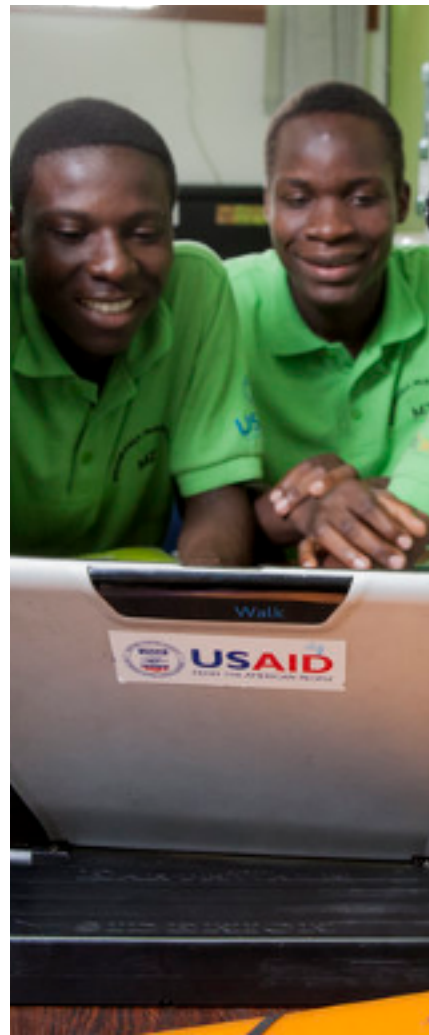# COVID-19 RESPONSE:
PIVOT STORIES

Basic Education Coalition
Last Updated: May 22, 2020

THE CONTEXT

About the Basic Education Coalition

The Basic Education Coalition (BEC) is a group of leading US-based organizations and academic institutions working together to promote global peace and prosperity through education. By leveraging our collective technical expertise and combining advocacy efforts, BEC members raise a unified voice to ensure US policy makers support and strengthen education for the developing world.

Background Information

Throughout the world, societies transmit not only knowledge and skills, but ethical and behavioral norms and traditions through their education systems, all of which help to reduce poverty and conflict. The importance of education increases in times of crisis, as schools are seen as the heart of the community, a symbol of a more hopeful future, and the source of education, meals, and refuge. The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) states that "funding for education response should be given equal priority with water, food, shelter and health responses to ensure education provision...[during emergencies]." Even before the COVID-19 crisis, the number of displaced persons in the world had reached historic highs, making access to education a frequent challenge. According to UNESCO, over 1.5 billion children (nearly 90% of enrolled learners), are currently out of school because of COVID-19 — a figure the United Nations expects to continue to increase. While these nationwide school closures in 188 countries (and rising) are necessary to contain the virus, they are projected to disrupt learning, nutrition, child safety, and the economy—to name only a few impacted areas. USAID is mobilizing agency-wide on a multi-sector COVID-19 response, and BEC member organizations are adapting international education programs to meet learners' new and evolving needs during this crisis.

Purpose:

The Basic Education Coalition (BEC) developed this document to highlight how international education programs are adapting to meet new learner needs that have emerged due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Specifically, the purpose of this document is to:

Share the innovative ways implementing organizations are continuing to provide learning opportunities during COVID-19.

Using this evidence, advocate for the importance of continued education during times of crisis.

Provide resources, strategic approaches, and information for organizations adapting to the new operating environment.

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Pivot Stories

The below "pivot stories" are listed in alphabetical order by implementer name. This is intended to be a living document, which will be updated as program adjustments are carried out.

Cambridge Education

Ghana is embarking upon the most ambitious and comprehensive set of teacher education reforms in its history, producing inspiring teachers who encourage critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. Reforms are overseen by the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) with support from Transforming Teacher Education and Learning, a Government of Ghana program funded by UK aid and implemented by Cambridge Education.

At the beginning of the second semester, Ghana instituted a nationwide ban on public meetings and indefinitely closed learning institutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The NCTE acted quickly, establishing a Virtual Learning Taskforce to ensure that teacher education could continue online. Learning materials have been made available through an online resource hub. Ninety percent of student teachers have registered for lessons delivered through virtual platforms.

