

Digital Learning Measures in Honduras During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Demographics and actions at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic

Honduras is located in Central America bordering Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Pacific Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea. It has over 9 million inhabitants (Instituto Nacional de Estadística de Honduras, 2019). The country has two major cities, Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. The population living in urban areas is approximately 54%, while those living in rural areas is 46% (Red Latinoamericana por la Educación [Reduca], 2018).

The amalgamation of poverty, violence, and education opportunities has often resulted in families and children being displaced or forced to flee the country (Fore, 2019). Honduras has the second highest poverty rate in Latin America and the Caribbean: in 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 14.8% of the population lived on less than US\$1.90 per day, and approximately 50% of the population lived on less than US\$5.50 per day (World Bank, 2021). Persistent poverty affects 67% of the population, and about 60% of the rural population lives in extreme poverty (UN Human Rights Council, 2019). Before the pandemic, there was limited and unequal access to public utilities, healthcare, and education (World Bank, 2015). Finally, violence and homicide rates are considered extremely high (UN Human Rights Council, 2019). The abovementioned factors play a role in the digital learning opportunities during school closures due to COVID-19.

The first COVID-19 case was registered on March 10, 2020 (Secretaría de Salud, 2020). Lockdown was enforced as early as mid-March allowing individuals to leave their homes only on predetermined dates according to the last digit in their ID cards (La Prensa, 2020a). Overall, the number of cases continued to rise along with the death toll of health care practitioners (New York Times, 2020; Colegio Médico, 2020). The Honduran government declared a State of Sanitary Emergency in February 2020 to prevent and surveil COVID-19 cases (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2020).

The education system in Honduras

The Secretariat of Education is responsible for authorizing and supervising informal and formal education (Ley Fundamental de Educación, 2011). Formal education is organized in (a) pre-basic education prior to grade 1 for 3–5-year-old students, (b) basic education from grades 1-9 for 6–14-year-old students, (c) middle education from grades 10-12 for 15-17 year-old students, and (d) higher education at the university level (República de Honduras, 2019). There is one National Basic Curriculum for formal education in the country which is flexible in its implementation (Reduca, 2018), and several education documents that complement it. See Appendix A for a table listing recent and active education documents crafted by the State prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Fundamental Law of Education (2011) makes a distinction between public and private schools, recognizing the validity of private schools, subject to the supervision and norms

established by the government but not funded by the State (UNESCO-IBE, 2006). The Secretariat of Education, through the Unidad de Infotecnología (Infotechnology Unit, 2020) listed 34,951 schools in the country excluding universities, amongst which 2,486 private centers. Within the private schools, 785 are bilingual (English/Spanish). Most private schools are in urban areas. As explored below, access to schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic differed significantly between private and public schools.

The Fundamental Law of Education (2011) further states that mandatory education in Honduras should last 13 years, but the existing average years of schooling is about half of that. This average was 6.2 years in 2014, and 7.7 years in 2017 (PISA, 2016; República de Honduras, 2019). The recorded illiteracy rate was 14.5% in 2013, and 11.8% in 2017, indicating that over 600,000 adults are unable to read and write (PISA, 2016; República de Honduras, 2019). In general, enrollment rates decrease as years of schooling increase (República de Honduras, 2019). For example, the enrollment rate in basic education was 89.5% in 2017, while the enrollment rates for middle and higher education were 28% and 16.5%, respectively (República de Honduras, 2019). These figures indicate that students are less likely to remain in school as they grow up. As considered below, dropout rates might increase as the socio-educational gap increases and access to digital schooling proves more difficult during the pandemic.

