

CONNECTING ACROSS ORGANIZATIONS

Answers to the questions from the 6.25.20 webinar

[QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GLOBAL EDUCATION LEARNING SERIES](#)

[QUESTIONS ABOUT COVID-19 AND EDUCATION](#)

[QUESTIONS ABOUT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES](#)

[QUESTIONS ABOUT DISTANCE LEARNING \(AND OTHER\)](#)

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GLOBAL EDUCATION LEARNING SERIES

- 1) **How can a USAID project contribute resources that they have developed to support the Global Education Learning Series? Many projects have developed resources that can be used by other projects.**

If your organization or project is interested in sharing content with other international education practitioners, [please use this form](#).

- 2) **Will the GEL series be mutli-lingual?**

Learning opportunities will be in English with live captions and sometimes with ASL interpretation as well.

- 3) **Is there an opportunity for implementing partners to apply to participate in the Global Learning Series as speakers, panelists, or subject matter experts?**

We are not accepting new applications to speak in the learning series. We selected speakers from the pool of participants previously scheduled to speak at the GEC, as well as speakers/partners who could address specific aspects of the education response to COVID-19.

- 4) **As follow-up from the USAID Global Education Conference that was planned for April 2020: when would it be possible to shift planned sessions with USAID and partners to online formats?**



EDUCATIONLINKS

Global Education Learning Series

See answer above.

- 5) **What is the target audience for the Learning Series? We know implementers are part of the audience, but it sounds like there may also be opportunity for mission staff and others as well.**

The target audience for the Learning Series is the same as it was for the Global Education Conference: USAID education staff including mission staff; implementing partners and USG agencies; and donors and partner country stakeholders.

- 6) **Our understanding is that this is meant to be an evolution of the USAID Global Education Conference. As such, will USAID seek external stakeholders/implementers to serve as panelists?**

Yes, we have already done this. See answer above.

- 7) **Can you provide more parameters/outline for submitting content?**

If your organization is interested in sharing content with other international education practitioners, [please use this form](#). The form provides more specificity on the kind of content we are looking for and what is a right fit for EducationLinks. All content submitted using the form will be vetted by USAID and you will receive a response from the EducationLinks team.

QUESTIONS ABOUT COVID-19 AND EDUCATION

- 1) **What assistance will USAID give to developing countries in terms of strategies in reopening schools and how to get funds?**

The USAID Office of Education has developed a [Return to Learning During COVID-19 Policy Brief](#) that outlines recommended strategies for reopening schools. In the next few months, we will be publishing additional guidance as part of a Return to Learning Toolkit, which will go into further detail for how to support learners, educators, and the education sector in planning and implementing return to learning guidance.

- 2) **Can you expand on how the Private Sector Engagement plan is adapting to the COVID response, if it is?**

USAID established a Private Sector Engagement COVID Task Team that is working across the Agency to support the COVID response and provided guidance for [COVID19 Unsolicited Proposals](#). For more information, visit [USAID's website](#). In the education



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sector, many private companies have made their products, resources, and platforms free for use, and have been reaching out to Ministries of Education, USAID Missions, and Implementing Partners to help adapt and support distance learning efforts for students and teachers, as well as long-term education activities. The Office of Education Private Sector Engagement in Education Plan has not strategically changed, but remains responsive to the short- and long-term needs of USAID Missions and interests of the private sector.

3) How are we dealing with the fragmentation of strategy/policy of different global organizations, from UNICEF to bilaterals to development partners so as not to overwhelm Ministries of Educations (MoE)?

We want to emphasize the critical role played by the Education Cluster and/or the Local Education Group in-country. In some contexts, USAID chairs and coordinates the Local Education Group and is an active member of the Education Cluster. This is the first step to ensure we align under one vision of the MoE and work in collaboration to avoid duplication, build consensus, and capitalize on stakeholders comparative advantage.

At the global level, we are coordinating closely with key stakeholders and leaders in international education including UNICEF, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, and other bilateral donors to share resources, harmonize approaches, avoid duplication and coordinate responses.

4) What will reporting to Congress look like in the absence of reliable data? Will F indicator reporting be delayed due to COVID-19? Will achievement expectations change due to COVID?

There are not currently any changes to the annual Performance Plan and Report schedule, and USAID will provide more guidance for the whole agency in September 2020. We have recently published guidance for the education sector implementing partners on monitoring, evaluation, and learning ([link](#)) that provides further details on this and other questions, relevant for implementers across the education continuum. We are planning to hold partner consultations on MEL guidance, likely in late July, though we are working to finalize the final date. We encourage partners to talk directly with their AOR/CORs if changes are needed to indicators, targets, or activity-level plans for monitoring, evaluation, or learning. There is not going to be a single solution/answer to the variety of operational and technical challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has created for our activities. Two key questions



EDUCATIONLINKS

Global Education Learning Series

to guide potential revisions or adaptations: 1) Can we get data safely?, and 2) How has the intervention changed?

