondary school teachers to develop worksheet, assignment and tests with adequate answer keys and explanation	No of curricular contents	200	500,000. 00								
Activity 1.5 Lunching the Radio and TV remote/distance learning program by using the existing digitalized curricular content for secondary education: April 8, 2010	No of Secondary School	3500									

Activity 1.6 Enhancing the capacity of regional education bureau to podcast radio program for primary school with progressive approach, Primary Grade 5-8 will be April 15, 2020 then to primary first cycle	No of regions started radio program		230,000,000.00								
Activity 1.7 Providing the reading and assignment package for unreached children	No of beneficiary student	2 million	400,000,000.00								
Activity 1.8 Providing safety kits for home visitors teachers	No of teachers benifited	500 Thousen ds	75,000,000.00								
Activity 1.9 Providing the necessary WASH and Safety Equipment for schools serve as quarantine center for COVID 19 infected/suspected persons	No of Schools	2000	4,000,000,000.00								4,000,000,000.00
Activity 1.10 Providing parental education about how can	No of lessons		50,000								

parents/caregivers helps their children											
Phase 2 (1,905,000,000.00)											
Activity 2.1 Re printing Grade 1-12 text book	No of beneficiery Student	2 million	6,000,000.000.00								
Activity 2.2 Introducing the digital technology for the education system to leverage teaching and learning during and after COVID 19											
Activity 2.2.1 Enhancing the capacity of the education system to improve the data management system to promote evidence-based planning and accountability	No of Data System	12 MoE and Regions	100,000,000.00								
Activity 2.2.2 Renting satellite to podcast learning via radio and TV	No of channels		180,000,000.00								

Activity 2.2.3 Improving the digital connectivity of 1500 secondary schools	No of Secondary Schools		100,000,000.00							
Activity 2.2.3 Procuring and distributing context specific connected devices (Tablets/Radio) for Grade 12 Students, teachers and hard to reach children	No of Beneficiary students and teachers	1 million	1,500,000,000.00							
Activity 2.3 Preparing, Piloting and Validating the online test for national Grade 12 Examination	No of Student	450000	20,000,000.00							
Activity 2.4 Providing support for Home based feeding programs (managed by other sectors)	No of Student	4 Milliom	8,000,000,000.00							80000000
Activity 2.4 Support teachers for safety home visiting operation and SMS contacts between parents and children	No of Teachers	500000	1,000,000.00							

Activity 2.6 Developing digitalized training content for teachers to adapt their curricular materials to suite for accelerated learning pedagogy to implement catch up class in the classroom when schools are ready	No of Digitalized Content	20	2,000,00 0.00							
Activity 2.7 Developing and disseminating psycho social training packages with different mode of delivery approach	No of Digitalized Content	20	2,000,00 0.00							
Phase 3 (402,000,000.00)										
Activity 3.1 Renovating the WASH infrastructure, providing water tanker and other sanitary materials for schools served as quarantine center.	No of Schools	2000	200,000, 000.00							200,000,000.0 0
Activity 3.2 Conducting back to school campaign	Media Campaign		1,000,00 0.00							

Activity 3.3 Conducting Mass Mobilization to universalize the WASH facilities in all schools	No of Schools	20,000	1,000,000.00								1,000,000,000.00
Activity 3.4 Conducting Catch up class for all level of school to finalize the lost period of 2012 E.C Academic calendar	No of schools	47000									
Activity 3.5 Expanding and strengthening the introduction of digital technology for the secondary schools to leverage teaching and learning.	No of Schools	3000	2000000.00								