



Lusophone
Network
for the Right
to Education

**THE COVID-19 PANDEMY AND THE
RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN PORTUGUESE
SPEAKING COUNTRIES:**

**CHALLENGES AND CONFRONTATIONS
IN ANGOLA, BRAZIL, CABO VERDE AND
MOZAMBIQUE**

Report of Lusophone Network for the Right to Education

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**BRAZILIAN
CAMPAIGN FOR THE RIGHT TO
EDUCATION**

Coordination

Andressa Pellanda
General Coordinator
Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education

Organization

Helena Rodrigues
Education Policy Officer
Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education

Marcele Frossard
Social Policy Officer
Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education

Writing and Systematization

Eduardo Moura Oliveira
Consultant and researcher

Research and data collection

Albertino Delgado
Cabo Verde's National Education for All Campaign Network

Marcele Frossard
Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education

Pedro Mazivila
Coalition Movement of Education for All Mozambique

Vitor Barbosa
Angolan Civil Society Network of Education for All EPT Network

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Introduction

This report presents information collected in the scope of the Lusophone Network for the Right to Education (ReLus) on the situation of guaranteeing the right to education during the moment of emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is launched as part of the [Brazilian Action Week for Education 2021](#) and intends to present a comparative exploratory study on the challenges faced in the context of different Portuguese-speaking countries and the emergency policies adopted.

The Lusophone Network for the Right to Education (ReLus) is an international civil society coalition that brings together national movements and organizations from Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and East Timor. In this report, the information gathered refers to the countries of Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde and Mozambique.

As Covid-19 advanced, at a time when the world was suffering severe restrictions as a measure to contain the spread of the pandemic, the countries of the Portuguese-speaking community sought to implement emergency plans in the education sector. The expansion of cases on a global scale has triggered protection mechanisms in line with the guidelines issued by the World Health Organization and by specialized science, with the objective of preserving the state of biosecurity and containing the spread of the disease.

What the report demonstrates is that countries had little capacity to react to the pandemic and that the majority suspended face-to-face activities as the main measure to combat the coronavirus. There was also no adequate allocation of financial resources to deal with the critical moment and encourage new forms of education, as well as investing in infrastructure for the reopening of schools. The systematization of information is organized into 8 spheres:

1. International cooperation,
2. Activities and school calendar,
3. Use of technologies,
4. Protection and guarantees of students' rights,
5. Protection and guarantees of the rights of education professionals,
6. Financing,
7. Privatization,
8. Reopening of schools.



The data gathered by the coalitions that make up Relus from official sources form a basis that allows the development of strategies aimed at the interests of civil society, especially those capable of guaranteeing a right to quality education. The documents analyzed demonstrate that the lack of coordinated actions at the national level was one of the main obstacles to education and decision-making in a participatory manner in this emergency context.

The immediate and long-term consequences of the pandemic are severe. According to an analysis produced by the United Nations Children's Fund - [Unicef Angola](#), the longer the crisis lasts, the deeper will be its impact on education, health, nutrition and well-being of children, as in recent months it there has been a disruption in essential services and poverty rates are on the rise, posing a major threat to children across the world. The inequalities that the countries analyzed here already faced before the pandemic are asserted in this period and the future requires more than optimism and hope, it requires prioritizing a rights-based agenda.

The main recommendations of this document are in the sense of strengthening the cooperation network, the efforts of integration and intersectoriality of policies, in addition to demanding investments in social policies - education, health, assistance and income transfer for the poorest. The pandemic demonstrated what those who militate in the field of education have been demanding for a long time: without adequate infrastructure and investment, it is not possible to have quality education.



Primary School June 16, Island of Mozambique, Mozambique (Jcornelius)

International Cooperation



Secondary school on the Island of Mozambique (Jcornelius)

During the Covid-19 pandemic, international cooperation between countries was important in understanding how the disease was spreading and preventing its spread, but also in gaining support. International organizations that are part of the United Nations (UN), such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and Unicef, played a fundamental role in the production and dissemination of information and documents. Within the scope of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) integration and cooperation in a more intense way is still a challenge.

The formal strategies through which civil society education coalitions cooperate were restricted to two main activities in the context of the pandemic: providing support for debates on means of prevention, in the general plan to combat the coronavirus, and taking a stand for closing schools and for emergency policies that guaranteed access, permanence and quality in education.

Mozambique was the only country that, in addition to educational responses to Covid-19, received support from cooperation partners, with a view to creating adequate biosafety conditions, such as hygiene kits and protective equipment. Angola and [Brazil](#) counted on international cooperation in the context of justifying the need to close schools, in the form of documents produced by these organizations.

Cabo Verde received the cooperation of the [Global Partnership for Education](#) (GPE), which represented an increase in the means to combat the effects of the pandemic in the education sector. In line with transparency and inclusion requirements, the plan was aimed at specific responses, while within the scope of local partnerships, Unicef was another partner.

In Angola, the education sector's [contingency plan](#) to respond to the pandemic involved the Ministry of Education, Unicef and the World Bank. In April

2020, it pointed out guidelines for conditions of emergency, however, no measures were implemented in the resulting four months.

In Brazil, organizations such as Unicef, Unesco and WHO played a role to situate the debate on educational responses to the pandemic. Given the high risk of contagion, guidance on the importance of closing schools was fundamental in the plan of emergency measures. In March 2020, Unesco released [10 recommendations on distance learning due to the new coronavirus](#); Unicef produced documents on [hygiene in Brazil](#), together with the WHO, and also on [Confronting the culture of school failure](#). However, as in Angola, the main form of support has been the production of data and documents on the context of the pandemic in the areas of health, education and protection.

Regarding the position about the conditions for reopening schools, [Unicef Brazil](#) has contradicted the recommendations of national public health bodies, such as [Fiocruz](#), defending the reopening in a context of high contagion and risk, as in the first half of 2021.



*Lyceum Salvador Correia in Luanda, Angola
(Felipe Miguel)*

Activities and school calendar

In March 2020, with the declaration of a pandemic state, schools around the world closed their doors indefinitely. In the countries that make up Relus it was no different, as they all took emergency measures in order to avoid agglomerations. As for the remote activities plan and the elaboration of new school calendars, it is possible to find variations between the partners.

