



The Civil Society Voice in Education

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCY – OPTIONS FOR CONTINUED EDUCATION DURING COVID-19

Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) Statement on COVID-19

ECOZI notes that the education system in Zimbabwe was already stretched before the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of multiple crises, the impact of Cyclone Idai last year, the economic crisis and hyperinflation and the ongoing drought, low teacher motivation and incapacitation, among others. The education sector hosts the highest population in the country hence we applaud the move to close schools on the 24th of March and subsequently the 21 days lockdown.

It is in this vein that ECOZI joins the nation in the fight against COVID 19 by encouraging the education sector to follow the prevention guidelines as shared by the Ministry of Health and Child Care , maintaining social distancing and staying at home.

ECOZI subscribes to the McKinsey & Company school of thought in an epidemic for action across the five horizons, and therefore calls for concerted efforts by all and sundry to;

1. **Resolve:** Address the immediate challenges that COVID 19 presents to education institutions, learners and workforce, part of which was achieved by the closure, but also attend to the anxiety and related concerns of learners, whilst encouraging parents to provide needed support to their children at home during closure period for continued wellbeing and learning. Also, resolve to ensure no fake news is spread to learners.
2. **Resilience:** Address broader resiliency in education by availing e-learning infrastructure and affordable connectivity in general as necessary prerequisites for education going forward,
3. **Return:** Create a detailed plan to return the Education sector to scale quickly as COVID 19 situation evolves and knock on effects become clearer and this entails sharing clear messages on opening and closing of schools, exam timetables and fees payments, among other preparedness plans.
4. **Reimagination:** Reimagine the next normal taking into account the lessons learnt during COVID 19 and for future emergencies and use of technology as institutions reinvent and innovate; and
5. **Reform:** Education financing to ensure the Right to Education for all learners, teacher and learner welfare, school feeding and engage innovative methods of sustaining learning for students through new technology, electronic and digital media, and other creative approaches such as community radio programmes on education,

ECOZI wishes to urge the key education stakeholders - and primarily, the Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education - to DEFEND Education and take appropriate measures that would prioritize safety of children, students, families and communities, and enhance sustainable learning among the all learners.

ECOZI will work with its members and partners to continue engaging the government to ensure that the Right to Education for all learners is protected and alternative learning mechanisms are put in place.

This world is our home! Education is our tool! COVID-19 cannot stop Education and Learning!

#STAYATHOME

LEARNINGBEGINSATHOME

Working together to fight against COVID 19

Shared by the Chairperson (Donald D Tobaiwa) on behalf of the ECOZI Board