However, efforts will only be successful if they reach *all* student teachers, including those living with disabilities, or who live in areas without mobile phone coverage, lack the money to purchase devices, or are expected to carry out chores instead of attending online classes. Cambridge Education is collaborating with learning institutions to develop guidelines that consider the needs all learners. Data is examined weekly to identify low attendance or where classes have not taken place, and Cambridge will soon be able to track individual attendance to identify and address barriers.

From this pivot experience, Cambridge has seen the advantages of blended learning. The need to ensure that all resource hub materials are inclusive has raised awareness of a free braille and text-to-speech translation tool. Virtual lesson observation means tutors don't have to make long trips across country. The realization that large-scale online learning is possible could help address the inevitable increased demand for higher education following 2017's Free Senior High School policy. What Cambridge and the NCTE learn from this crisis can contribute to Ghana's vision of a truly world class – and inclusive – teacher education system.

For more information, contact daniel.waistell@camb-ed.com.

Creative Associates International

To respond to the COVID-19 crisis, Creative Associates International quickly mobilized under a "keep safe-keep healthy-keep learning" framework to prioritize its pivot activities. Drawing on its experience supporting education in crisis settings, Creative's pivot strategy is based on stages of emergency—mitigation, response, recovery, and prevention. To effect a quick pivot, Creative's initial approach is to repurpose existing project resources and networks, such as parent-teacher phone contact lists and supplementary learning

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materials, to deliver both messages and virtual materials to households that promote safety, health, and continued learning. To make sure needs are known and met, Creative conducts rapid phone surveys with households and school staff to better understand the field environment.

The USAID-funded Northern Education Initiative (NEI) Plus project, an early grade reading reform program implemented by Creative in Sokoto and Bauchi states, immediately developed a first-response—a simple iPhone-shot video of children correctly washing their hands to prevent the spread of COVID-19. To increase accessibility, subtitles in Hausa and English subtitles provided proper hand-washing instructions. The video was shared with over 20,000 contacts via WhatsApp and Facebook. Another education project translated the video into four additional languages for broadcast on television in Borno state. The video is simple, straightforward, and relatable.

NEI Plus has demonstrated significant improvement in children's reading skills. To

maintain these gains and support continued learning, it has created a series of audio literacy lessons for Primary 1-3 students based on its MuKaranta (Let's Read) materials, using simple voice recording devices with local voice talent. These Interactive Voice Responses (IVR) messages are based upon specific lessons in the student textbooks, targeted at one grade level per day. Through songs, games, and stories, the

audio program reinforces the assigned lesson in the textbook. COVID-19 and SEL messages are woven into the program. The lessons reach more than 20,000 parents and students in Bauchi and Sokoto. Currently Hausa and English lessons are being broadcast with a plan to move ahead with radio broadcasting in collaboration with Bauchi and Sokoto states governments.

The USAID-funded Afghan Children Read (ACR) project is

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leveraging its experience developing supplementary reading materials for Grades 1-3 students to raise awareness of the spread and prevention of COVID-19 among children and their families. ACR is developing a new set of supplementary reading materials in both Dari and Pashto languages to provide children and their families with accurate information about the virus while they practice reading at home. The readers include information on handwashing, face covering, and social distancing, presented through realistic storylines, such as children's experiences of the COVID-19 epidemic, managing stress as a family, and learning at home. Digitized using Bloom software, the readers will be accessible to students, parents, and teachers online via the Afghan Ministry of Education's website and social media platforms and linked with media platforms created for the newly launched Iqraa Afghanistan National Reading Campaign. In Nangarhar province, school management committees or "shuras" have drawn on their knowledge of social emotional learning (SEL) and community mobilization skills, developed under ACR, to provide the extra support that their children need to cope with the uncertainty caused by school shutdowns and re-establish the normalcy and routine that attending school usually brings. One shura has initiated an awareness campaign to encourage families in their community to undertake appropriate safety measures. Reaching parents by phone, letter, and broadcasts via mosque loudspeaker systems, it provided families with information about public health and coronavirus prevention measures. Members showed parents how to introduce learning routines at home, using children's educational television and radio programs. ACR is mobilizing shuras throughout its pilot provinces to provide similar support to families and ensure children across Afghanistan continue to develop both SEL and literacy skills at home.