In this report, we will divide the organization of the pandemic action plans into two registers: a) school activities and b) calendar reorganization. The two sections deal with how countries developed their school activities during this period and how they reorganized the calendars, that is, how they adapted to the circumstances imposed by the pandemic.

School Activities

Accustomed to the sounds, games and characteristics of school activities, the whole world has seen the closing of schools sequentially. At the same time, public and private managers, teachers and students were invited to reflect on how these activities would be resumed, since, due to lack of knowledge about the disease, there was no expected return.

In Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde and Mozambique, classes were interrupted with the arrival of the coronavirus in each of these countries. In Angola, [there was an interruption of all teaching and non-teaching activities in public schools and part of the private network from April to July](#), when activities were restricted to meetings and specific training in certain provinces.

[Brazil](#), [Cabo Verde](#) and [Mozambique](#) followed the same trend of interruption of activities. The latter suspended classes throughout the national territory, where the competent bodies took measures to contain the impact of the coronavirus. Mozambique closed schools throughout its territory and promoted isolation measures, accompanied by a recommendation that young people stay with their families and at home.

In Cabo Verde, the government approved [Resolution No. 50/2020](#), on March 18, 2020, according to which school holidays were brought forward throughout the pre-school, primary and secondary education network. Expected to return to face-to-face classes only in August, the Ministry of Education imple-



mented a [temporary program](#) of remote activities.

In Brazil, most of the [5568 municipalities suspended classes on March 20, 2020](#) according to information from the National Union of Municipal Education Directors (Undime). In Bahia, 82% of the municipalities suspended classes, a rate lower only than the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Amazonas, where 87% of schools stopped. In Pará, however, the index of municipalities that suspended their school activities was considered low, since only 33% made the decision. This low trend was followed by Paraná, where 36% of the municipalities interrupted school activities.

Within the states, 22 of the 27 federative units confirmed the total suspension of public school classes in March. The states interrupted their face-to-face activities indefinitely in more than 80% of the national territory at the beginning of the pandemic, a situation that remained throughout the entire school year, with the exception of some places such as Manaus.

Remote activities, participation in decisions and policy making

As the face-to-face activities were completely cancelled, the development of remote activities began. The advancement of technologies was felt at this time, while social inequalities were also strong. Older and more vulgar technologies, such as radio and television, were essential for students without access to cutting-edge technologies to be able to follow the activities and maintain the link between the community and the school. Paper and pencil also continued to fulfill their old function and in many places the distribution of printed material was essential. School exclusion, however, is a mark of the challenges of emergency policies implemented in the analyzed countries.

[Angola](#) sought specific initiatives, including support for students with incentives for distance activities. Homework and stimulus actions involving students and family were mediated by communication technologies. Most schools responded positively about the existence of a support system and distance monitoring of students between the months of April and July. When asked about the measures, the answers focused on teachers going to homes delivering homework, however, such initiatives were not systematic nor continuous.

In Brazil, remote emergency activities focused on digital media were developed, but also making use of printed materials, especially in municipal networks. The low socioeconomic and infrastructure conditions of Brazilian households and the [inequality in access to the internet and access devices such as tablets and computers](#) demonstrate that these measures were not effective and that a strong investment in schools across the country is necessary

for the return to school activities safely.

There was little participation of school communities in the reorganization of the calendar and replacement of in-person activities. According to the [preliminary survey](#) carried out by the Campaign network, contact between teachers and students was mostly concentrated on social networks and messaging apps. Some states promoted the distribution of internet chips, however the action was not coordinated in a way to distribute the devices equally throughout the country.



Quirimbas National Park Office (David Stanley)

Thus, part of the activities remained restricted to printed material, which implied traveling to schools to receive support material. The lack of uniformity and systematicity in decisions compromised the dialogue among people in the school community during the pandemic, which appeared as an obstacle to development, decision-making and the construction of political actions.

In Mozambique and Cabo Verde, the period of isolation was marked by the development of complementary activities, divided into two main actions: classes on digital platforms and activities offered in the form of study sheets. Such measures, however, served more to occupy the students and reinforce [previous contents](#), not being offered evaluations and advances. In Cabo Verde, the Ministry of Education implemented the “[Learning and Studying at Home](#),” program, which was presented as an alternative to closing schools and was in force between April and August 2020.

Particularly in Cabo Verde, the [Group of Local Education Partners \(LEG\)](#) held a meeting in May 2020 with the objective of debating the proposals for a project to be presented and submitted to the GPE. The initiative sought a funding plan for emergency education policies in response to covid-19. In this proposal, the Ministry of Education produced a booklet of guidelines with exceptional measures to support the education delegations. The objective was to draw up a plan of academic and non-teaching activities with a view to preserving the right to education in public, private and cooperative education, with the participation of unions, family members and civil society.

As can be seen, countries resorted to similar strategies, diversifying between digital and print media. The emergency character of the actions, according to the response of all countries, made difficult joint decision-making and systematicity, and compromised the participation of the school community.

Thus, one recommendation would be to develop emergency protocols for participatory and intersectoral actions. In particular, it was clear that in these situations it is necessary to coordinate actions and participate in decision making, regardless of the country.

School calendar

Disorientation is the word that defines the state of the network's countries with regard to the resumption of classes and reorganization of the school calendar. Again, the lack of general coordination to define the reopening and define a timetable was fundamental. Other factors, such as the lack of infrastructure for the reopening, also played a major role. In Angola there was a lack of regular water supply to schools, which continues to be one of the main constraints on the safety of students in the context of a pandemic (hand hygiene and cleaning of school spaces). In Brazil, many schools do not have basic sanitation and water to guarantee basic hygiene protocols. In Mozambique, the reorganization of the calendar was defined together with civil society and according to some priorities, such as school exams.

In Angola, at least half of the participants in the diagnosis had no plans for a new class regime capable of compensating students for lost class time, given the challenge of reducing the workload and the permanent risk of the spreading pandemic. Teachers used teleconferences, others encouraged the monitoring of students in tele and radio classes, however the absence of a unified action resulted in difficulties in achieving effectiveness in learning.

In addition, in 16% of the surveyed Angolan schools observed, the problem of lack of electricity was reported as an obstacle for students not being able to attend classes. [The Diagnosis of Conditions for Return to School](#) (2020) also informs that of 70 schools, in 9 provinces, 93% were unable to return because the number of taps and toilets was not insufficient.

