

Panel Discussion:: Xcelerate NC - International Panel Discussion

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Episode Length: 2hrs

Background:

- Topic of discussion: **Education In The Times Of The Pandemic And The Way Forward**
- Multiple panelists, these notes focus on Sylvester Renner's contributions to the discussion

Notes:

- Impact of the pandemic on student education – 188 countries have experienced school closures
 - Went into lockdown, closed down the schools, some went online...but need the resources for this to work (electricity at home, laptops, internet access, etc) and many do not have these resources at home – as such, many students fell behind
 - There was some radio broadcasting of lessons with very limited success
 - Definite decline in educational quality + missing out on the social aspects of school
 - Many students feeling left out and, in turn, dropping out
 - Many parents lost jobs so couldn't afford to send kids back to school even when opened back up
 - Kids will not know what they don't know – easy to go along not knowing that you didn't understand or missed some material
 - Trying to make up for lost time, but not working so students are having to repeat the year
- Concerning group learning and the pandemic's effect
 - Students were learning at home or not learning at all until schools reopened
 - Even in socially distant situations the learning quality is deteriorated
 - Africa is a communal continent where a lot of learning is focused on clusters, so if trying to learn alone or in a socially distant manner the learning quality is inevitably deteriorated
- Overcorrection / cramming and mental health
 - Are in a shortened semester and educational system is trying to cram more into less time. But, ultimately, this doesn't seem to be the answer. It's just going to be more stress on the kids and we need to be wary of mental health.
 - Seeing spike in mental health related situations – students don't realize that already on edge and now adding more stress by cramming is just making them more likely to act out without fully understanding why they feel the need to do so (ex. spike in fights)
 - Important for parents and teachers to be a little more patient given the circumstances
- New innovative ways of educating that will carry forward
 - More emphasis on leveraging technology, more e-learning use as there are some students that will/do learn best in this manner. Further, online there are more courses to choose from and this can be leveraged to complement what learning in person.
 - Ones that thrive in a classroom will benefit from getting back to the classroom, but need to consider that students are individuals and there are some students that do flourish more with individual learning. In such cases, continuing to offer online learning is an important resource.
- Closing thoughts
 - Quote: *Limits exist only in the mind*
 - Pandemic has forced us to realize that things we thought had to be done in a specific way, didn't actually need to be done that way (ex. in person vs online exams)
 - As we move forward, important to continue to push on the perceived limits

Notes compiled by Madeline M