



# 10 Things to Know About the Impact of Covid on Education

1



The pandemic's impact on education goes beyond educational outcomes such as performance on tests/exams and learning gains or losses. It includes students' social and emotional development, and fulfillment or improvement of students' potential for self-actualization.

2



The primary impact on education is learning losses, or missed learning: the concepts, knowledge, and skills that were not acquired during remote schooling. The evidence suggests that the learning deficit is significant, due to the inherent limitations of the medium, lack of connectivity, unavailability of devices, electricity outages, and unsupportive home environments.

3



There have been mental health and psychosocial impacts on students given extended isolation at home, the absence of social interaction, the lack of involvement in physical and leisure activities, the increase in screen time, the increase in sexual abuse (especially of girls), and an increase in violence against children generally.

4



The pandemic has deepened and worsened the pre-existing inequalities in Jamaica's education system, as vulnerable children and poorer schools fared worse than their better-off counterparts with regard to access to resources, including devices, access to internet, and level and quality of parental involvement.

5



Teachers have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. They were expected to learn and implement new teaching modalities, new methods and standards for planning lessons, managing classrooms virtually, and conducting assessments, all while grappling with new technology and software, in a short space of time.

6



Schools and teachers demonstrated innovation and resilience in adapting to the pandemic and the new teaching modalities. Where their creativity and resourcefulness have resulted in positive outcomes, they should be harnessed to establish best practices for the upcoming school year, much of which is likely to be remote.

7



There are systemic deficits in data management (from before the pandemic) that preclude the collection and analysis of the data relevant to accurately measure learning losses and deficits, and to plan and implement targeted remedial interventions.

8



There is a consensus in Jamaica and across the world that schools must re-open for in-person learning to stave off further learning and other developmental losses.

9



It is unlikely that schools will re-open in the first term of the new academic year 2021-2, and if they do open, it will be partial. There is low vaccine take-up amidst the high infection rates of an extremely contagious variant (Delta) that appears to be affecting children more than previous COVID-19 variants.

10



For schools to re-open face-to-face in the soonest time possible, the ministry should institute testing regimes for teachers and students, conduct surveys of infection and positivity rates in the communities in which schools are located, procure and utilize alternative locations in close proximity to schools, and encourage and facilitate vaccinations for all teachers and children age 12 and up.

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