A case very similar to the Brazilian one, in which there was a lack of infrastructure, according to the [School Census](#), with regard to the public water supply network, only 88.8% of secondary schools are covered, and the resource is less common in the North of the country, especially in the states of Acre, Amapá and Amazonas. Mozambique also faced infrastructure problems to return to school, in some provinces such as Inhambane, [there were no desks](#) for 20,000 students.



In [Angola](#), one measure mentioned by the teachers surveyed was the scheduling of homework assignments for children, which were implemented in some community schools at the beginning of the break in the school year. Over the weeks, however, parents gave up going to school to get the exercises due to lack of teaching materials and means of reproducing the student support forms. This was one of the conditions pointed out by the teachers that made it impossible to continue this measure.

In Brazil, the National Council of Education presented [guidelines](#) and [MPV 934/2020](#) was approved on the reorganization of the school calendar during the public health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education presented a [technical note](#) on MPV 934/2020, criticizing the government's position of trying to include home schooling in the text, for example, as about other risk issues related to remote education.

The Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education monitored the reorganization of the [school calendar](#) and realized that there are still many uncertainties and that states and municipalities have not received clear instructions for handling the situation. According to this monitoring, return was prioritized, regardless of the students' conditions of access to classes, the sanitary condition of the schools and the location, with regard to the number of contaminated people, the safety of education professionals, students and their families.



*School in the village of Furna,
Braua Island, Cabo Verde*

The pandemic context led the government of Cabo Verde to a plan to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. The remote activity plan provided for permanent contact with teachers and plans to encourage study. However, at the end of the [remote program](#), students did not return to schools for the close of the third trimester, instead a final assessment was given based on the first and second trimester grades.



The 2020-2021 school year began on October 1, 2020 in all nine islands of Cabo Verde. During this period, the Ministry of Education made changes in the functioning of the educational system, including distance education as a complementary activity to on-site. Classes were divided and timetables were reduced and distributed on alternate days, from the 1st to the 12th grade. At the same time, educational TV was created and licensed, a channel through which teleclasses were implemented as distance activities.

In Mozambique, the calendar was reorganized in order to prioritize students in exam situations and special cases. Classes were interspersed, in a hybrid regime, consisting of distance and face-to-face classes. Regarding the participation of the school community, the Ministry of Education and Human Development organized meetings in audience format with parents, students and teachers.

The reflection on the right to education in Mozambique in the context of the pandemic sought to bring civil society into the debate, collecting ideas and perceptions from parents regarding the interruption of classes and the resumption of classes, in view of the pandemic situation.



*Jorge Barbosa Secondary School,
São Vicente, Cabo Verde (Manuel de Souza)*

Use of technologies

The emergency situation caused by the pandemic produced a unique context. One of the main tools for maintaining school activities was the use of digital platforms, as well as for communication among teachers, students and guardians.

However, many of these instruments were acquired on an emergency basis and without useful time for analyzing the conditions of use of data, conditions of access and information sharing, for example. Issues such as guaranteeing the labor rights of education professionals, control over private life and access to private information and the choice of digital platforms were not properly reflected.

On the other hand, despite the multiple possibilities generated by the uses of technologies, this format is still inaccessible for most people who access public schools in the Portuguese-speaking Countries Network.



Access data

The survey sought to understand the access to communication technologies during the period of interruption of school activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For remote activities, access to communication equipment is of fundamental importance, whether in the context of classes, remote activities or assessments.

Among Relus countries, access to means of carrying out remote activities was, in short, insufficient. The number of students with access to technology was partially met, often in small portions in relation to the total demand.

In Brazil, according to data from the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), the problem is concentrated in the early and late years of elementary school, which corresponds to 27.2 million enrollments throughout Brazil, data from 2018. Among children that gave a face to these enrollments, it is estimated that between 4.3 and 4.4 million did not have home access to broadband internet or 3G/4G for remote teaching-learning activities.

When adding children without access enrolled in preschool and young people without access enrolled in high school, this number corresponds to 15% of the total number of children and adolescents in the mandatory schooling phase

who attended schools in 2018 without having access to the Internet at home.

It is important to highlight that internet access at home does not mean having data packages, according to [PNAD TIC 2019](#) data, for carrying out activities such as exercises on digital platforms and teleconferences. Even for students who have broadband, in times of social distance, demand is high and data transmission speed drops, especially in certain locations. If we take into account the situation of the households of most public school students, in which many live with single parents or with couples with more than three children, in addition to good internet access, it would need to have more than one computer.

In Cabo Verde, [the websites of the Ministry of Education and education operators provided educational material with free access](#), however, 30% to 40% of parents or guardians [still did not have access to 3D technology](#), which allows interaction with the digital teaching platforms. In view of these difficulties, the Operational Nucleus of the Information System (Nosi) of Cabo Verde sought to expand cooperation and make investments in its technological platforms. Officially, [Educational TV and Radio were created](#) with the aim of expanding the reach of remote classes, in addition to the use of digital platforms such as networks and applications. In April 2020, the arrival of digital television extended the coverage area and improved the signal quality, reaching places that had not had access to these before.

In Mozambique, the scarcity of concrete information about access to technologies prevents a specific verification aimed at enrolled children, however, the National Institute of Statistics has a database related to the last population census. It is estimated that the number of students who actually had access to distance learning is reduced and that a large part of the workforce is no longer part of the teaching-learning process. Based on data available on the [Sekelekani website](#), only 4.3% of the population has access to the internet, a percentage concentrated in urban areas and adults. Already 45.5% of the population has at least one radio receiver, another 19.5% have access to television in urban areas, while a very small part has access to cell phones with support for school learning applications.

Data Privacy

The issue of data privacy is still under debate in most countries. In the Relus countries that participate in this report, a series of measures have been taken to preserve and secure private information. Cabo Verde [signed adherence](#) to the Macao Cybersecurity Convention, in addition to the already established law for the protection of personal data of individuals ([41/VIII/2013](#)). Mozambique, as well as Brazil, already had legislation on internet crimes, while Angola had also passed a law in 2011 with the same content. But despite the existence

of these laws, in practice they still face obstacles to be carried out.