Digital learning strategies at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic

In Honduras, access to mobile phones reached almost 90% of the population prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (Poder Ejecutivo & Secretaría Técnica y Cooperación Externa, 2013). Data from 2017 indicated that 31.7% of the overall population had Internet access, with a significant gap between the percentage of people in rural areas (6%) and urban areas (31%) (Poder Ejecutivo & Secretaría Técnica y Cooperación Externa, 2013; International Telecommunication Union [ITU], 2019). In 2017, the overall percentage of households with computers was 17.1% (ITU, 2019). According to data from the National Statistics Institute, there was a 23.7 percentage point gap between urban households in the country who owned a computer (28.6%) and rural households (4.9%) (Poder Ejecutivo & Secretaría Técnica y Cooperación Externa, 2013). This played a role in access to digital learning during school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the 2014-2018 Digital Agenda for the country (Poder Ejecutivo & Secretaría Técnica y Cooperación Externa, 2013), the Honduran government recognized the need to develop human capital related to ICT by mentioning the need to incorporate ICT within formal and informal education. The document lists 7 preliminary lines of action related to ICT, including enriching formal education through ICT, implementing non-formal training centers, and collaborating with universities, among others.

On March 13, 2020, the government of Honduras announced the closure of education centers as part of prevention mechanisms in response to the spread of COVID-19 (Despacho de Comunicaciones y Estrategia Presidencial, 2020). On March 24, 2020, the Secretariat of Education announced plans for lessons to become available on television (Secretaría de Educación, 2020a; 2020b). Meanwhile, private schools started offering synchronous and asynchronous classes through a variety of means according to each school (La Tribuna, 2020a). At the higher level, although experts recognized limitations in Internet access, universities shifted to online classes (Dirección Ejecutiva de Gestión de Tecnología, 2020).

Unaware of the length of schools' closure and with little preparation for nationwide distance learning, the State tried various strategies for learning from home (Alas-Solis, et al., 2020). On May 8, 2020, the government announced the strategy *Te Queremos Estudiando en Casa (We Want You Studying at home)*, aimed at guaranteeing learning from home for public schools in the core subjects by working in collaboration with the National Commission of Telecommunications [CONATEL] (Presidencia de la República, 2020c). The strategy included broadcasting lessons via television, radio, and the Internet, and it also included printing educational material for students without access to telecommunications (Presidencia de la República, 2020c).

At first, the State prohibited teachers to demand work from students since there was a perception that classes might resume shortly. With the shift to virtual platforms and distance learning, the Secretariat of Education made available online teacher-training workshops for usage of virtual platforms, for norms of biosecurity in the workplace, and cybercrime (Secretaría de Educación, 2020k; 2020l; 2020m). In early July 2020, the Secretariat of Education announced that plans were underway to strengthen connectivity, implement sanitary conditions for safe return to classes, and improve infrastructure for schools (Secretaría de Educación. 2020c). At this time, the State started urging students and teachers to maintain learning active, stating that students would not be automatically promoted to their next grades (Secretaría de Educación. 2020c). Over 120 TV and radio channels began broadcasting lessons free of charge (La Tribuna, 2020b). Additionally, in July 2020, the application Open Data Kit (ODK) was launched to track teachers from both private and public schools in their daily work (Secretaría de Educación, 2020d). On July 10, 2020, the government announced the evaluation guidelines for the school year for promotion to next grade level and the varying requirements for public and private education centers (Secretaría de Educación, 2020f).

The president of CONATEL pointed out that the best solution to ensure that children received education required a comprehensive approach which include a variety of mediums for accessibility (La Tribuna, 2020a). Thus, the Secretariat of Education employed the digital learning platforms and social media channels listed in Table 1 free of charge. Many of the platforms point to the same resources. For example, the lessons in SEDUC-Emergencia are linked to the videos in the YouTube channel. See Appendix B for user facts and figures on these learning platforms at the beginning of the pandemic.

