

# *School system on a tightrope*

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The restrictions imposed to stop the chain of infections and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic have had a painful effect on the school system throughout the entire world, where 1.6 billion students had to abandon the classrooms and many do not have the proper conditions to continue studying at home.

In many nations, 'distance learning' has been an option in the urban areas, either online or by television, but the country life provides a different reality, since there are less developed regions where electricity is a fantasy and the Internet seems to be taken from a science fiction story.

Never in recent human history, has such a massive break in the field of education occurred, not even during the two World Wars of the last century. And the worst thing is that the consequences are still uncertain.

According to the humanitarian organization Save the Children, at least ten millions of students will never return to school after the pandemic. They are the ones who live in countries and regions with a poor quality of life, such as Yemen, Afghanistan, West and Central Africa. They will join the 258 million children that were already outside the formal educational system before COVID-19.

The organization recognizes that the health crisis will wreak havoc of about 77 billion dollars in the budget destined for education, for at least the next year and a half in the most vulnerable nations.

In most of the cases, this is because large sums of money were diverted to meet the expenses caused by the disease, but also because some governments artfully took these resources to pay public debt

services, almost an abomination in the time of a pandemic.

All this without taking into account the increasingly frequent complaints of corruption. Save the Children asked creditors to forgive the debts of the poorer countries, which would allow to free up some 14 billion dollars that would serve to reactivate or even improve education.

The fact is that many children outside the educational system are precisely those who need this service the most, to stop the cycle of poverty.

Without adequate training, they are condemned either to obtain low quality employment and wages, or fall into the disastrous informal economy. And, unfortunately, the same conditions and way of life will be passed on to their children.

The COVID-19 pandemic should not be a reason or a pretext to keep millions of human beings immersed in poverty and ignorance. And schools around the world are now on a tightrope... with the fear of falling without a safety net.

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