In Brazil, in the context of the postponement of the General Law for the Protection of Personal Data (2019), the violation of the privacy of students, parents and guardians, from the use of digital platforms via private apps, presented itself as a real risk. There were no public debates or provision of clarifications in this regard. According to an investigation released by [The Intercept](#) an unrecognized company became one of the main representatives of education apps during the pandemic. Hired in a rush because of the pandemic, the company's apps have problems: they have defects in the transmission of sound and image and do not work on older cell phones. Due to this context of insecurity about the use of data and protection, the [Educational Watch](#) platform was created, which relates surveillance capitalism with the platforms used for online education and maps the situation in Brazil.



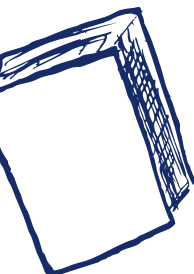
A school project funded by the government so that children could paint this mural - each school painted a part (Edward Middleton)

Issues such as the exposure of the image for commercial use and the collection of personal data have become central to the debate about protection laws. States and municipalities have produced specific protocols, such as the state of Rio de Janeiro, which approved [Law No. 8973/2020](#), which prohibits the commercial use of distance learning data.

In Mozambique, according to data from the [Public Integrity Center](#), there are no specific policies or protocols for the use and protection of data during remote school activities. In Cabo Verde, this task is the responsibility of the [National Data Protection Commission](#), responsible for supervising and controlling compliance with laws on data protection and the preserva-

tion of privacy. In both contexts, there were no specific inspection protocols or the intensification of awareness programs on data preservation, given the increased use of digital platforms by the school community. In this sense, there is a framework of vulnerability with regard to the protection of personal data.

Therefore, the information collected demonstrates that the data privacy policy is still very incipient and needs to be improved. Especially because it affects the guarantee of rights for students, teachers and everyone who participates in the distance education process. Countries are still lacking the technical and legal resources to enforce existing legislation, as stated in the [African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms](#).



Inequalities in access to tools

Among the plans for accessing technological means of learning, a problem that arises is the democratization of these tools, which allows for expanded use by students. Social and economic inequalities are reflected in the access to tools for the use of technologies. Inequality also means digital exclusion and in the context of a pandemic, with the spread of distance education, it is synonymous with school exclusion.

In Angola, there is no information on the preservation of egalitarian distribution parameters for this equipment. On the other hand, in Brazil, some states, such as [Maranhão](#), and municipalities have distributed equipment and chips for internet access, but there has not been a coordinated strategy by federal authorities for universal access. In June 2021, the [National Congress overturned the presidency's veto](#), approving Bill 3477/2020, which will guarantee access to the Internet and equipment to basic education students.

Another strategy used in some cities in [Brazil](#) and [Angola](#) was radio transmission. The federated entities, responsible for collecting information and for the evaluations, did not produce data on access to the tools. According to the mapping carried out by the Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education, this has not been the majority practice in the states and capitals in Brazil, but some places in the Legal Amazon have used such channels, for example.

Cabo Verde is among the African countries with the [highest rate of internet access](#), in addition to having a network of 120 squares with free digital access. On the other hand, internet service prices are among the most expensive in the world, with one of the worst scores in items such as the adoption of emerging technologies, digital tools, cybersecurity and sustainable practices.

In Mozambique, [most students did not have access to education](#) due to limitations in the scope of access policies and the reorganization of the school calendar. Based on information provided by the Ministry of Education and Human Development, access strategies to technological tools were not effective. It has been seeking a study plan to assess the impact of Covid-19 in the sector, as well as an effective survey of teaching strategies and measures adopted. The Ministry reaffirms its engagement in actions with partners in the sector, highlighting Unesco and Unicef.

On the use of technologies, it is concluded that countries and different locations have been using digital media and new technologies without planning or planned planning. Thus, there was no homogeneous distribution in terms of devices, chips, internet network, and there is no data available on schools, students and education professionals who accessed these technologies.

Digital security is also not an issue that is clearly addressed by States, managers and documents in general. It is difficult to find information on this topic. The choice about the platforms on which the remote classes have taken place, or the development of [their own systems for these classes](#), are also not very clear. Examples of tools developed voluntarily, or that are developed in universities or purchased from large conglomerates such as Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple and Microsoft (GAFAM), emerged, as an emergency and by necessity. According to the study by [Action Aid International](#), if they paid more taxes, technology giants would pay nearly 900,000 teachers in 20 countries, including Brazil.

After this initial phase, the recommendation is that the use of technologies for basic education in public schools is discussed in a broad and transparent way with the school community and civil society. It is necessary to create regulations that encompasses the protection of image, data, and information in general that avoids disclosure, commercialization and control based on private data. Furthermore, it is important to follow the Open Educational Resources (OER) guidelines and understand technology as an aid in the educational process, not replacing and not being a factor of exclusion and deepening of social and educational inequalities.

The internet, in accordance with the [African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms](#), must have an open and shared architecture, and continue to be based on open interface standards and applications and ensure interoperability to allow for the common sharing of information and knowledge.

The Covid-19 pandemic is in need of debate on the [human right to the internet](#). Some [United Nations reports](#) have even defended this issue, and during the pandemic access to basic rights such as access to finance, health and education were mediated through the internet. Therefore, we believe that this matter is extremely important and deserves attention.

Protection and guarantee of students rights

The importance of education as a gateway to other basic rights, such as the right to inclusion, socialization, participation or food, during the Covid-19 pandemic was constrained by the closure of educational institutions. The school as a key part of guaranteeing students' rights became evident at this moment. The social assistance networks, the enforcement of protective measures and even the legal protection network found themselves without the support of education professionals to mediate contact with children and adolescents and their families.

The context of the pandemic shed light on the need for [intersectoriality in policies](#) and, above all, on how the school is an important institution in this gear. Food and nutrition security, which was ensured in some way through the distribution of school meals, was severely compromised.

Schools, managers and education professionals, as well as students, families and the school community as a whole have developed strategies to maintain close links between them. Once again, social networks, messaging apps and social participation were key to keeping in touch.

