

Common Market for
Eastern and Southern Africa



LEARNING INSTITUTIONS BEGIN TO OPEN IN THE COMESA REGION

COVID-19

in **COMESA**
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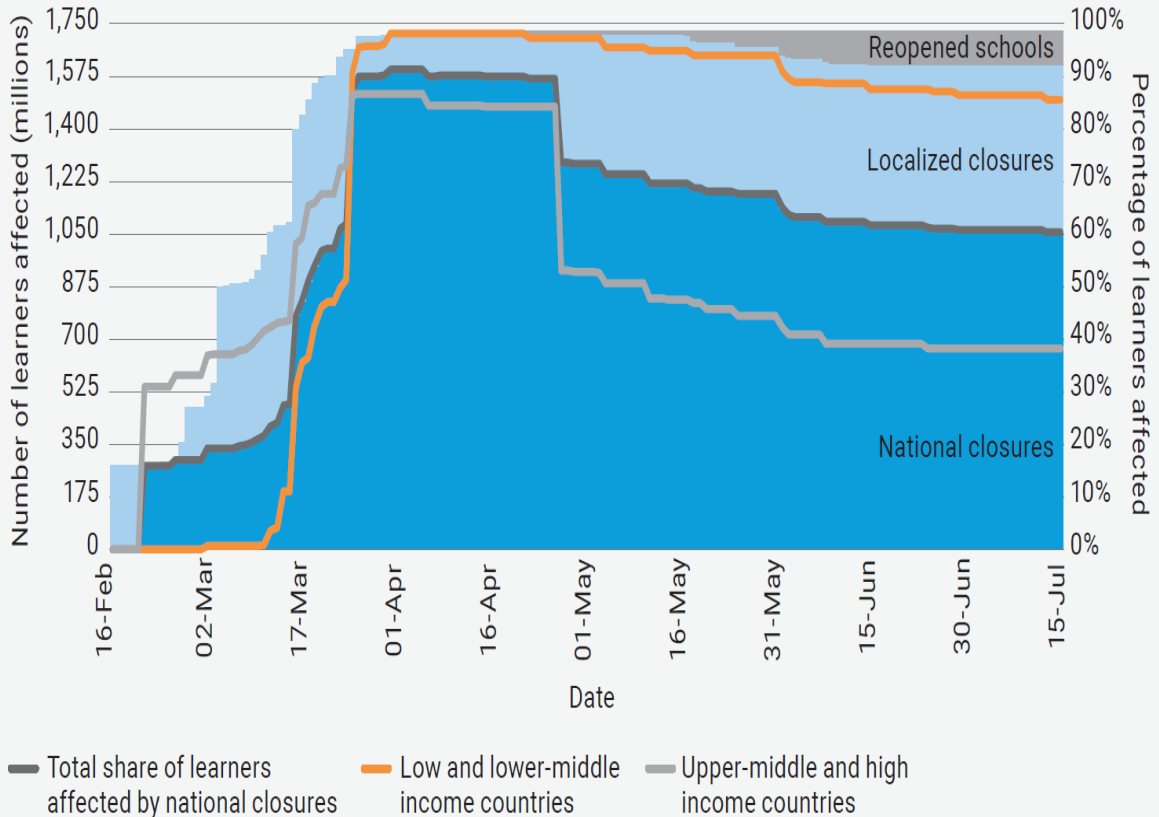
LEARNING INSTITUTIONS BEGIN TO OPEN IN THE COMESA REGION

Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region in February 2020, COMESA Member States had made commendable milestones in the education sector. For instance, progress had been made in terms of the transitioning from primary to secondary to tertiary levels. The positive transition was realized through the implementation of the free primary education policies. At the secondary and tertiary levels most Government in the region subsidised tuition costs through grants and bursaries as well as affirmative action policies.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted learning and led to the closure of educational institutions including pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, technical and vocational education and training institutions, universities, other learning and skills development institutions. According to a United Nations (UN) policy brief of August 2020, it is estimated that by mid-April 2020 94% of learners worldwide were affected by the pandemic. This represented 1.58 billion children and youth affected from primary to higher education.

A summary of children affected by school closures is highlighted below:

Figure 1: Number of Children Affected by School Closures Globally



Source: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse> and authors' calculations.