Table 1
Digital learning platforms and social media employed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in Honduras

| Name | Description |
|--|--|
| SEDUC-Emergencia. | This is an app. Resources such as lessons and workbooks are provided in an organized way. It provides announcements and updates. |
| YouTube: Repositorio Vídeos SEDUC. | Recorded lessons are uploaded here. These are arranged in playlists according to grade level. |
| Portal Educativo de Honduras: EduCatracho. | The portal contains interactive lessons. Videos, and workbooks are available here. |

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| Facebook page of Portal Educativo. | It contains student and teacher resources, announcements, pictures, and posts. |
| Centro Educativo Virtual. | Courses are available for every grade, from preschool to grade 12. |
| Open Data Kit (ODK). | This app is used for reporting and tracking attendance. Each school has a unique code for login and teachers as well as administrators use it. |

Internet connection is required to access all the platforms listed in Table 1. In Honduras Internet connection carries a cost. Households of higher income are more likely to be able to afford Internet connection. In addition, since many households do not have the type of Internet access required to utilize the learning platforms, other resources that complement or substitute digital strategies were employed, such as TV, radio, and printed materials. Experts in telecommunications in the country explained that more homes have access to Cable TV than to the Internet (La Tribuna, 2020a). Therefore, efforts were made to include lessons in regular TV and radio throughout the country. On July 22, 2020, the Secretariat of Education stated that there were over 230 communication media outlets including Cable TV, direct TV, and radio programs (Secretaría de Educación, 2020j). Additionally, the Secretariat of Education announced distribution of printed materials in rural areas with limited radio, TV, and Internet connection (Secretaría de Educación, 2020g). Finally, the Secretariat of Education specified that teachers were required to stay in touch with homes and follow up on learning (Secretaría de Educación, 2020h). Thus, private and public schools were reporting to the Secretariat of Education using the application ODK and providing evidence of students' work on a weekly basis (Secretaría de Educación, 2020d).

In sum, during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the education system was forced to move from face-to-face schooling to distance education nationwide. In response, the Secretariat of Education of Honduras promoted various strategies for learning from home, tracking results, and encouraging communication between teachers and students. The effectiveness of those valuable efforts made by the State is examined in the following sections of this report through the lived experiences of education experts during the time of confinement while considering the pre-existing education and socioeconomic conditions of the country.

How effective was the implementation of digital learning strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic in Honduras?

This exploratory study aims to understand how learning policies and digital learning measures implemented in Honduras during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted access to education, quality of education, and socio-economic gaps. The study involved semi-structured interviews with a teacher working in a public school, a teacher working in a private school, and a policy analyst and education expert working for a university's observatory which processes and disseminates information about the education system nationwide. Although the small sample does not speak for larger trends within Honduras, it provides a valuable window into the perspectives of individuals across the different educational strata in the country. Interviews were conducted from November, 2020 to

January, 2021, and considered the professional viewpoints and lived experiences of the interviewees. Findings indicate that the socio-economic gap is fueling inequalities in access and quality to education opportunities more than in the past with potential negative effects in society at large. This discussion explores accessibility to education opportunities during the pandemic, quality of education opportunities for students of various socio-economic status, and possible concerns for society emerging from a limited access to quality education.

Access: What factors influence access to education in Honduras during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The gap in access to quality education was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The education expert interviewed explained that inequalities in learning opportunities have been aggravated during COVID-19 due to social inequalities existing at home as learning moved from the school space –with common learning tools such as a teacher and a blackboard –to home. Now home resources have a bigger impact on education.

Prior to the pandemic, studies showed that accessibility to education in Honduras was impacted by socioeconomic and geographic status, where rural areas had less access than cities, and where private schools had more access than public schools (Bos, et al., 2018; Duarte, Jaureguiberry & Racimo, 2017). Distribution of resources for education was unequal as the poorest quartile of the population had very poor school infrastructure. Internet access is a prerequisite for all the digital platforms implemented by the government and for consistent communication between teachers and students, but economic restrictions imposed considerable limitations in Internet access. For example, the public-school teacher explains:

In our students' homes, often, there is only one phone per family. The family has 3, 4 or 5 children and they can only purchase a WhatsApp package on their cell phone... [but they] must have a standard or high data package... There may be the coolest videos and we can have the most beautiful platforms but, if our receiver lacks the resources to choose to engage as a result of inequalities and the extreme poverty in which we live, what are we going to do?