Food and nutrition security

In the set of guarantees of rights for students, regular access to quality food occupies a central place when the needs of children and young people are considered. Before the pandemic, students who attended schools had the right to balanced eating practices aimed at promoting health, an aspect deeply impacted by emergency measures to interrupt classes and, consequently, by social isolation in the homes

In Brazil, there is the [National School Feeding Plan](#), the PNAE, which guarantees balanced school meals, with fresh food, which respects the local culture and must be purchased from family farms. In Mozambique, the [World Food Program](#) is largely responsible for the distribution of school meals and has been updating the distribution to respect local culture and reduce the distribution of processed foods.

In the countries of the Lusophone Network for the Right to Education, the issue of food security arises from the effort to develop actions in partnership, involving secretariats, ministerial departments, non-governmental organiza-



tions and civil society.

Due to the adoption of international protocols to guarantee food and nutrition security, Cabo Verde approved the Law on the Right to Adequate Food ([37/IX/2018](#)), according to which the right to food, including non-discrimination, equity, human dignity and the protection of the vulnerable people must be preserved.

In Angola and Mozambique, countries that were already experiencing a food crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic aggravated the problem of food insecurity. According to a recent analysis by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Program, the effects of the pandemic tend to aggravate the previously existing food crisis, so that countries like Angola and Mozambique would be at the forefront of this problem.

Despite this scenario, the Government of Angola has started a pilot school feeding project in some provinces, with local products, with a view to stimulating production. For two months the School Food and Health Program, as been implemented in some provinces in southern Angola, which also aims to stimulate local production, and consequently foresees an impact on education and local agriculture. The Program to Combat Poverty is a measure of the priorities of the Government together with the UN.



During the pandemic, the National School Feeding Plan (PNAE) in Brazil focused on measures such as the distribution of food baskets, food kits and shopping vouchers. However, the distribution did not follow criteria of regularity and uniformity, which resulted in a lack of food in different parts of the country, as verified in the School Feeding Guide. Furthermore, as the schedule was not systematically followed, not all students were included. Still, there were processes of policy deregulation, pressured by agribusiness, which has been threatening the permanent dismantling of this program, which is so es-

sential and a world reference.

In view of the concerns with the execution of the school feeding program during the pandemic and aiming to monitor the guarantee of this right, a partnership was created, coordinated by the Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education, together with Action Aid, the Brazilian Forum on Sovereignty and Food Security and Nutritional (FBSSAN) and the Landless Movement (MST), entitled [School Feeding Observatory \(ÓAÊ\)](#). It is possible to access the website and follow in depth the situation of politics in the country.

Strengthening and maintaining links

The work was carried out based on coordinated actions, in which each network developed its strategies and acted, through social networks and messaging apps. Faced with the challenges imposed by the pandemic, the networks worked remotely, which made it difficult to create strategies, as well as the work of reception. Education professionals found it difficult to maintain a role of protection and a bridge of denunciation and referral in the face of violations of students' rights. Through listening carried out with the network, monitoring has taken place in the form of reports and complaints.

In Mozambique, the network developed TV and radio spots in order to sensitize parents and the school community in supporting students at this stage. They warned of the need to look for exercise sheets in schools and encourage students. In addition, members of the network promoted follow-up sessions for students in the communities, providing school supplies, masks and providing support to schools with soap and alcohol gel.

Angola, Brazil and Mozambique have developed similar strategies that are characterized by the lack of coordination and definition by competent bodies of specific channels to maintain links with the school community. [Cabo Verde was supported by the legal apparatus that provides for the inclusion of school meals, an initiative in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#). In these places, however, the organization of channels through which links could be strengthened was the responsibility of the schools and the community.

In Brazil, research carried out by the Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education, in partnership with the National Confederation of Workers (CNTE) and the Brazilian Union of Students (UBES), entitled "[Dimension of protection in public state schools during the pandemic](#)", listened to students and teachers from the country's state education networks on the dimension of protection in schools during the pandemic.



Intersectorial and intersectional work

The constant concern with the safety of isolated children at home mobilized the formation of monitoring networks as the pandemic spread. The increase in [crimes against women](#), [domestic violence](#), and [violence against children and adolescents](#) in general during the Covid-19 pandemic has demanded greater attention from the protection and assistance system to guarantee rights for children and adolescents.

In Brazil, at the end of 2020, the numbers of violence, including against children and adolescents, showed a reduction, which indicated a situation of underreporting, according to the [Brazilian Yearbook of Public Security 2020](#), since the bodies responsible for ensuring the protection of these children and adolescents had their ways of acting reduced due to isolation. In this sense, the impact of isolation restricted the forms of intersectoral articulation in order to limit the monitoring of the guarantee of rights to education, food and health.

The challenges imposed in times of pandemic not only consider the right to education, but involve a series of other risks, such as violence, parental neglect, malnutrition, protection from disease, among other issues.

As in Angola and Brazil, in Mozambique this issue was also one of the concerns. The Southeast African country does not have a school feeding program, however, debates about the need for a policy aimed at this protection are ongoing, in which the Education for All Movement is involved.

A joint effort, in order to bring together the sectors of Education, Health, Public Works, Housing and Water Resources, was mobilized with the objective of preventing schools from being places for the propagation of Covid-19. However, in relation to cases of violations of rights, such as child labor, sexual abuse and exploitation, so far the network has not obtained reliable information, however some press reports, mainly television and written, have shown cases related to violation of the rights of children in the pandemic.

In Brazil, the situation of domestic violence and sexual abuse, according to data from the [2020 Brazilian Yearbook of Public Security](#), in 2019, **1 rape was recorded every 8 minutes**, totaling 66,123 victims, most of them being vulnerable rape. According to the data, 57.9% of victims were at most **13 years** old and 85.7% were female. Although most victims are between 10 and 13 years old, 18.7% were between 5 and 9 years old and **11.2% were babies aged 0 to 4 years**. The data also show that the vast majority of rapes of vulnerable people were committed by people close to the victim.

The information shared by the network demonstrates that an associated work

is needed and that it produces results in the sense of guaranteeing rights and protection for children who are without access to school. Therefore, sharing information between different networks and a common database is very important.

Cases of abuse, child labor and violations of rights must be denounced and the protection and assistance network must receive investments to be able to change the reality of these vulnerable families and break this cycle of rights violations.