5) How is USAID working to make sure that remote education programs, implemented during the COVID pandemic, are accessible to marginalized groups, girls and children who have disabilities and need specific accommodations (e.g. sign language or Braille) while ensuring that technology, which is not available to many families, is not necessary to continue learning?

Equity and Inclusion are core principles of USAID's Education Policy - across the entire education continuum - the Policy which continues to guide all of our basic and higher education investments, including those for our response to COVID-19. We know that the impacts of COVID-19 on the education sector are likely to exacerbate and widen inequality. As a sector, equity and inclusion are central themes to our conversations about COVID-19 and Education. We are committed to low and no tech inclusive distance learning materials.

We encourage everyone to access two new guidance documents that have been developed recently: *The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning during COVID-19* guidance and the *Return to Learning Guidance*. Both documents include equity and reaching the most marginalized as central themes. For example, in the MEL guidance, we underscore the need to capture data that will help inform how we can minimize exacerbating inequities. The *Return to Learning Guidance* includes strategies and considerations for the most marginalized students.

We have recently launched the UnrestrICTed prize, which focuses on scalable ICT solutions to support learning for children with disabilities. Also, USAID/Ethiopia and an All Children Reading Grand Challenge for Development winner, eKitabu in Kenya, are doing exemplary work in integrating principles of Universal Design for Learning into their education programming, which is being aired daily on national television. The content includes audio, sign language and simple images to support learning.

6) When country governments do choose to re-open schools, how will USAID's Office of Education work across the agency to ensure schools have adequate WASH facilities?

Through USAID's COVID-19 Task Force, the Office of Education participates in coordination efforts across all offices engaged in our whole-of-Agency response, including



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Global Education Learning Series

the Global Health Bureau. The Office of Education has specifically worked with Global Health to identify reliable, evidence-based resources for ensuring safe and hygienic learning environments. We have worked together to provide professional development opportunities for our staff on cross-sector Health and Education approaches.

QUESTIONS ABOUT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- 1) **Where do we find the list of USAID funded COVID-19 projects? We read USAID has announced \$274 million in projects.**

Most of the supplemental funding is being allocated to missions rather than to central mechanisms. Missions will report their procurement plans through the Business Forecast, which is available to the public. OAA will host the next Business Forecast call on July 17- if you are interested in attending the next Business Forecast call, you may register using [this link](#).

QUESTIONS ABOUT DISTANCE LEARNING (AND OTHER)

- 1) **What modalities or approaches have proved to be most effective for Distance Learning? Do we have data on the effectiveness and which modality is most effective?**

This is a good question, but, unfortunately, there is not a single, universally-applicable answer. Modalities for distance learning must be selected based on a combination of factors. For example, what audience are you seeking to reach, what context are they currently living in what access to technology does that audience possess, what skills or content are you teaching, what budget is available to you, and what indicators are you planning to use to measure progress? *Choice of modality may be very different for reaching small children in rural Africa as compared to reaching university-level students in a major city in the Middle East.*

Very generally, broadcast radio is the modality proven to have the largest reach, but modalities like cell-phone based delivery have proven highly effective for individual study. For more on choice of modality, please see USAID's recent literature review: [Distance Learning in Emergencies](#). For resources on radio instruction, please see the IRI and IAI collections on Education Links and on "Global Digital Library-Radio." USAID's COVID-19 Education Task Team is also preparing a review of evidence on how to measure the efficacy of distance learning, which will soon be published on USAID's Education Links.



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2) What opportunities are there for implementers to support the work of the Global Working Group on Distance Learning in Crisis and new Virtual Center of Excellence for Education Distance Learning for developing countries?

First, if you are not a member of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) please become one. Membership is free and comes with multiple benefits! Not least of which is access to the latest resources on COVID-19 and Education, opportunities to learn from experts and thought leaders in this field, and a platform to exchange ideas, challenges, and successes.

This working group and related objectives is transitioning to INEE. As a member of INEE please look for updates and opportunities for future engagement.

3) Can you share the timeline for the completion of the Checklist: Quality Parameters for Inclusion & Equity for Selection of Distance Learning Materials

We are piloting a draft with one field team in early July. We hope to incorporate their feedback and publish the guidance later this summer.

4) I would like to hear about the new USAID organizational structure. How is Education positioned? What is the same and what has changed, particularly within the regional bureaus? How can we best engage and support our USAID colleagues in this new structure?

The Center for Education will be in the new Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI). DDI will serve as the Agency's central resource for design support and technical assistance, and will bring together the following:

- Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and Environment (E3)
- Global Development Lab (Lab)
- Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
- Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad
- Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
- Minority-Serving Institutions program

DDI will reorient Washington-based technical expertise to drive program decision-making towards the field, with more consistent, coordinated and responsive technical support. It will increase coordination and accountability among Washington expertise in their service



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Global Education Learning Series

to missions, consistently infuse the values of USAID and the American people into programming, enable staff to experiment, test, and scale new practices and approaches, and increase learning to improve performance. [The USAID Transformation website](#) provides information on USAID's new structures/bureaus as well as on how we do business.



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