

WEEKLY UPDATE:

03 April 2020

COURAGE, FORWARD THINKING AND GROUNDED ACTIONS

CORPORATE FUNDERS, FOUNDATIONS AND NGOS WORK TOGETHER
TO SUPPORT THE EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE COVID-19

NECT AND PARTNER SUPPORT MINISTER'S RESPONSE

The National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) has been working with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in formulating a national response programme to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, especially during the period of the 21-day national lockdown announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa. The Minister of Basic Education, Ms Angie Motshekga, gave a comprehensive briefing to media and other stakeholders around the same time (See full speech here <https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-angie-motshekga-basic-education-sector-plans-support-learners-during-covid-19>). She highlighted "a series of consultations with the provincial departments of education to identify ways in which we can ensure that our children are better informed about COVID-19, are engaged, and continue their education in their homes".

The NECT naturally works as a facilitator of collaboration among several stakeholders to generate synergies, which optimise the use of resources. To this end, the NECT has been supporting efforts by the DBE to encourage individuals, public, private and civil society organisations to come on board the plan to disseminate the messages preventing the spread of the virus, and to keep the education of our children going on even when the schools closed.

Different partners have already committed to assist, but the drive to raise more support continues to make the emergency plans of the DBE workable. The emergency plans include E-learning that ensures that learning continues during the lockdown, providing revision and examination preparation support, offering audio, video and online lessons, availing free books, workbooks, previous question papers and various reading material on different online portals, special broadcast programming and inserts in community newspapers.

JOINT SUPPORT STRUCTURES CREATED FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

The NECT and DBE jointly set up three teams to drive the national education response, namely:

- 1.** Communications and dissemination team, which is tasked with establishing and operationalising an agile, extensive communication strategy to all the 13 million learners (and their parents and teachers) through the nine provincial departments, 75 districts, 980 circuits and close to 25 000 schools.
- 2.** Content and production team, tasked with the curation and production of relevant content, materials and platforms to disseminate to all learners and teachers.
- 3.** Partnerships and resourcing team, tasked with establishing and activating partnerships that support and resource contactless learning, communication and care and support of learners and teachers.

An Interim Steering Committee (ISC) has been set up under the auspices of the NECT to support the implementation of the education response plan. The Steering Committee is currently comprised of the DBE, the NECT and some of the partners who have committed to resourcing the education response plan: Old Mutual Foundation, UNICEF, Momentum Metropolitan Holding and FirstRand. The key tasks of the ISC are to represent the interest of all involved in supporting the education response to the Covid-19 disaster, ensure swift joint decisions, gather strategic inputs, communicate to the broader stakeholder group and to liaise with the Solidarity Fund in respect to the implementation of the education response plan. Interested partners may write to info@nect.org.za.

Different organisations and individuals have come forward to support the national education response. To date, the United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF), National Association of Social Change Entities in Education (NASCEE), Heartlines, DG Murray Trust, PILO, CovidComms SA, Zenex Foundation, Old Mutual, First Rand, SABC, DSTV, Vodacom, MTIN, Telkom and Cell-C are among those that have enlisted as partners of the response.

NATIONAL RESOURCES SET UP TO SUPPORT REMOTE LEARNING

These partners have made it possible for the DBE to put together a comprehensive **COVID-19 Learners Support Package**, available on the department's website www.education.gov.za, which includes:

- Several online multimedia resources, study and teaching material, all available on www.education.gov.za. This platform offers access to workbooks, textbooks, study and revision guides for all grades, the Second Chance Matric Support Programme, South African Sign Language, CAPS-aligned learner-apps for Android, e-Assessment for Grade 12, audio and video lessons, Lockdown Digital School, Nal'ibali multilingual stories and several children's readers.
- These online and broadcast support resources – available from April 1 – can be accessed via
 - Broadcast lessons on SABC TV and Radio, DSTV.
 - DBE TV broadcast support for Grade 10, 11 and 12 learners and teachers on the Open view HD (OVHD) platform – channel 122. This channel is available free of any subscriptions and will broadcast initially for a period of six months from 1 April to 30 September 2020. The full broadcast schedule can be found on Channel 122 or the DBE website, www.education.gov.za.
 - Community media outlets countrywide – including TV, radio and print, so everyone is encouraged to pick a copy of one of more than 100 community newspaper titles for inserts; and
 - Electronic readers which can be found on platforms provided by Vodacom, MTN, Telkom and Cell-C.
- Different Apps that prioritise indigenous languages such as the 2Enable App, which is freely downloadable – offering more than 2,000 electronic readers.
- Different resources identified by the National Reading Coalition, the National Education Collaboration Trust and other pro-education civil society organisations.

