

Authors

Elisabetta Aurino
University of Barcelona

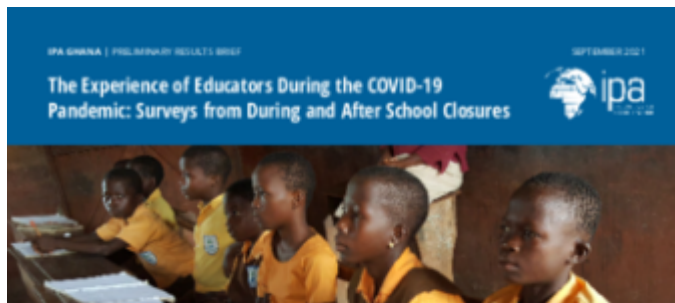
Sharon Wolf
University of Pennsylvania

Jere R. Behrman
University of Pennsylvania

J. Lawrence Aber
New York University

Staff

Edward Tsinigo
Research Manager, Ghana



The COVID-19 pandemic forced educators and students worldwide to rapidly shift to distance learning. As a result, governments, school systems, and educators worked to provide continuity in learning and services accessed through schools—such as school feeding programs—while trying to recreate persistent equity gaps in access to technology and material and social resources. To date, global educational research has largely focused on how existing disparities and the social and economic downturn resulting from COVID-19 have undermined children’s learning. Much less data exist on how teachers fared during distance learning and the return to in-person schooling.

This brief leverages an ongoing longitudinal study on children, parents, and teachers in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Researchers conducted two rounds of phone surveys with 514 primary-school teachers from public and private schools to measure the pandemic’s repercussions on both children’s education and teacher well-being. Data were collected during school closures (October 2020) and when schools reopened (mid-January 2021) after ten months of distance learning.

Key Findings

- Most school teachers (87 percent) attempted to reach caregivers during school closures to discuss academic and distance learning matters. However, such efforts dropped (80 percent) upon school re-opening. Most teachers (75 percent) were only able to reach **half or fewer of their students** while schools were closed, with private school teachers reaching more parents than public school teachers.
- **Nearly one in five teachers (18 percent) left the teaching profession** when schools reopened. Those who left teaching were younger and more likely to work in a private school.
- Upon re-opening schools, teachers were concerned about a wide array of issues. The most highly reported was the **health and safety** of their students and themselves.
- As students returned to school, nearly half of teachers reported that more than 50 percent of their students are behind on learning. **Teachers were pessimistic that the learning loss is “very large.”** More public school teachers reported very large learning loss than private school teachers at 26 percent versus 16 percent, respectively.
- To address pandemic-related learning losses, schools re-opened, teachers most frequently reported **assigning extra homework (33 percent) and holding remedial or after school classes (28 percent)** to mitigate the loss. Private school teachers reported engaging more after school classes for students (14 percent versus 13 percent of public school teachers). This finding is consistent with the pattern observed during distance learning, whereby private school teachers were also more likely to engage students in individualized learning activities during these months.

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<p>RESEARCHERS Elisabetta Aurino (Imperial College London), Sharon Wolf (University of Pennsylvania), Jere R. Behrman (University of Pennsylvania), J. Lawrence Aber (New York University), Edward Tsinigo (Innovations for Poverty Action), Nicole Sutherland (University of Pennsylvania), Jerome Brainerd (Georgia State University)</p> <p>PARTNERS Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council</p> <p>TIMELINE 2020-2021</p>	<p>SECTOR Education</p> <p>SAMPLE 514 teachers</p> <p>STUDY DESIGN Observational</p> <p>IPA STAFF Sibonem Senevirathna, Edward Tsinigo</p>
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The Experience of Educators During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Surveys from During and After School Closures

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