# COVID-19 RESPONSE:
# PIVOT STORIES

## Basic Education Coalition

Last Updated: April 15, 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.

## 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 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.

*"We've learned from past outbreaks that continued education and distance learning can help children and families cope with the disruption to their daily lives. Including education in USAID's multi-sector strategic response to COVID-19 will ensure that international education programs provide learning opportunities for vulnerable children and youth who now face a heightened risk of delayed development, exploitation, and drop out."*

*— Nancy Devine, BEC Co-Chair and Senior Vice President of the Education Development Center*

# Pivot Stories



*I believe education is the single greatest force multiplier in foreign aid.*

*— Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY)*

## 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 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.

## 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.

# Pivot Stories

## 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 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

# Pivot Stories



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 for free.

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.

*"While these school closures are necessary to reduce the spread of the virus, USAID must take immediate action, so no child's education is stalled during these difficult and challenging times, parents and teachers need access to online tools and resources to continue educating all children, including those with disabilities,while their schools are closed for the unforeseeable future."*

*— Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL), Co-Chair of the Congressional International Basic Education Caucus*

# Resources

Click on the buttons below to access each resource.

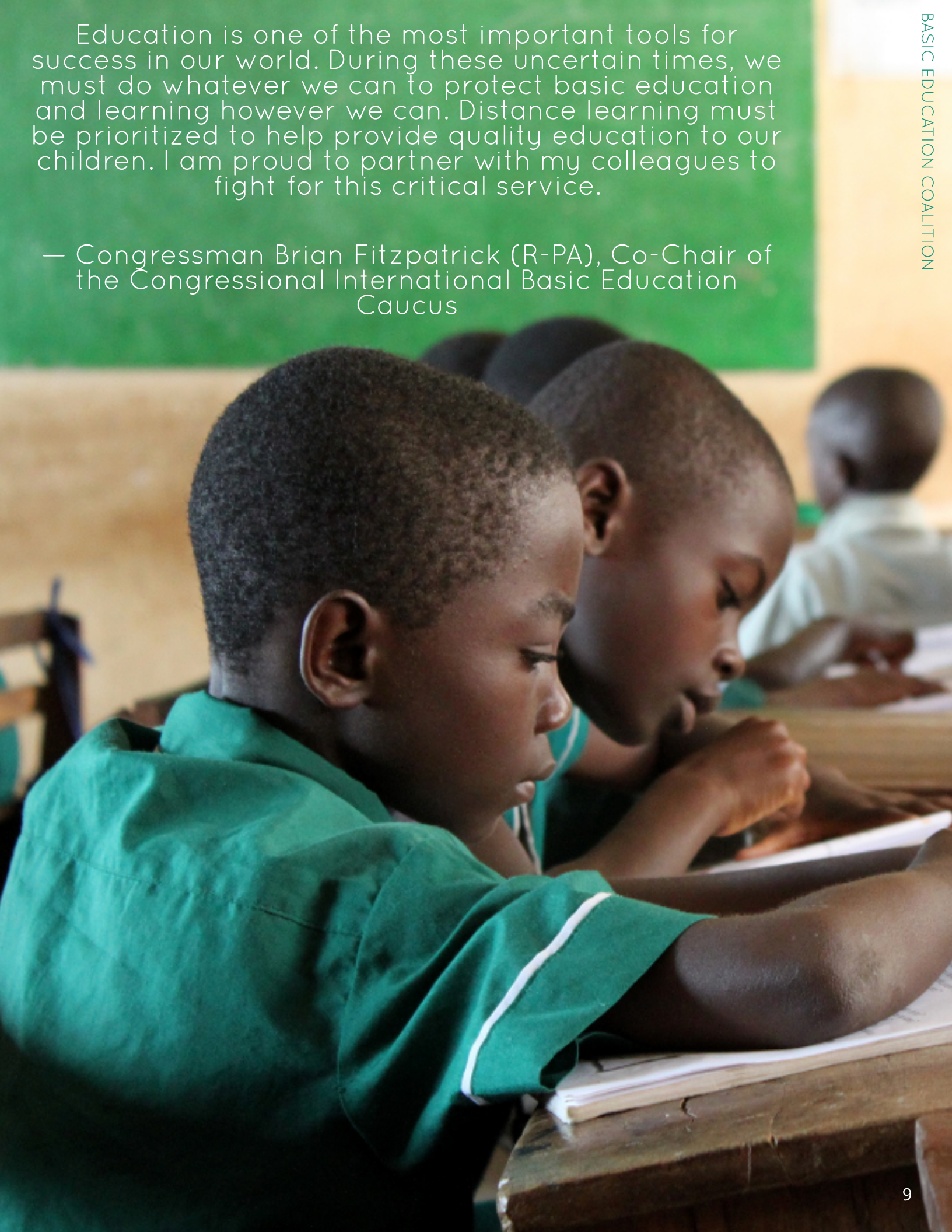| | |
|---|---|
| **USAID** FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE <br> COVID-19 guidance to implementing partners | **COVID-19 AND EDUCATION: INITIAL INSIGHTS FOR PREPAREDNESS, PLANNING AND RESPONSE** |
| **EDUCATION**LINKS <br> Education Resources in Response to Coronavirus | **INEE** Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies <br> Coronavirus (COVID-19) resource collection |
| **ECDAN** Early Childhood Development Action Network <br> Early Childhood Focused COVID-19 resources | **UNESCO** <br> Distance learning solutions |
| **Save the Children** <br> Coronavirus and Kids resources | **EDC** Learning transforms lives. <br> International Resources for the COVID-19 Crisis |
| **mEducation Alliance** <br> COVID-19 ICT4E resources from members | **United Nations** <br> 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

# 2020 BEC

# Members