In Ethiopia, the READ II project, in partnership with Whiz Kids Workshop, is supporting educational radio and television programming for home-bound children focusing on early grade reading and mother tongue literacy. The Tsehai Loves Learning series comprises forty USAID-funded video episodes in seven local languages. Videos will be televised and radio-adapted content broadcast throughout 6 regions of Ethiopia. Complementary multi-media Public Service Announcements target both children and parents/caregivers, promoting the availability of the program and providing guidance to parents on how to engage with their children at home.

For more information contact karent@creativedc.com

Education Development Center

The ongoing pandemic has caused EDC to pivot back to an old and reliable ally in the distance education space: interactive audio instruction (IAI). EDC has an extensive catalog of legacy IAI programs, comprising thousands of hours of instruction, in a variety of languages (English, Spanish, French, Malagasy, Chichewa, Bamanankan, Songhai, Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili, and Somali) and across a variety of subjects (literacy, math, social studies, science, foreign and

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second language instruction, and life skills). All program content is aligned to standards and best practices and was validated by ministries of education at the time the programs were developed.

Governments, donors, and other stakeholders have reached out to EDC to explore how existing audio programs could be used during the COVID-19 crisis. These IAI programs can be repurposed for broadcast, with minimal investment, to rapidly provide education to children in a number of countries while schools are closed. Therefore, EDC has developed a set of guidelines for repurposing the existing IAI programs and is assembling program packages, including audio files, related workbooks, teacher guides, scope and sequence documents, and even scripts (if still available). EDC has posted the guidelines on its COVID-19 International Resource page, which also includes its program catalog with details and links to a variety of research documents, IAI tool kits, and other resources. The article "The Case for Learning by Radio: Teacher Support, Wide Accessibility, and Hands-on Experience in the Classroom" provides additional information

on EDC's IAI and the advantages of using audio during this crisis.

For more information about adjustments to EDC's programming, please contact hboyle@edc.org.

Food for the Hungry

As millions of children around the world continue to be affected by COVID-19 and related school closures, Food for the Hungry (FH) is working to support families with a multi-sectoral response that includes COVID-19 prevention messaging, food distribution, livelihoods assistance, WASH services, and supporting

families and caregivers with at-home learning, positive parenting, and psycho-social support.

In the Dominican Republic (DR), FH staff are reaching out to caregivers through WhatsApp, phone calls, SMS, and other technologies to help caregivers to access online learning platforms, educational radio, and TV programs for the most vulnerable families. FH is providing printed at-home learning packets, in coordination with the Ministry of Education, to ensure no student is left behind. In collaboration with local schools, FH set up WhatsApp groups to facilitate the transfer of school lessons and assignments to families, and the return of

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student work to teachers. Teachers supply Food for the Hungry with lists of students who are not engaging or submitting work on WhatsApp, and FH follows up with those families to discuss barriers to technology access and identify areas of support for learning such as tutoring, school supplies provision, and other needs.

Food for the Hungry Dominican Republic is also working with local community leaders and volunteers to report cases of domestic violence, distribute and collect school work to those who do not have access to the internet, and facilitate virtual discussion groups with caregivers to encourage family learning activities. After-school literacy clubs continue to function through WhatsApp groups. Through this program in the DR, FH has reached 7,843 children through 160 online messaging groups.

For more information about Food for the Hungry's education programming, click here. For more information about Food for the Hungry's global COVID-19 response, click here or contact leasterbrooks@fh.org.

IREX

As countries cancel classes, close school buildings, and adapt instruction for distance formats, teachers are a critical source of connection and continuity for their students. This is especially true in conflict-affected areas like the Ninevah and Anbar governorates of Iraq, where the impact of violence and trauma under Da'esh occupation is evidenced in serious mental health challenges for children and youth. With funding from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), IREX is supporting educators in Anbar and Ninevah to effectively address their students' needs.

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, IREX trained a network of ethnically and religiously diverse educators in Ninevah and Anbar to promote safe and protective school-based learning environments. In response to school closures, IREX is now preparing teachers to pivot towards distance provision of emotional support and learning opportunities. Trainings address what

teachers need most, beginning with resources to provide for their own self-care at a time of heightened stress and including strategies to work remotely with students and to identity warning signs of domestic violence, which often increases during a crisis.

While Internet access in Ninevah and Anbar is limited, IREX has found over two years of programming that teachers are able use WhatsApp to participate in training, as well as to share remote teaching and student support strategies. IREX recently published an Online Collaboration Guide for Facilitators that can help teacher trainers and educational leaders to assess digital readiness and conduct effective virtual meetings, workshops, learning sessions, and trainings.