On the contrary, private schools often used other platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, and materials made available by the Spanish publishing house Santillana for virtual synchronous and asynchronous lessons (personal communication, December 21, 2020).

All interviewees mentioned the government's failed promise to provide free Internet access for educational purposes. The legislative decree 60-2020, published in mid-2020, ordered free Internet access for educational purposes (Estrada, 2020). However, all interviewees expressed frustration at its non-existent implementation, especially since the validity period of the decree ended after the 2020 school year was finalized. The seriousness of the matter was explained by an interviewee citing a survey in which about 40% of parents stated that they are uncertain whether their children will finish the school year because they are unable to pay the Internet costs necessary to connect with school and send homework (Alas-Solis, et al., 2020).

The discrepancy between access to education opportunities for students from differing socio-economic backgrounds was heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic as was also articulated by the policy analyst interviewed:

The difference is clear within elite private schools, where they have all the conditions for a virtual connection, and the educational activity has been developing quite complete. At the other extreme, in the public centers, students cannot connect, or there is no Internet, or no cable TV signal, etcetera. All this is aggravated if we consider that there is no textbook and didactic guides or workbooks. If the student had these materials at home, then it would be easier for the teacher to be guiding the activity, but, if the child has absolutely nothing but an old notebook that he used last year and does not have books at home..., and [has] parents with low education... [then], the poorest children have lost almost a year of schooling even if they are passed to the next grade.

The Third Regional Comparative and Exploratory Study (TERCE, 2013) revealed that only 14% of the sampled students attended schools with sufficient overall infrastructure (Duarte, Jaureguiberry & Racimo, 2017). Other limitations in accessibility emerge from the country's overall infrastructure and ICT impacting public and private schools. An example of limited infrastructure connected to ICT is the frequent rationing of electricity. For instance, the private school teacher stated, "There are a lot of power outages here [in the country]. It not only affects them, [students] but also us, teachers. There were days when I started 'Good morning, how are you?', and puff! Electricity was disconnected. I didn't hear from them again until the power came on."

Finally, geographically, there was a shortage of schools in rural areas and students in the lowest income sectors had lower education coverage rates (República de Honduras, 2019). Findings showed that location plays a role in accessibility to learning avenues during the pandemic. Many students who live in rural areas have extremely limited connectivity to the internet and TV as well as less access to learning tools or an adequate learning environment at home. Although the government took steps to reach students in rural areas, the actions were insufficient. The policy analyst stated, "One must recognize the Secretariat [of Education] had initiatives [as] they distributed books in rural areas...but, if they distributed 40-50 thousand books and enrollment is a million and a half, the effort is good, but more is needed". Nonetheless, due to the active role of teachers in these rural areas, many students continued to have some access to school related work. The policy analyst further commented, "There are a large number of teachers in rural areas who...made the effort, and have done it all year, to walk from house to house, [or] put the homework in the village grocery store for the parent to come and copy it".

Quality: How well are students in Honduras learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Prior to the pandemic, educational achievement indicators placed Honduras below average in international and regional evaluations. In 2013, Honduras participated in TERCE carried out by the Regional Office for Latin America of UNESCO evaluating 3rd and 6th grade in language, math, and science (Flotts et al., 2015). Moreover, in 2017, over 4,773 Honduran students participated in PISA-D, which evaluates reading, math, and science (Bos, et al., 2018). Honduras's results in TERCE and PISA-D were below the regional median in all areas at all evaluated grade levels, with differences of more than a school year in some tested areas (Flotts et al., 2015; Bos, et al., 2018).

