



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



Are Children learning during COVID-19?

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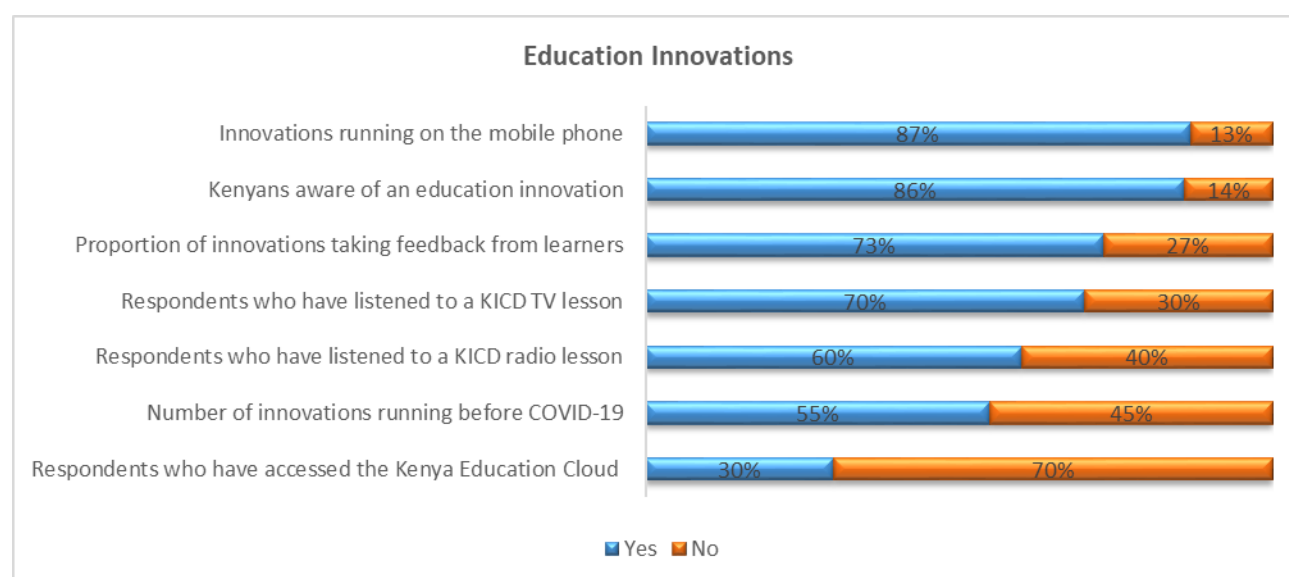
Findings of the Rapid Survey on Education Innovations in Kenya

The Government of Kenya announced the closure of all learning institutions on March 15, 2020, bringing the first term of 2020 to an abrupt end. This followed Kenya reporting the first case of COVID-19 in the country. Following this unprecedented closure of schools, discussions, and reactions have been rife on the status of learning. The Ministry of Education, through the relevant agencies such as the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), has undertaken several measures to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector. Evidence is emerging to affirm that many citizens, in their individual or collective effort, within or outside of government, are implementing several interventions in the education space in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNICEF 2020 recommends that Rapid Response Surveys be undertaken to gather critical information to inform decision making. The Kenya Basic Education COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan (2020) affirms the essence of such data and the centrality of partnerships. It is within this spirit that the perception survey, using an online form, collected data between April 28 and May 6, 2020. A total of 2,664 respondents from all 47 counties gave responses using the online form.

This brief presents the findings on the effort individuals and institutions are undertaking to respond to the learning disruptions. The following are the six (6) major findings of the survey.

Summary of the Findings



1) Almost nine out of ten Kenyans are aware of interventions in education that are working during COVID-19.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, 86% of the Kenyans surveyed reported that they knew of an intervention to help children continue learning. In 43 counties, over three in every five respondents reported knowing a working solution during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, none of the Kenyans

surveyed in the four counties of Lamu, Nandi, TaitaTaveta, and Tana River reported knowing any learning solution applicable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2) COVID-19 has spurred more than half of the education innovations.

