

## Moving on or dropping out, a dilemma for students facing Covid-19

Social inequality and digital gaps are noticeable in Mexico before coming back to school

The social inequality gap is growing due to the closure of schools, it is important to make decisions about the return to school, to avoid affecting more than 30 million students in basic education in the country.

Education is a topic that always causes controversy, however, the educational sector is, and it will always be fundamental in any strategy that the government decides on, but predictions in this sector do not seem favorable.

To start the new school year 2020 - 2021 the real situation of thousands of children, teenagers, and young students is not being considered as they do not have the necessary conditions to start their academic activities. We all predicted that COVID-19 might have several consequences, but the fact is that as usual, vulnerable people with economical and educational lacks at home will be affected the most.

The federal government in Mexico through the Minister of Education, Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, informed that students will start distance learning on August 24 thanks to the agreement with several TV stations in the country. TV stations will broadcast classes to more than 30 millions students, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This way, broadcasts will have official value and students will be evaluated in specific dates.

The Mexican government will pay 15 pesos for each enrolled student in the school year 2020 - 2021 to each TV station. The goal is that TV stations broadcast educational programs for 30 million students in basic education, so the government will pay more than 450 million pesos.

The question is: Will this situation affect or benefit education in Mexico?

According to Eduardo Backhoff Escudero; president of the civil association “Directive Council on Educational Metrics”, in his article called “COVID-19 educational impact in Mexico”; he mentioned that if we want to know the impact of it for the next school year starting on August 24, it is important to consider the access that Mexican people have to new technology, as well as the resources availability at home. For example 10% of basic education students, that is to say, about 2.5 million students do not have a TV at home.

Moreover, 50% of them, that is to say, about 12.5 million students do not have computers with internet connection. Besides, it is important to know the limitations teachers have at using computers for educational purposes, as well as the lack of contents and unavailability of didactic materials for both, students and teachers, in several subjects and school grades.

Eduardo Backhoff also mentioned that the digital gap increases in rural and indigenous communities because they do not have ideal conditions for it. For that reason, we will be able to know the real impact of COVID-19 on education several years later.

### International perspectives

The United Nations (UN) warned about the increase of the gap due to schools closing, and it also asked that security must be the priority to make decisions before coming back to classes. This situation has affected more than 1,000 million students so far, but we have to add to this number, more than 250 million school-age children who were already out of the educational system before the pandemic.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, presented a report, and he mentioned that the world had an “educational crisis” before the pandemic due to a big amount of people with low levels of schooling. He also stated that in developing countries, only a quarter of secondary school students can complete their studies with basic competencies.

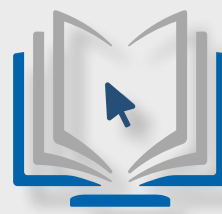
On the other hand, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) predicts that pandemic will have serious impacts on the sequence of studies in Mexican people so, 1.4 million students might not come back to classes in the next school year 2020 - 2021.

In the analysis called “Human development and COVID-19 in Mexico”, it is mentioned that 800 thousand secondary students may not continue with their high school studies; 593 thousand



### Data

- In Mexico, students will come back to school on August 24, and four TV stations will be responsible for broadcasting educational programs
- However, 10% of basic education students, that is to say, about 2.5 million students do not have a TV at home



sand students might drop their university studies, and 38 thousand 567 graduated students will also drop from their postgraduate studies so, the total number of dropouts might be one million 431 thousand 567 students. It is difficult to determine the number of students dropping basic education, but as far as we know, it is the educational level with the lowest dropout rate.

### Acciones CMT en pro de la educación



- Computer equipment
- Laboratory equipment
- Sport equipment
- Equipment for libraries
- Furniture for classrooms
- School supplies

#### Equipment and supplies

- School uniforms, shoes, tennis shoes, and backpacks
- Didactic materials
- Educational electronic devices
- Vehicles
- Economic assistance for maintenance services
- Cash and in-kind assistance
- School insurance policies
- Food supplies
- Kitchen equipment
- Equipment for digital, telephone and satellite links to transfer voice and data to guarantee connectivity

### Message CMT

Due to this situation, Congregación Mariana Trinitaria (CMT) calls on parents, educational authorities, teachers, and authorities on the three governmental levels to work together to improve education of children, teenagers and young people.

Congregación Mariana Trinitaria developed its “CMT Welfare Ecosystem Model”, whose objective is to encourage integral development, as we know that education is important for any country. That is the reason why this model includes several networks that foster access to education: infrastructure and educational equipment, teachers development, and an online / offline platform that allows development of skills and knowledge.

Parents are asked to avoid pauses on their children’s education, and also to provide them with better conditions to study. Meanwhile, educational authorities and teachers must look for different programs and continuous training in order to offer an ideal academic support to future generations.

Government; civil society; private, and educational sectors need to reflect on the efficiency of their public policy. Today is the moment to become aware of the importance of education because it is a fundamental factor for Mexican people. Besides, it is crucial to understand that unidirectional education is not effective so, the actual strategy will not have the results we expect, if we do not look for alternatives that provide effective feedback.

### Actions CMT to promote education



- Restroom equipment
- Building materials
- Special equipment for handicapped people

#### Educational infrastructure

- Special restrooms
- Anti-slip pavement
- Construction of libraries
- Materials to build roofs
- Materials for firm floor
- Equipment and materials for rainwater collection
- Materials to improve water distribution systems