In this study, interviewees reported increased unease around students' learning during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the implementation of digital learning strategies from home. Although the Secretariat of Education declared that schools kept 85% enrollment rates during the pandemic (Secretaría de Educación, 2020i), interviewees expressed concern around the learning achievement of these students. As mentioned above, the government used the ODK application to track enrollment and attendance from both private and public schools weekly (Secretaría de Educación, 2020d). However, interviewees explained that the

application only tracked if the students were responding to the teacher's assignments, with little regard to the accuracy of the responses or students' understanding. The interviewed public-school teacher stated that, "[completing tasks] gives the indicator that the student is working, but it does not give us the indicator that the student is learning". Interviewees reported the perception that the government "wants to fill in a figure, not to improve educational quality". As a result, teachers expressed fear towards students passing to the next grade level without attaining the expected learning competencies and skills, impacting the overall quality of education in the country over the long-term.

Historically, the lack of quality public education has influenced privatization, impacting unequal access to education opportunities and widening the socio-educational gap (Verger, Moschetti & Fontdevila, 2017; Edwards et al., 2019). The 2017 PISA-D evaluation reveals that Honduras displays the widest performance gap in the region between private and public schools. Low performance is heightened on students from underprivileged backgrounds, with 96% obtaining low results in PISA-D compared to 78% from students with a privileged economic status (Bos, et al., 2018).

When comparing public and private schools during the pandemic, there were varying approaches around structuring school from home which had a direct impact on the perceived quality of education received. Interviewees in this study explained that, during the pandemic, while public schools halted or slowed activities waiting for the government's stipulations for education measures, parents within private schools were able to impose higher demands on the type and quality of education provided through their private institutions. For example, while waiting for official government guidelines, classes as well as communication with students' homes continued in private schools shortly after in-person schooling closed. The private school teacher explained that, after a few weeks, the school had developed schedules to accommodate synchronous virtual classes through platforms like Zoom, provided digital training to their staff, created individual email accounts for students using virtual learning spaces like Google Classroom, and started employing other paid learning platforms connected to textbooks like Santillana. The private school teacher expressed that "in private institutions, a parent demands a lot because he is paying... [they] demanded class time and the complete use of the books. We had to adapt".

In contrast, public schools, while dealing with the connectivity issues previously mentioned, received conflicting instructions from the Secretariat of Education. The Secretariat of Education seemed to lack a consistent methodology when addressing the situation emerging in school due to COVID-19 pandemic. The public-school teacher explained that "the Secretariat [of Education] woke up a long time later, when they were almost in the fourth quarter". First, under the perception that classes could resume soon, the Secretariat of Education prohibited teachers from demanding students to deliver homework. Next, they promised and failed to deliver free Internet access. Finally, the Secretariat of Education shared another official communication stating that students who did not provide proof of work would not be promoted to the next school year. The policy analyst and education expert concluded that "the public system has functioned in a very limited way...therefore, the levels of learning, as expressed by teachers, parents and students...are very little or nothing."

The relevance of meaningful student-teacher interactions was highlighted by all interviewees when addressing learning achievement and perceived quality education. The private school teacher alluded to the importance of interacting with students to promote learning while stating that, "when we were just assigning homework for students, it was much more difficult [for students] to do it completely alone. Once they connected with us

[through virtual classes and video conference platforms] and we [teachers] explained, then, they could have guidelines on how to do things...or understand them". Unfortunately, for the public and rural school sectors with more connectivity issues, student-teacher interaction and feedback was not commonplace. The public-school teacher stated that, when she tried to interact with her students, few were able to connect, and many had low band levels, being unable to hear or communicate virtually. Throughout the school year, this public-school teacher made attempts to connect with students while considering their economic limitations, changing meeting times when digital devices were available at homes, yet less than half of the students were able to connect.