Respondents reported that before COVID-19, almost half of the innovations (45%) were already in place. However, 55% of the innovations emerged after COVID-19 broke out in Kenya. This finding demonstrates that education is agile in adjusting to shocks occasioned by schools closing. The innovations are cutting across the counties. However, the survey cannot explain the spread and flow of education innovations.

3) Almost half of the learning solutions target learners in all grades in basic education.

A majority of the solutions (45%) target learners in primary and secondary schools. On the other hand, 19% of the solutions target learners in primary schools, while 27% of the solutions target learners in secondary schools. A few solutions (2.8%) target parents, while 3.1% target teachers. The survey cannot establish whether the solutions targeting learners have an interface with the teachers or require self-instruction.

4) Three-quarters of the available education innovations have an inbuilt feedback mechanism.

Nearly three-quarters of the respondents (73%) reported that the available solutions have an inbuilt feedback mechanism. However, 27% of the respondents reported that the solutions did not have a provision for receiving feedback from the learners. It is noteworthy that feedback is critical, mainly when conventional learning is interrupted, and the face to face interaction between learners and teachers is missing. Feedback is essential during an emergency, considering that there are no guidelines for selecting learning content. Similarly, there are no known guidelines for vetting the available content to establish the fitness of purpose.

5) Television learning lessons are the most popular of the KICD learning solutions; seven in every 10 surveyed Kenyans have watched a lesson on TV.

KICD has a bucket of learning solutions that are loaded on the radio, television, and the Kenya Education Cloud platforms. These solutions are available for free. To increase access to learning solutions, KICD has an elaborate public engagement strategy that includes forging partnerships with media houses. From the survey, 70% of the respondents reported that they had watched a lesson on TV. Similarly, 60% of the respondents reported that they had listened to radio lessons, while 30% had accessed the Kenya Education Cloud.

6) Four in every five learning solutions are loaded on the mobile phone.

With the high penetration of mobile phones (49 million registered GSMs, according to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019), it appears that the mobile phone as a learning tool is gaining acceptance. The solutions cited run on android enabled cellphones. Other solutions are pre-installed on computing devices (desktop and laptops). The presence of WhatsApp platforms and educational applications running on cellphone operating systems (windows, android, and iOS) is a clear demonstration of the deep penetration of the phone into the learning space. It, therefore, appears that the development and selection of any learning solution cannot ignore the place of the mobile phone.

Recommendations

The following recommendations emerge from the findings:

- 1) Adopt rapid surveys in developing and implementing education response to the COVID-19 pandemic.** The rapid survey demonstrates that it is possible to design and implement surveys

using technology (on the phone). Technology-based surveys have a faster turnaround time on generating responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 2) **Collect additional information on innovations in education.** The rapid survey has brought to fore salient issues in innovations in education during COVID-19. There is a need to collect additional information focusing on scope, quality, and equity of the learning solutions. The efficacy of solutions in facilitating learning is a pithing this survey cannot conclude on.
- 3) **Scale up the learning opportunities provided by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development.** The three solutions (radio, television, and the Kenya Education Cloud) have already gained acceptance. Continued feedback on the efficacy of learning is critical in scaling up the solutions.
- 4) **Partner with the private sector and not for profit agencies to reach the less served.** There are many players in the education space, trying to offer learning solutions. They include enterprises on an extensive continuum and the not for profit public and private agencies involved in delivering education solutions. In this case, partnerships with local community radio stations and popular television stations through social responsibility should be pursued to increase penetration of the solutions with a focus on reaching those left furthest behind. Mapping of these solutions and the agencies implementing them should be undertaken urgently to reduce duplication and ensure a fair distribution to reduce the evidential digital gap.
- 5) **There is a need to develop and implement consumer protection measures in learning innovations.** It is of great concern that 27% of the solutions lack feedback mechanisms, and it is not clear on whether their content has been vetted as age and grade-appropriate for learning. The proliferation of the solutions from overzealous vendors may predispose unsuspecting buyers and consumers to more harm than the intended good. Measures should be put in place, including public education, on the criterion for selecting appropriate solutions to mitigate the possible risks.