These are among the many other freely available resources. For information on these, broadcast schedules for lessons and more updates, please visit the DBE website www.education.gov.za and follow the social media pages of both DBE and the NECT.

THE NGO ARE COLLATING GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE TO RESPOND TO COVID-19

Non-governmental players on the other hand have started various other collaborative initiatives. These include:

- JET Education Services is commissioning nine educational research related to Covid-19 covering pertinent questions such how education institutions have to be governed and the exploring innovations in times of the disaster
- Zenex Foundation as activated its international networks to gather lessons on how other education funding partners and systems are responding to the pandemic.
- The Social Change Entities in Education (NASCEE) and the Centre for the Advancement of Mathematics Education (CASME) are curating resources for remote and online Learning
- The Programme for Improving Learning Outcomes (PILO) is working with the churches and teacher unions to spread the Covid-19 prevention messages

ANYONE CAN GET INVOLVED AND SUPPORT THE NATIONAL EFFORTS TO COMBAT THE EFFECT AND SPREAD OF COVID-19.

The NECT is working with a wide range of these organisations and the Department of Basic Education to ensure that every resource, material and effort is optimally used to support the national response. The NECT will continue to provide updates on initiatives in the sector with a view of disseminating information that is key for collaboration among the players and the coordination of the efforts and activities in the sector. We are of the view that this is not the time for non-governmental organisations and funding partners to compete, but time, to look for points of integration and collaboration.

NATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Among the many encouraging gestures to support the fight against COVID-19 has been the Solidarity Fund, into which different South African individuals, corporations and civil society organisations have contributed generously. It is heartening to experience such goodwill from all over South Africa channeling resources from business structures or organisations, companies and firms rallying behind the definitive action by President Cyril Ramaphosa to mitigate the impact of the outbreak. We can only call for those already contributing to sustain their patriotic efforts and those not yet involved to join the cause. Read more about Business For South Africa here:

www.businessforsa.org

For more information please contact: Mongezi Masilela, Marketing & Communications Coordinator, +27 12 752 6200, Masilelas@nect.org.za or +27 83 301 5172

ADDITIONAL USEFUL INFORMATION

NICD	www.nicd.ac.za
COVID-19 Learners Support	www.education.gov.za
COVID-19 information	www.sacoronavirus.co.za
Coronavirus 24-hour Hotline	0800 029 999
Coronavirus WhatsApp	060 012 3456
Official Government Regulations and Guidelines on COVID-19	www.gov.za/coronavirus/guidelines
Business for South Africa	www.businessforsa.org
Interim Steering Committee (ISC)	DBE and NECT covidresponse@nect.org.za
COVID-19 Learners Support	www.education.gov.za
Old Mutual Foundation	www.oldmutual.co.za / www.oldmutual.co.za/covid-19
United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF)	www.unicef.org
Momentum	www.momentum.co.za
Metropolitan Holding	www.metropolitanholdings.com
FirstRand	www.firstrand.co.za
National Association of Social Change Entities in Education (NASCEE)	https://nascee.org.za/ info@nascee.org.za
Heartlines	https://heartlines.org.za
DG Murray Trust	www.dgmt.co.za/
PILO	www.pilo.co.za
CovidComms SA	covidcomms.org.za
Zenex Foundation	www.zenexfoundation.org.za
SABC	www.sabc.co.za
DSTV	www.dstv.co.za
Vodacom	www.vodacom.com
MTN	www.mtn.co.za
Telkom	www.telkom.co.za
Cell-C	www.cellc.co.za
JET Education Services	www.jet.org.za