The debate on [universal basic income](#) has been presented during the pandemic as one of the possibilities for reducing social inequalities and guaranteeing rights. The adoption of Universal Basic Income in view of the effects of the pandemic on the most vulnerable is recommended by the UN. It is also singled out as one of the best responses to a potential economic and social catastrophe caused by the coronavirus crisis, as putting finances at the service of human rights and supporting the less fortunate through bold financial approaches can be a way out of the current situation. This policy was adopted in Brazil, but reduced by pressure from the federal government from 2021, which left 1 million people helpless.



*Camargo César Public School,
in Sorocaba, São Paulo (André da
Silva Barros)*

Protection and guarantee of the rights of education professionals

Among the many support fronts needed at the critical moment of the pandemic, a protection network that is sensitive to the problems encountered by education professionals plays a central role in the reorganization of everyday school life. This accompaniment involves dialogues and preparation with adequate training, safety and working conditions. It is in this sense that the report explores the protection networks for educators during the interruption of in-person classes.



In Angola, according to the [Diagnosis report on the conditions of return to school during the pandemic](#), most teachers responded that there was no support during the pandemic. In 12 schools, support came from the school community itself (directors and coordinators), while in 10 schools, support came from the Municipal Education Directorate - DME. In the questionnaire, applied at the end of July, 32 respondents denied any activity, a number that corresponds to 46% of the total.

Among those who confirmed the carrying out of activities, most were concentrated in meetings with teachers and guardians and meetings between teachers, totaling 44%. A small portion mentioned the organization of tasks, such as dialogues promoted during this period. The numbers also point to a lack of support from the Municipal Boards, which covered only a third of the teachers surveyed, and to the restricted nature of the actions, since the meetings were sporadic and approximately half of the teachers did not participate.

In Brazil, the promotion of communication channels through which it is possible to establish a dialogue for exchanging experiences was concentrated in messaging apps, according to a [survey carried out by Undime](#). The union was not called upon to participate deeply in the decision-making processes of emergency policies, which were concentrated in the administrations, and the best indicator of this lack of uniformity can be found in the strike suggestions, which emerged in [some states](#). Teachers did not receive clear information about the remote learning plan, or even guidance on the use of digital platforms, or minimum working conditions were promoted, as determined by the [Distance Education Guide](#). In this context, the possibility of dialogue became precarious given the irregularity and the absence of a standard of organization.

The training plan for education professionals in Brazil did not include the pro-

vision of structural conditions for carrying out the work. Teachers, in most cases, used material and personal instruments to carry out their professional activities. Equipment and internet access were not provided. On the other hand, payments were made normally, with some exceptions, cases in which the federative units cut bonuses, such as the municipality of [Tobias Barreto](#) and [Goiânia](#).

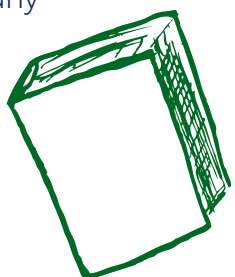
Regarding the training of these professionals, some federative units in Brazil sought to organize a training plan to deal with technologies and classroom platforms, however, there was no national coordination to train education professionals for these activities during the pandemic. In Angola, a third of schools indicated holding meetings aimed at preparing teachers, a number that points to a large majority who did not have access to any training on protection and safety in the pandemic.

Highlight for Luanda, where all respondents indicated the holding of meetings in the form of lectures, seminars and sessions on protection and security measures. As in Luanda, Kwanza Sul was another city that received training, however in the other provinces the preparation programs were practically non-existent.

According to 76% of respondents, teachers have the information they need to ensure children's safety, especially when it comes to communication. As for the content standardization plan, to be started in July 2020, half of the schools responded that they did not know how such a plan would be implemented. Time planning is an important issue in organizing the calendar during the isolation period.

About the existence of a training plan about Covid-19 for teachers, approximately one third of the schools said that yes, there was training; that is, the vast majority did not have any training in protection and safety in the coronavirus pandemic.

Regarding the planning of lessons in the new announced regime (which would start in July 2020), about half of the schools responded that they did not know how to plan the timetables. About the seminars, 93% of the subsidized schools answered that they had some type of training, the majority organized by the schools, while the other part organized by the Municipal Directorate of Education. Among public schools, the rate of schools that received minor training, only 57%, among which approximately half organized by schools, half organized by DME's. In this meeting, the topics discussed revolve around planning, evaluation, methodology, professional ethics, among others. Such themes reappeared in the seminars, according to the questionnaire participants. However, in fact, half of the respondents said that the school did not promote any



activities in schools, which leads to the following picture: in summary, only a third of education professionals received training on Covid-19 and safety procedures, concentrated mainly in the two provinces, Luanda and Kwanza Sul.

In Mozambique, the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINEDH) has a space with the objective of ensuring the participation of teachers in the dialogue of sector decisions. In addition, the Ministry promoted face-to-face meetings with the aim of improving the interaction between governments and teachers, seeking solutions to expand support for the teaching and learning process in the context of covid-19. Other entities, such as the National Organization of Teachers and the National Union of Teachers of Mozambique, held regular meetings with MINEDH, in addition to technical consultative advisers.

At this meeting, unions and governments debated issues related to the teaching and learning process in the context of the pandemic, particularly the rights of teachers and the importance of these professionals for resuming the calendar. Thus, it is possible to affirm that a teacher training plan took place in Mozambique, in preparation for the use of digital platforms. In addition, labor security was observed within minimum conditions, added to the continuity of payments and benefits on a continuous basis.

In Cabo Verde, according to the data collected, basic education teachers were instructed to enroll in the distance education platform EaD, a digital portal used by the National Directorate of Education. The initiative aimed at training professionals within the scope of the emergency education action plan in September 2020. Such activities made it possible to improve training supported by tutors in schools. Despite having to accumulate functions and carry out replacements for retired teachers, payments continued normally during the period of closing of schools. A considerable number of schools did not have the structural conditions to acquire teaching materials and personal use, which was left to the teachers. This framework points out the critical working conditions for education professionals.

Financing

In March 2021, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights recommended, through a [report](#) that had the collaboration of complaints by the Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education, to increase public investment in education. It is known that the increase in investments in educational policies plays a central role not only in the quality of student education itself, but also in combating social inequalities and in refuge in situations of risk. Among Relus countries, the issue of funding is no different.