In the COMESA region, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on the learning institutions. In the COMESA region, all Member States closed learning institutions as a measure to contain the spread of the pandemic. This huge impact will continue to be experienced disproportionately in the region. Countries that over time have built strong education systems are likely to overcome the effects brought about by the disruptions as compared to countries with fragile education systems. Some of the consequences of the prolonged closure of educational institutions in the COMESA region include:

- * Unemployment;
- * Disruption of curriculum implementation;
- * Disruption of health and psychosocial support such as counselling and mentoring;
- * An upsurge of teenage pregnancies;
- * Student dropouts;
- * Conversion of educational institutions into COVID-19 isolation centres;
- * Disruption of school feeding programmes, thus, impacting on nutrition;
- * Disruption of school fee paying schemes whereby funds allocated to support needy students were diverted to other needs including purchase of masks and PPEs;
- * Loss of tutors/ teachers to other sectors of the economy.

In order to address the above challenges, various coping mechanisms were put in place to ensure continuity in learning. Most Governments in the region embraced innovative approaches such as e-learning and home-based learning.

OPENING OF LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

To ameliorate the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector countries have started gradual opening of learning institutions. Below are some of the countries that have opened up learning institutions with appropriate COVID-19 measures in place.

Figure 1: Examples of Member States that have opened Learning institutions.

Egypt

Plans to open institutions of learning beginning 17th October 2020 with adherence to the following measures

- a. Pupils to carry their own meals and water.
- b. Temporary COVID-19 isolation rooms established in schools.
- c. Regular disinfection of schools buses
- d. Social distancing in classes.
- e. Awareness posters placed strategically in all classes.
- f. Teachers and other subordinate staff to have their temperature checked before entering or leaving the school.
- g. Schools coordination committees established to implement and supervise protective measures.

Zambia

From 14th to 28th September to reopen primary and secondary schools with the following measures in place:

- a. Wearing of masks.
- b. Provision of sanitisers.
- c. Checking of temperatures when entering school premises.
- d. Observance of social distancing in classes
- e. Depending on student population, availability of class rooms and the staffing situation, shifts may be introduced.
- f. Continued monitoring of schools to ensure adherence to COVI-19 preventive measures.
- g. Adjustment of the schools calendar.

DR Congo

On 10th August 2020, primary schools, secondary schools and universities were opened with the following measures in place:

- a. Wearing of masks.
- b. Provision of sanitisers.
- c. Checking of temperatures when entering school premises.
- d. Observance of social distancing in classes.

Summary of Regional Figures as of 15th September 2020

Country	Total Cases	New cases	% Increase of new cases	Total Tests	Total Cases/ 1M pop	Tests/ 1M pop	Total Re-covered	Total Deaths	Deaths/ 1M pop	Recovery Rate	Total Active Cases
Burundi	472	6	1.29%	27,836	39	2,327	374	1	0.08	79.2%	97
Comoros	457	5	1.11%		523		427	7	8	93.44%	23
Djibouti	5,396	8	0.15%	72,143	5,445	72,804	5,331	61	62	98.80%	4
DR Congo	10,390	157	1.53%		115		9,807	264	3	94.39%	319
Egypt	101,177	1,136	1.14%	135,000	985	1,314	84,969	5,661	55	83.98%	10,547
Eritrea	361	31	9.39%		102		304			84.21%	57
Eswatini	5,104	220	4.50%	31,259	4,390	26,887	4,374	101	87	85.70%	629
Ethiopia	64,786	5,138	8.61%	1,147,268	561	9,931	25,333	1,022	9	39.10%	38,431
Kenya	36,205	1,000	2.84%	481,982	670	8,924	23,243	624	12	64.20%	12,338
Libya	23,515	4,681	24.85%	157,481	3,413	22,855	12,762	368	53	54.27%	10,385
Madagascar	15,769	417	2.72%	64,676	567	2,324	14,411	213	8	91.39%	1,145
Malawi	5,697	76	1.35%	48,556	296	2,525	3,742	178	9	65.68%	1,777
Mauritius	361	5	1.40%	227,409	284	178,751	335	10	8	92.80%	16
Rwanda	4,602	193	4.38%	464,583	354	35,694	2,736	22	2	59.45%	1,844
Seychelles	140	3	2.19%	5,200	1,422	52,806	136			97.14%	4
Somalia	3,389	27	0.80%		212		2,803	98	6	82.71%	488
Sudan	13,535	98	0.73%		307		6,759	836	19	49.94%	5,940
Tunisia	7,382	2,258	44.07%	177,904	623	15,021	2,175	117	10	29.46%	5,090
Uganda	4,978	1,202	31.83%	434,243	108	9,435	2,317	56	1	46.54%	2,605
Zambia	13,720	884	6.89%	132,642	742	7,176	12,380	320	17	90.23%	1,020
Zimbabwe	7,531	233	3.19%	155,082	505	10,403	5,690	224	15	75.55%	1,617
AGGREGATES	324,967	17,778	5.79%	3,763,264			220,408	10,183		67.82%	94,376

Source: World Health Organisation, Worldometer, Johns Hopkins University (compiled by COMWARN)



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