COPING WITH COVID-19

Mapping education and training responses to the health crisis in ETF partner countries

6th April 2020 (next update 14 April)

Emerging issues

- **Support for teachers/trainers**. Teachers and trainers are at the forefront of service delivery. They face the challenge of adapting to working from home and delivering distance learning to students. Support is provided mainly through access to online learning modules organised by ministries as well as civil society organisations. Peer learning and peer support is becoming increasingly important as countries take a more systematic approach to distance learning as school closures are prolonged.

- **Access to internet for all.** While countries have adopted measures to maximise outreach, especially through TV, access to internet is still patchy, raising issues of equal access, opportunities and digital literacy for all age groups. The question of equality of access and learning effectiveness is addressed through diversification of delivery methods, but issues remain regarding coverage and sustainability of digital and online provision. A first poll launched by the ETF involving 100 experts and teachers reported that almost 40% of online respondents find problems in performing their work (including teaching) remotely.

- **Digital solidarity and public-private partnerships**. There is increasing evidence of bottom-up initiatives involving civil society and private sector organisations, promoting connectivity as well as distribution of equipment to students, teachers and trainers.

- **Examinations, certification and validation**. As closure of schools is prolonged, countries are starting to reflect and make decisions on final examinations including reshaping requirements and modalities for conducting exams.

- **Work-based learning**. All forms of work-based learning including practical training and apprenticeships are suspended in all countries as a consequence of companies and education and training providers being closed. In some countries, work placements are being postponed, and final examination requirements revised, reducing the number of practice hours for the achievement of certification. In most countries, it is not yet clear how practice and work-based learning activities will be addressed with the prolongation of the social distancing measure.

- **Autonomy of schools**. While decision-making on school operations and examinations is centralised in most countries, schools are autonomous in organising digital and online learning. Many providers are either sharing good practices or accessing resources made available centrally. Still there are differences among regions and localities linked also to pre-crisis developments and the preparation of providers and staff.

- **VET specificity**. In most countries there is generally good coverage of general education, with a focus on broadcasting general education classes. As closure of schools is prolonged, more countries are rolling out specific coverage for VET.

- **Involvement of medical schools and use of dormitories**. In some countries medical schools are involved in the production of medical supplies and equipment with students directly involved in the emergency management chain. Furthermore, in some countries dormitories are being used as emergency hospitals.

OVERVIEW BY REGION

Information is available for the 27 countries listed here:

South Eastern Europe and Turkey	Eastern Partnership and Russia	Southern and Eastern Mediterranean	Central Asia
Albania Bosnia & Herzegovina Kosovo[1] Montenegro North Macedonia Serbia Turkey	Armenia Azerbaijan Belarus Georgia Moldova Ukraine Russia	Algeria Egypt Israel Lebanon Palestine[2] Jordan Morocco Tunisia	Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan Turkmenistan Uzbekistan

1.   South Eastern Europe and Turkey

Schools are closed in all countries in the region until further notice. Countries have rapidly organised delivery of general education classes mainly through TV and e-learning, either by creating ad-hoc websites, building on existing platforms and social media. Provision is being organised centrally for general education, while in most countries except Montenegro and Turkey, VET is left up to the providers. In North Macedonia, having given initial priority to general education, the government, will focus on providing centralised support to VET in the coming weeks. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, some pilot initiatives in place before the COVID-19 emergency are paving the way for peer learning and support among providers. In Montenegro, the government has launched an initiative called #ucidoma, which follows up on actions already planned under the Western Balkans Digital Agenda. In Turkey, the government is building on the Turkey Education 2023 strategy and accelerating access to and use of e-platforms, namely 'Turkish VET map', 'E-graduates website', as well as platforms for teacher training and ICT based curricula. The Turkish private sector is working closely with vocational schools, many of which have switched to designing and producing materials such as surgical masks and disinfectants to cope with the pandemic. In Montenegro, an online platform was developed through cooperation with the private sector as well as volunteer contributions and sharing of digital material and video lessons by teachers and trainers. In Turkey, mobile service providers are providing free connectivity to facilitate access to online platforms for students and teachers.

2.   Eastern partnership and Russia

Schools are closed in all countries, except Belarus, where the education and training system continues to operate with some measures to ensure social distancing and avoid mass gatherings at universities. Countries in the region have quickly organised their response to the emergency, issuing state orders with clear measures. In all countries, there are specific platforms and services focusing on VET, building on existing strategies and pilot projects. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are providing specific e-platforms and e-learning for teachers and trainers and developing digital content, which is

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[1] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

[2] This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual position of the Member States on this issue

growing as closure of schools is prolonged. In Moldova, the government is preparing an online examination system to enable final examinations and certification online. In Ukraine, the government has made digital content available and is counting on regional authorities and providers to define details of how to deliver it. It has called upon teaching staff to use this time for their professional learning and development. In the whole region, peer learning is being promoted amongst providers. Georgia has launched a voluntary tutoring scheme for schools. In Armenia, the National Centre for Educational Technology Development is providing online training for teachers. In cooperation with the NGO National Network for Distance Learning, an online introduction to e-learning will be delivered from 20 March to 3 April for 158 teachers from technical colleges and craftsmanship schools.

3.   Southern and Eastern Mediterranean

Schools are closed in all countries in the region. General education is being provided on TV and online platforms. Some countries, such as Egypt, Morocco, and Israel, are focusing increasingly on VET specific provision, while others have very limited information on VET. In Egypt, the government has used the first two weeks of school closure to prepare teachers and trainers through online and onsite learning, in particular peer support. The network of Applied Technology Schools is involved in supporting other schools and preparing for online delivery. In Tunisia and Palestine, there are bottom-up initiatives in cooperation with international donors, civil society organisations and the private sector. In Tunisia, a Hackathon has been organised, while in Palestine, the internet service provider, Mada, has launched a community initiative to provide free internet access for three months to schools and university students and teachers. Mada has also provided them with routers. The Palestinian telecommunications company, Paltel, has announced it will soon launch an initiative to increase internet speed for subscribers free of charge to support e-learning. In Morocco, all three telecom operators have granted free access to the internet to facilitate connectivity. Israel, which is already technologically advanced, has been fast in implementing online and digital education solutions. Ministries and vocational education networks such as ORT and AMAL are providing support to teachers and trainers. In the region there is a great deal of focus on inclusion and equality of access. Efforts are made to provide education through multiple channels, to involve teachers in reaching out to students (Israel) including emotional support. In Algeria, where the provision of distance learning has not yet started, both the teachers' Union Satef and the parents' association have raised concerns over inclusion and equality of provision through online and digital solutions.

4.   Central Asia

In Central Asia, the outbreak of the emergency coincided with spring holidays which are coming to an end this week (April 6/8). Schools are expected to open in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, with medical checks and other health precautions. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan used the break to get ready to deliver distance and online learning. In Uzbekistan, the government has involved honourable teachers, state award winners and authors of textbooks to prepare video lessons. Mainly focused on general subjects, these are broadcast nationwide on TV and radio. Kyrgyzstan is taking a similar approach with the production of video classes for general education. In both countries, there is less information on VET, with some materials available through pilot projects in the sector. In Kazakhstan the government followed a preparation plan, including a survey of all VET providers to check on both equipment and preparation of teachers and trainers. Around 20 online platforms are available in the country and around 2000 VET lessons are under preparation for release starting next week when the holidays end. In Kazakhstan, the government has also encouraged cooperation with the private sector

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and telecom operators to facilitate connectivity, and procurement and distribution of equipment for teachers and trainers as well as students.

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