For more information contact rbell@irex.org.

Room to Read

Room to Read is in the process of pivoting to address the current state of education with most schools in the world closed. In the meantime, Room to Read has several resources at the ready, such as digital books in multiple languages

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available for download here, which are free and accessible to anyone. Room to Read has hundreds of titles as well as read aloud videos available on literacycloud.org, also free and open to all.

Room to Read is conducting individual mentoring via telephone with secondary school students in their girls' education program. The team is identifying existing and emerging distribution channels to distribute hard copy reading and learning materials to students. Room to Read is also looking to adapt life skills curriculum, literacy and reading activities for distance learning via radio, mobile, computers, or other methods.

For more information contact heather.simpson@roomtoread.org.

RTI International

RTI is using evidence-based solutions to help clients and partners mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within their education portfolio, RTI is working with clients to adapt activities to can continue to support learning goals during school closures. In Liberia, the USAID/Read Liberia team has been working with the Ministry
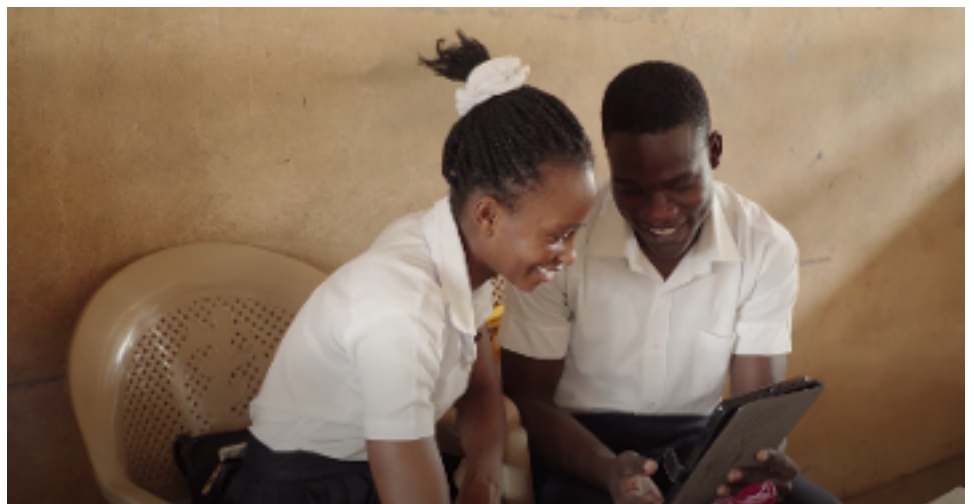
of Education to retool early grade reading teachers guides for use in radio instruction. The first episodes of "Learning to Read via Radio Instruction" have already aired. In Jordan, the USAID-funded RAMP activity put worksheets and lessons online for parents to use at home with their children. They are also developing brief TV spots showing parents how to support their children when they are out of school. In Tanzania, RTI has developed a Remote Support Plan for teachers that uses WhatsApp groups to offer a series of weekly prompts to teachers around a learning theme. RTI's team in Malawi is developing a similar remote training for teachers using a combination of SMS and WhatsApp. All Children Reading in Cambodia posts simple story books on

Facebook as albums with a variety of activities for students. The stories are also provided in video, including Cambodian Sign Language, which has been particularly helpful for Sign Language learners and for parents who are not strong readers.

Lastly, RTI has created tools and resources to support the wider education community and contribute to our collective learning during these periods. "Think before you Link" is a blog post that presents considerations (around identifying the purpose, access, and content) when sharing links to online books, ideas for offline literacy activities and recommended online book sources. Another blog post, "Going Virtual: Reflections and Key Considerations"

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summarizes best practices in distance learning to help guide the transition from in-person to virtual delivery of educational content.

For more information, contact jbulat@rti.org.

Save the Children

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the USAID-funded "ENABLE BiH" project provided 3D printers and STEM training to 12 partnering public schools across the country and three state universities, as well as the "INTERA" Tech Park. These 3D printers have not only increased the STEM students' capacity but, most recently, the ENABLE BiH team has been coordinating efforts with all stakeholders and experts across the region to optimize the 3D printers in the fight against the spread of COVID-19. Despite the countrywide curfew and school shutdowns, teachers are working in empty classrooms to produce critical face shields used by medical staff treating virus patients, and there are plans to produce other life-saving equipment as well. This work has proven particularly essential during this crisis, given the public

healthcare system's lack of preparation in response to the pandemic. The ENABLE BiH team has been (remotely) closely collaborating with all project partners to prioritize meeting the most urgent needs during this crisis and to ramp up production quickly, anticipating the production of approximately 1500 shields, using biodegradable filament.