Additionally, parents' schooling played a role in meaningful interactions conducive to learning. The public-school teacher explained that:

The parents of children in private schools generally have opted for higher levels of academic training and can become tutors of their children...On the other hand, the parents of the children in our schools ... are of low educational levels so [it affects] ... the levels of reading comprehension and reasoning ... They may have the material, but if there is no guidance directly from the teacher [learning] is also very lacking.

Similarly, the policy analyst explained, "we know that...learning normally takes place in that [student-teacher] interaction but, for the vast majority of students in the public sector, connecting with teachers on a normal schedule did not happen because...[it] implies having an Internet service that has an economic cost".

Finally, all interviewees stated that learning achievement for students with special needs was considerably impacted. In addition to limitations imposed by economic conditions, possible adaptations to support students with special needs were affected. In a private school where students with special needs are more readily identified with plans to support their learning, the teacher, when referring to students with special learning needs conceded that:

It has been difficult to adapt the little virtual time that we have... I believe we need to... see the possible ways of working with them... there are strategies [designed] for in-person...[but] this group has escaped us; we really have not been able to meet their needs.

Society: What are the potential consequences of learning inequality in Honduras during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Socioeconomic status and access to quality learning opportunities work in a feedback loop that continues to widen the socio-educational gap. Historically in Honduras, violence and organized crime have been a barrier to access education, especially in areas of low socioeconomic income (Alas-Solis & Hernandez, 2020). In 2019, more than half a million of school-aged children and youth were out of school, and in gang-controlled areas (Fore, 2019).

Dropping out of school, followed by internal displacement and immigration, has been a way to escape violence threats and/or forced gang recruitment (Alas-Solis & Hernandez, 2020; Fore, 2019; Park, 2014). All interviewees observed that potential adverse effects in society are now heightened as unequal education opportunities during the pandemic became more prominent, leading to lower levels of education, higher school dropout rates, and further widening of the preexisting socioeconomic gap. These factors could contribute to higher emigration and violence rates in the country.

A common fear expressed by interviewees are the diminishing levels of education as students were promoted to the next grade level without the necessary skills and knowledge. As indicated by international evaluation studies, TERCE in 2013 and PISA-D in 2017, Honduran students were not achieving the basic levels of competencies, yet grade repetition rates were among the lowest in the region, with 28% of boys and 20% of girls reporting repeating a grade at least once in their education (Bos, et al., 2018; Flotts et al., 2015). All interviewees reported perceiving an accelerated rate in lower educational achievement due to changes in education during the pandemic. To counteract this phenomenon, public and private universities in the country collaborated to create and present to the Secretariat of Education the Proposal for the Prioritization of the Educational Sector Strategic Plan (Lagos, 2021; Universidad Nacional Autónoma et al., 2021). However, the policy analyst interviewed explained that no measures have been officially announced by the government for the 2021 school year to counteract learning inequalities emerging from the socioeconomic gap. Lack of action may contribute to two consecutive years of precarious learning conditions with serious learning gaps.

Consequently, there is less confidence in the relevance of education. This lack of confidence from students and parents may contribute to higher school dropout rates and its associated negative aftereffects such as migration and violence. For example, the policy analyst stated that “youth think that in their country there are no opportunities, that they have to emigrate, that the educational system does not support them. They do not see the functionality”. Similarly, a study on eighth and ninth grade students confirmed that most participants were already thinking about emigrating as they believed it was useless to continue studying if they were not going to find work (Alas-Solis & Hernandez, 2020). Furthermore, the policy analyst explains that they have calculated that, without appropriate measures, enrollment rates can drop to fifty percent. He stated:

Having half of the underage population out of the system is putting those hundreds of thousands of young people at risk in a society where there is no work, where they cannot study...It is a place of high-risk because they look for opportunities to have some income through criminal means ... It is a time bomb to have these minors out of the educational system.

