

SA2- EDUCATION

*Establishing regulations to solidify
access to education in times of
pandemics and epidemics*

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**RESEARCH
REPORT**



Forum: SA2 Education

Issue: Establishing regulations to solidify access to education in times of pandemics and epidemics

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Introduction

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic brought unexpected challenges to educational systems worldwide. Governments around the world had to struggle with the question of how to keep schools open while keeping students safe from the virus. In many countries, the closing of schools and other disruptions have had a severe impact on educational access, particularly for low-income and disadvantaged students. As a result, establishing regulations to solidify access to education in times of pandemics and epidemics has become a crucial issue that requires urgent attention and action.

Definition of Key Terms

Access to Education:

The right of every individual to access and benefit from quality education. (unesco)

Pandemics and Epidemics:

Widespread outbreaks of infectious diseases that affect individuals in multiple countries or regions. (intermountainhealthcare.org)

Implementation:

The process of putting policies or plans into action. (cambridge dictionary)

Solidify:

To strengthen or make it more secure. (cambridge dictionary)

Regulations:

Rules and guidelines set by a governing authority to ensure compliance with set standards. (cambridge dictionary)

General Overview

Establishing regulations to solidify access to education in times of pandemics and epidemics involves creating policies, and guidelines to ensure that all students have equal access to education during crises. This issue does not only affect education but also has significant economic, social, and health implications

for societies as a whole. The regulations may involve measures to ensure all the students have access to remote learning platforms, educational resources, or other forms of support. Additionally, this calls for governments to allocate funding for educational resources or establish emergency response plans for educational systems.

The previous attempts made by governments and international organizations to address this issue have been mixed in their effectiveness. There have been efforts to provide emergency funding, develop online learning platforms, and distribute educational resources. However, there have also been challenges related to access and implementation. Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate these previous attempts to identify their strengths and weaknesses and determine how they can be improved.

Overall, establishing regulations to solidify access to education in times of pandemics and epidemics requires collaboration and cooperation among governments and international organizations. By working together, it can be possible for all students to have equal access to education.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Governments, educational institutions, students, parents, and international organizations such as the UN, UNICEF, UNESCO, and the World Bank are the major parties involved in establishing regulations to solidify access to education in times of pandemics and epidemics.

Timeline of Events

1520	<i>Smallpox is a viral disease that caused several pandemics throughout history, the most severe being in the 18th century. Resulted in the closure of schools and universities.</i>
1700	<i>Yellow Fever outbreaks in the southern United States often led to the closure of schools and universities.</i>
1916	<i>Polio outbreaks often resulted in the closure of schools and the cancellation of school-related events.</i>
1918	<i>The Spanish Flu pandemic results in school closures globally.</i>
1981	<i>HIV/AIDS has had a significant impact on education in many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where it has resulted in a high number of teacher deaths and absences.</i>
2002	<i>SARS outbreaks led to the closure of schools in several countries, including China and Canada.</i>
2014	<i>Ebola outbreaks led to the closure of schools in several West African countries.</i>

2020	<i>The COVID-19 pandemic causes the closure of schools worldwide.</i>
2021	<i>COVID-19 vaccination campaigns and new safety protocols allow some schools to reopen and back to in-person learning.</i>
2022	<i>COVID-19-The emergence of new variants of the COVID-19 virus results in the closure of some schools.</i>

Treaties and Events

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) emphasizes the right of every individual to education. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) reinforces the right of every child to access education. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) prioritize quality education for all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status.

1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDGs are a set of worldwide goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015, with one of the goals being Quality Education. This means access to quality education for all, including pandemics and epidemics.
2. United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC): In 2019, the UNHRC adopted a resolution recognizing the right to education during emergencies including pandemics and epidemics

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Previous attempts to establish regulations to solidify access to education during pandemics and epidemics have focused on online learning and distributed learning. However, these approaches are not always accessible to students from low-income families or those without access to technology or the internet. The lack of effective communication and safety protocols has also caused challenges. For example, International aid organizations have provided significant support to education during emergencies, including pandemics and epidemics. Organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and the World Bank provided funding, technical assistance, and resources to help ensure that education remains a priority during a crisis. However, aid resources are limited, and many countries do not receive sufficient support.

Possible Solutions

- Governments and educational institutions can establish safety protocols that prioritize the health and safety of schools.
- Investing in technology infrastructure: Governments and education institutions should invest in technology infrastructure to support remote learning. This includes providing students and teachers with the necessary hardware and software, as well as ensuring that they have access to reliable internet connectivity.

- International organizations can provide financial support and resources to adopt online and distributed learning approaches.
- Effective communication and mental health checks between schools, students, and their families are crucial to ensure that students have access to education during pandemics and epidemics.

Useful Links for Further Research

1. Unesco: COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response
<https://www.unesco.org/en/covid-19/education-response>
2. United Nations: Policy Brief: Education during COVID-19 and beyond
https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf
3. International Labour Organization: COVID-19 and the world of work
https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf

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Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic - Cepal.

https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/education_during_the_covid-19_pandemic.pdf.

The Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic for Policy in Relation to ...

https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/SUSTAT94_3.pdf?app=true.

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“Strengthening Online Learning When Schools Are Closed: The Role of Families and Teachers in Supporting Students during the COVID-19 Crisis.” *OECD*,

<https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/strengthening-online-learning-when-schools->

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*W*ww.unhcr.org. <https://www.unhcr.org/5ea7eb134.pdf>.