For more information contact ptibbetts@savechildren.org.

Teach for All

Across the Teach For All network, teachers and educators are working hard to ensure millions of children affected from school closure are able to continue learning in the context of COVID-19. At the global level, Teach for All's Virtual Learning Navigator provides examples, templates, and tips for creating strong knowledge products and virtual learning experiences for adults. These resources may help implementers as they adjust to virtual interactions with project staff.

Many of the same principles may be applied to virtual learning for children as well. Hundreds of teachers around the world have

joined "Teaching Without Internet" WhatsApp groups in Spanish, French, Arabic, and English (developed by Teach For All) to share resources for reaching students in the most under-resourced contexts. Due to high demand, group members are now self-organizing to lead targeted virtual workshops on topics like using WhatsApp for learning and using SMS/voice for learning. If your organization is interested in learning more about these groups, please reach out to the email provided below.

Throughout the network, Teach for All participants and alumni are also taking various actions in response to COVID19. Enseña Perú participants created a COVID19 awareness campaign, making videos in indigenous languages to share them across communities. Teach For Nigeria fellows organized themselves to develop lesson plans for primary grades 1-6. They are recording lessons of up to 45 minutes and disseminating them on the government's radio station, thus reaching all students in public and private schools in their state. Teach For Morocco teachers supporting early education programs have been relying on WhatsApp and

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Facebook to coordinate with parents and using voice memos to reach illiterate caretakers.

For more stories and resources like those highlighted above, see this blog or check the Teach for All website.

For specific questions, please contact Kim Baskin at kim.baskin@teachforall.org.

Worldreader

Worldreader has launched Keep Children Reading. It features free access to their newest reading program, BookSmart, designed for use on basic cell phones everywhere in Africa, India, the Middle East and Latin America.

The BookSmart app contains more than 75 great local and global books in English, Spanish, Hindi, and Arabic. It's full of tips to get parents and children reading together while schools are closed. So far, 40,000 new users have used the application.

In addition, Worldreader is adding new titles to their free Worldreader reading app for older students and young adults, which is available on mobile phones everywhere. It features hundreds of books for learning and pleasure, in categories such as Life Skills, Farming, Health – even Love. Over 120,000 people already read from this app each month. For more information contact carold@worldreader.org.

World Vision

The All Children Reading Grand Challenge (a partnership of USAID, World Vision, and the Australian Government) has funded dozens of innovations to improve literacy and learning outcomes for children who have limited to no access to books, quality education, or personalized learning. These solutions are intended to support children in low-resource contexts, but can be used to support the learning needs of children anywhere. These solutions are available in multiple languages for free and, once downloaded, do not require a continuous Internet connection. These innovations were spotlighted in a blog on All Children Reading's website here.

For more information contact branderson@worldvision.org.

Resources

Click on the buttons below to access each resource.

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
COVID-19 guidance to implementing partners

COVID-19 AND EDUCATION: INITIAL INSIGHTS FOR PREPAREDNESS, PLANNING AND RESPONSE

EDUCATIONLINKS
Education Resources in Response to Coronavirus

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
Coronavirus (COVID-19) resource collection

ECDAN Early Childhood Development Action Network
Early Childhood Focused COVID-19 resources

UNESCO
Distance learning solutions

Save the Children
Coronavirus and Kids resources

EDC Learning transforms lives.
International Resources for the COVID-19 Crisis

mEducation Alliance
COVID-19 ICT4E resources from members

United Nations
Socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 report

To submit resources or examples of support to education during COVID-19, email pmorencynotario@basiced.org.

Education is one of the most important tools for success in our world. During these uncertain times, we must do whatever we can to protect basic education and learning however we can. Distance learning must be prioritized to help provide quality education to our children. I am proud to partner with my colleagues to fight for this critical service.
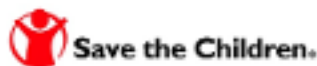
— Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Co-Chair of the Congressional International Basic Education Caucus

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