

# SDGs and distance higher education during covid-19

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## Introduction

Higher education's contribution to and connection with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are significant. SDG 4 clearly indicates that higher education is part of this SDG, as higher education is a component of quality education and can provide lifelong learning opportunities [1]. However, one significant change in the year 2020 was the pandemic of COVID-19, which spread throughout the world and obliged the governments to suspend all non-essential work, including teaching [2], influencing SDGs [3].

## Influence of SDGs due to covid-19 on distance higher education

The education system has suffered a serious blow due to Covid-19 [3], primarily due to the closure of educational institutions and by the sudden adoption of E-learning practices [4]. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has a thought-provoking impact on the SDGs [4], especially by those educational organizations that have not yet had time to prepare technologically for the transfer of information and education using technical means that allow remote interaction [3].

Distance education is possible to create burdens for the sustainable development of higher education as such strategies may consume substantial resources such as finances and staff stints, and therefore reduce universities contribution to SDGs via teaching and research [1]. In addition, more problematic are the least developed countries and some developing countries, where access to essential online teaching resources such as internet and basic shelter is insufficient, so the attainments of SDG 4 face challenges [5].

Furthermore, the current formal education system (including higher education) does not make learners successfully prepare for disasters and developing suitable health defense systems [6], which is an important dimension of SDG 3 and SDG 13, while students (including university students) in less-developed countries are more likely to suffer from

disadvantages in access to educational resources in the pandemic of COVID-19, which has negative impact on achieving SDG 10 to reduce inequality within and among countries [5]. Finally, COVID-19's influence on higher education and economy may also lead to a diminishing human capital and economic opportunities, and therefore generates negative impact on SDG 8 [7]. This can also be reflected by the high unemployment (including youth employment) in many countries since the spring of 2020 [1].

## Conclusions

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between higher education and SDGs, and in particular investigating the impact of COVID-19 on higher education, including how the pandemic reduces the contribution of higher education to the achievement of SDGs. The pandemic of Covid-19 appears to have affected the achievement of SDGs at the higher education level, in particular as regards the achievement of Goals related to quality education, health, economic prosperity and viability of universities, inequalities between countries and in general teaching and research.

## References

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