In Brazil, structural financing even before the pandemic was below the minimum parameters of quality education. Adequate funding should be calculated in the way that the Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education has been presenting as [Student-Quality Cost \(CAQ\)](#) and, although it has been constitutionally approved through the Basic Education Fund (Fundeb), it is still not a reality because has not been regulated.



*Nossa Senhora Aparecida
municipal school, Rio Grande
do Sul, Brasil*

In relation to structural financing and emergency financing, there was a counter-march of emergency situations: in addition to not having the necessary contribution for emergency situations, education resources suffered numerous cuts. In view of the austerity policies implemented by [Constitutional Amendment 95/2016](#), one of the ac-

tion fronts of civil society in terms of education funding is the request to revoke the aforementioned amendment. However, even in the case of an emergency critical situation, there was no change in this policy in Brazil and, worse, the [National Congress cut 27% of the education budget in the 2021 Annual Budget Law](#).

Angola and Cabo Verde did not issue responses on funding plans in the context of the crisis caused by the pandemic. On the other hand, Mozambique received emergency funding of around US\$20 million, an amount defined in view of the needs raised, planned and budgeted for. It is not possible to say



whether the amount is sufficient, but it is an emergency plan defined to respond to the impacts of the arrival of Covid-19, an initiative that had the collaboration of cooperation partners, including the [Global Partnership for Education \(GPE\)](#).

The global funding to the education sector, until the end of the financial year of 2020, with a global value of 58.7 billion Meticaís (US\$ 925 million) against 56.5 billion Meticaís (US\$ 890 million), initially approved, which represented an increase in the order of 3.9%, thanks to the reinsertion of balances carried over from the 2019 financial year, and various adjustments made by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, in the internal component, which also received a new boost from the European Union's support to the State Budget.

It should be noted that from the European Union's support to the State Budget, around 432.50 million meticaís (US\$ 6.8 million) were allocated to the Education sector in order to provide schools with the necessary resources for the implementation of covid-19 prevention measures, in order to guarantee students and teachers a safe return to classroom classes.

Regarding the austerity plan and debt treatment, according to the [Institute of Economic Social Studies](#), Mozambique had high levels of unsustainable Public Debt, so that the commitment to servicing the debt choked the financing of the Education sector. Furthermore, as in other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Mozambique has suffered the economic and social consequences of the onset of the pandemic, which forced a renegotiation of the debt. [Before the pandemic, the country had been meeting the internationally agreed universal percentages of GDP, according to which the Education sector reserves around 18% of the budget and 5 to 6% of the GDP.](#) It so happens that most of this amount (about 90%) is intended to cover operating expenses, against only 10% allocated to Investment expenses.

Despite the low allocation of funds for investment expenses, its level of execution is quite low, contrary to operating expenses. The low level of execution has to do with liquidity difficulties at the level of the Public Treasury, which, despite the implementation of the financial programming to carry out the activities and the various projects registered, the release of funds did not occur, due to the impact with the health crisis, bad weather (climate change) and high [public debt](#) service.

Due to climate change, which sets up contexts marked by natural disasters capable of causing impacts on school infrastructure, Mozambique has been working in search of resilient constructions. After the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic, a new condition was imposed on schools: the biosafety, a problem that mobilizes the Ministry of Public Works, Housing and Water Resources. With regard to hygiene conditions, the Ministry of Education works with prov-



inces and districts, and schools to purchase and make available school hygiene kits according to the funds made available.

Privatization

The pandemic demonstrated the importance of face-to-face education because learning is an act of relationships, which demands dialogue and embrace. When virtual activities are indispensable, they must also guarantee the human right to education, in all areas that this mean.

On the other hand, it also presented us with a new model of privatization (families, students and teachers assuming the cost of equipment and connection, for example), student social stratification – through the possibilities or not of connection – and billions of students unable to continue their educational trajectory in these contexts. This situation threatens to continue and expand with the announcements of hybrid teaching models. For this reason, different actors from around the world, such as Relus, [Clade](#) and the Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education, have been drawing attention to the issue of privatization.

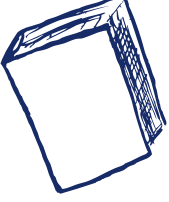
As an example, the members of the PEHRC (Global Consortium on Privatization of Education and Human Rights), an informal network of regional, national and global organizations – including members of Relus – collaborate in the analysis and response to challenges posed by rapid growth of private actors in education from the perspective of human rights and propose alternatives, [monitored news related to private education](#) in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This resulted in three main lessons: 1. Technology companies are not reducing educational inequalities, and may even perpetuate them; 2. In many cases, privatization creates non-resilient and unsustainable education systems; 3. The urgent solution: investing in free and public education, and rebuilding sustainable systems.

If there is a lesson to be learned from this education crisis, it is the indispensable aspect of creating spaces aligned with human rights and non-marketable, with a strong public sector that guarantees equitable services for all, even in cases of contingency. Human rights norms and principles are more relevant than ever in these times, and the recently adopted [Abidjan Principles](#) provide clear recommendations on how countries can create more equitable, solid and effective education systems.

With regard to Relus countries, Brazil has been witnessing the development

of public-private partnerships mainly to provide remote and distance learning. The accelerated and hasty realization of public-private partnerships in the area of education, which go even further beyond the boundaries of the use of the service, composing a process of privatization of education, which impacts in terms of the educational model, in pedagogical terms, and in terms of quality of education and the right to informational self-determination.



Digital platform services were the main outsourced services to the private sector during the pandemic. According to [a study carried out by Undime](#), this service was used mainly by municipalities with more than 100 thousand inhabitants and is expanding in the country. Furthermore, its implementation has been problematic for not respecting the data protection policy of education professionals and students in the country. There is no regulatory process.

Differently from what was reported by Brazil, Mozambique reported that the services outsourced and performed by the private sector are strictly related to the rehabilitation of school infrastructure.



*Raul Brasil School,
revitalized by the government
of São Paulo*

Reopening of schools

In view of the crisis brought by the Covid-19 pandemic in the world, the plan to reopen schools must be accompanied by safety conditions, preserving the health of children, young people, education professionals and the families of all. An assessment of the specific situation of the pandemic in each location is essential. The context requires intersectoral care between the areas of health, nutrition, sanitation and education.

