



LADY HELEN CHILD HEALTH FOUNDATION - ZOOM SUMMIT -

THEME:

THE IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON CHILDREN AND FAMILY IN NIGERIA - NAVIGATING THE SOLUTIONS.

Presented by

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State : FCT ABUJA

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1. Introduction

Arising from the declaration by the World Health Organization of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the inauguration of the Presidential Task Force (PTF) for the control of the Pandemic in Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education in its response, directed the immediate closure of all schools, including Tertiary institutions on 25th March, 2020.

Immediately the Government took the following drastic steps:

- ❖ Constitution of a Steering Task Team by the Honourable Minister of Education, comprising of representatives from all Federal Ministry of Education Parastatals; Development Partners and senior officers of the Ministry.
- ❖ Collaboration/Coordination with States Ministries of Education where information and experience sharing was provided virtually.
- ❖ Virtual learning platform was rapidly deployed as a stop-gap measure for continued learning: Rapid deployment of e-learning platforms for students to continue their lessons mainly on www.education.gov.ng and other associated platforms.
- ❖ Collaboration with Telecom service providers such as Airtel Nigeria and 9mobile in offering free bandwidth to access educational portals.
- ❖ Collaboration with TV and Radio station to provide teaching platform to reach students in the remotest location.

2. COVID19 Implications on Education and Responses

- ❖ Students were abruptly stopped and horridly dispatched home to their parents while in the middle of writing their 2nd term examinations.
- ❖ Early release of students which prevented any casualty in our schools.
- ❖ The situation did not abate, students had to stay much longer, in idle mode and frustrating circumstances to parents.
- ❖ This development had indeed altered the narrative on the traditional methods of teaching, requiring new strategies.
- ❖ Fractured school calendar, in all the tiers of education, which may lead to students losing one school year across all tiers.
- ❖ Specific monitoring of situations and advise to Government through the PTF.

COVID19 Implications on Education and Responses Cont.

- ❖ Sustained sensitization on the preventive Protocols to students while at home.
- ❖ Use of e-learning platform to keep students busy at home.
- ❖ Constant consultations with critical stakeholders to establish the right course of action on matters that concerns the sector;

3. Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Challenges

- Inadequate IT infrastructure for accessing online educational resources;
- High cost of funding of educational programmes via Radio and Television broadcast.
- Non-availability of android phones to a large number of students.
- Low penetration of bandwidth in the remote communities to facilitate smooth e-learning.
- Preparing schools for students return with minimum risk of contracting the virus.
- Adherence to the physical distancing protocol against the backdrop of our over crowded public schools.

Lessons Learnt

- e-learning may just be the new normal for education across the globe.
- more investment will have to be made in providing electronic platforms and improving an ICT infrastructure.
- The school structure as it is currently may need to be reviewed to reflect the new challenges brought about by COVID-19.

4. Action Plan

The Education Sector has in the last 4 months demonstrated capacity to rise to the challenge of the pandemic, in spite of some daunting challenges. The Federal Ministry of Education has taken proactive measures to mobilize and carry along all critical sector players with a view to bringing all the innovative actions that will help address this novel challenge.

- ❖ **Provision of guidelines on “Safe School Reopening”:** Consultation and series of virtual meetings were made with stakeholders in Education sector on the production of guideline for reopening, safety and security of Learners, Teachers, educational personnel and school Communities.
- ❖ **Staggered Resumption of Schools:** The resumption of the schools as to be carried-out in phases, **phase I:** examination graduating (exit) classes which are SS3 and JSS3 and **phase II:** All other classes;

Action Plan Cont.

- ❖ **Provision of Safety Kits for Students and Teachers:** Teachers, Supervisors and Students would be provided with re-usable cotton face masks while each school would be provided with hand washing equipment, hand sanitizers and temperature measuring equipment at strategic places. **Placing Restriction on Visitors:** Ensuring physical distancing by placing restriction on irrelevant visitors into the schools.
- ❖ **Provision of additional facilities:** Additional classrooms, hostels, laboratories and technical workshops will have to be built in the long run to facilitate the implementation of physical distancing; which is now the new normal.
- ❖ **Awareness Campaign:** Sensitisation of staff and students on the Corona Virus.
- ❖ **Investment in ICT and E-learning facilities** e.g. upgrading of ICT centres, establishment of virtual classrooms, virtual libraries, e-content, etc.
- ❖ There is need for massive investment in education at all levels therefore all tiers of government should increase funding for education. The Private sector, Corporate bodies and Development Partners are also expected to increase investment in education.

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