In terms of evaluating and diagnosing this process, Brazil has not developed a monitoring of this type provided by the bodies responsible at the federal level, such as Inep and MEC. There is no plan for carrying out diagnostics and reopening at the national level. Fiocruz, a national research and development

institution in the biological sciences, which even conducts research on Covid-19, developed [a document with recommendations on safety at reopening based on the CDC](#). Despite this, the document has not been followed, which is very serious, since we are one of the countries with [the highest number of deaths by Covid-19 in the world at the moment](#).



Cerro Azul municipal school, in the Tingui district, Curitiba

In addition, the Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education developed a [Technical Note](#) together with the [Covid-19 BR Observatory](#) and [Covid-19 Analysis Network](#) resending the collapse of the health system throughout the country, with the loss of over 66,000 lives in due to coronavirus infection, only in March 2021. The note also


highlighted that the discussion on reopening did not analyze the epidemiological context and infrastructure conditions of educational institutions, essential factors for a safe reopening. And he considered that: **“In practical terms, the responsible approach to the problem must be dedicated to saying how and when it is possible to reopen schools safely, without putting at risk the lives of education professionals, students and their families”**.



In Angola, the analysis carried out by [Mosaiko](#) and the Angolan Network of Civil Society for Education for All, four months after the suspension of classes,

sought to know the conditions of biosafety in schools, as well as an overview of distance education and of improvements carried out in schools, aiming to guarantee the right to education for all children.

The questions asked about the safety and protection conditions of Covid-19 were based on national and international legislation and documents, so that, in addition to collecting information, the questionnaire had a pedagogical function and served as a warning for the biosafety measures to be created in the schools



Among the 70 Primary and Secondary Education Schools surveyed in nine provinces, mostly public, 93% believe that there are no adequate conditions for a safe return to school. On the other hand, the majority mentioned that it is essential to return to classroom or blended classes, to ensure not only the right to education, but also the protection of children.

In the biosafety protocol plan, the safety distance indicated by teachers and principals was defined, between 1.5 and 2 meters. Of the total, 70% of the schools indicated that they would divide the classes into 2 shifts, in order to comply with the distance rules, among which, 5 schools would have to do 3 shifts and one, 4 shifts. The evaluators were left with the feeling that some of the schools would simply divide the class in half, without measuring the safety distances within the classroom, without counting the number of students arriving at the school at the same time and without inspecting the cleaning staff for cleaning between shifts.

The lack of infrastructure was identified as one of the conditions for the return, as a place to wash hands, and possibilities to guarantee distance by creating queues of students, putting more taps and having more adults (staff, teachers) to support the organization were not created.

Regarding the compensation strategies for students, the time without classes and the time reduction, the proposals presented were: offering essential content, reinforcement of classes and homework.

In Mozambique, Covid-19 impact mitigation measures adopted by the education sector and the results indicated that most students did not have access to education due to biosafety issues, a study later published in MINEDH.

The network is aware that MINEDH had planned a study to assess the impact of covid-19 in the sector, as well as in relation to the restriction measures and teaching strategies adopted. The information initially shared was that sector partners would be engaged, especially Unesco and Unicef. In this sense, it is possible to affirm that in Mozambique there are plans aimed at the elaboration of diagnoses whose function is to point out guidelines for the resumption

of classes.

There was also an engagement of parents and guardians, government institutions with emphasis on the sectors of Education, Health, Public Works, Housing and Water Resources, Cooperation Partners, Civil Society. The plans, guidelines and protocols respond at all levels to the education sector.

In general, the countries present that there was no planning for the reopening or a general consultation with the school community, as well as with civil society. Governments and managers did not plan this process considering the contamination curves and infrastructure changes that needed to be made for the return.



Raul Brasil School, revitalized by the government of São Paulo

Conclusion

This report presents a picture of the impact of the suspension of school activities in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The points of convergence between the difficulties encountered by the countries of the Lusophone Education Network demonstrate that the problems and the challenges were the same for everyone.

Regarding international cooperation, the countries found the same support in the dissemination of information about the pandemic and ways to face it. Documents produced by international organizations such as WHO, UN, Unicef were very important. Regarding the distribution of resources, access was restricted.

As was known, school activities and the school calendar were affected in all responding countries. The main measure to contain the contagion was to close the face-to-face activities, so school institutions were one of the first to close in the world. The same happened in Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde and Mozambique. Consequently, the entire school calendar was affected. Which meant doubts about the reopening of activities, as well as non-homogeneity within each country regarding the calendar.

One of the main marks for education during the pandemic was, without a doubt, the advance in the use of technologies for basic education. All reported the widespread use of digital platforms and distance learning. Strategies such as remote classes via radio and television were also used. And in many places the distribution of printed material prevailed.

It was clear that social inequalities and access to education were reflected in access to the internet and technology for access to distance classes. Therefore, for this education model to really become a reality for public education, it is necessary to guarantee the access of students from public education networks around the world to the internet and access tools.

The school, as part of the network for the protection and guarantee of students' rights, was also notable for its absence. The assistance network has seen a reduction in the number of reports of abuse against children and adolescents, while at the same time an increase in the number of domestic violence and violence against women is expected. Consequently, it is inferred that there was underreporting in the period due to the lack of contact with

the school and with people who could certify and report abuse and violence.

Changes in school activities had consequences in the work relationships of education professionals. There was no clear communication about the hours worked, or the distribution of technological tools or the cost of basic supplies for online classes, such as the internet.

In this context of emergency, when education needed more contributions to infrastructure and drastic changes in its way of functioning, there was just the opposite and attempts to cut education budgets.

The moment was even used to experiment with new forms of privatization through the purchase of digital technologies and outsourcing of services.

Finally, the reopening is still not consensual and happens without mass vaccination of education professionals, students and the population in general. The schools did not undergo renovations or experience changes to conform to the standards necessary to follow the biosafety protocols stipulated by the WHO, such as the recommendations for ventilation and toilets with soap and water for hand washing.

Thus, the report demonstrates that the pandemic has increased inequalities in access to education and opened up possibilities for privatization. Studies show that the pandemic has increased the number of children out of school and that states must invest in education so that they are included again. Girls will be heavily affected and child labor is also a major threat.