In sum, the country faces potential alarming consequences from a widening socio-educational gap due to unequal access to schooling during digital learning in times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a significant gap in access to quality learning opportunities due to socioeconomic gaps. In line with safety measures during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person classes moved to distance education from home. The government aimed to implement various interventions to enable students' continued engagement with education opportunities, including digital platforms, social media usage, distribution of printed resources, and usage of TV and radio to broadcast lessons. However, many of those efforts proved insufficient as students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and rural areas were unable to access many of these resources due to connectivity issues while private schools, with students with higher socioeconomic status, opted to use other paid platforms. There is a concern around lower learning achievement, especially for students from lower income households as there is limited room for student-teacher interactions, feedback and proper formal learning assessments. Thus, the interruption on learning seems to have a higher impact on underprivileged students, contributing to furthering the socio-educational gap with potential negative

outcomes in society, including higher school dropout, violence, and emigration rates. Further research on the impact of digital learning strategies in Honduras during the COVID-19 could investigate themes related to changes implemented during the second year of schooling from home, dropout rates after one year of schooling, internal displacement and immigration rates of families with economic restrictions, the impact of digital learning on indigenous communities, and the impact on education strategies for students with special learning needs.

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Appendix A

Recent and active planning instruments by the State of Honduras prior to the COVID-19 pandemic relevant to quality education

| Title | Link | Description |
|---|---|--|
| Strategic Plan for The Education Sector 2018-2030. | https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/en/2019/plan-estrat%C3%A9gico-del-sector-educaci%C3%B3n-2018-2030-6810 | Outlines the education framework in Honduras, examines challenges, vision, and strategic areas, describes priorities and actions for 2019-2022, explains budgeting, and communicates management, monitoring and evaluation (República de Honduras, 2019). |
| Institutional Strategic Plan (2017-2020) | https://siteal.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sit_accion_fi les/hn_0310.pdf | Guides the management of the Secretariat of Education. It describes the mission, vision, and objectives of education, and outlines six strategic areas including access, quality, efficiency, competitiveness, management, and participation (Secretaría de Estado de Coordinación General del Gobierno, 2016). |
| Country Vision 2010-2038 and National Plan 2010-2022 | https://www.se.gob.hn/med ia/files/articles/VISION_DE_PAIS_ExUjsjP.pdf | Two parts: The first part describes the four objectives for the country's vision which are: (1) a country without poverty and with health, education, and social security, (2) a democracy with security and without violence, (3) a productive country with sustainable employment and resources, and (4) a transparent, modern and competitive State. Each objective contains their corresponding goals. The second part of the document describes strategies and progress indicators (Poder Legislativo, 2010). |
| Public Policy for the Integral Development of Early Childhood: 2014-2025 Strategic Plan | https://siteal.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sit_accion_fi les/siteal_honduras_6016.pdf | Targets the protection and survival of children from gestation to age 6. The instrument aims to improve early education, health, protection, and child rights (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social et al., 2013). |
| National Policy for Women: II Plan for Gender Equality and Equity of Honduras. | https://siteal.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sit_accion_fi les/hn_0315.pdf | Analyses the contextual situation related to gender while pointing to education as one of the axes of gender equality and equity. It outlines the institutional framework, budget, and monitoring systems. The Gender unit of the State is responsible for overseeing gender equity in education and other areas (Instituto Nacional de la Mujer, 2010). |
| Social Protection Policy | https://siteal.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sit_accion_fi les/siteal_honduras_0314.pdf | Delineates social protection priorities, including education, according to various stages in life, describing the legal framework and objectives (Secretaría de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social, n.d.). |
| Indigenous Peoples Afro-Honduran Plan | https://www.se.gob.hn/med ia/files/articles/afrohondureno s_YSbE5aC.pdf | Outlines the social context and history of indigenous peoples and Afro-Hondurans. It provides objectives, interventions, and strategies aimed at improving life quality and education opportunities for Intercultural Bilingual Education (Secretaría de Educación, n.d.). |
| Honduras Digital Agenda 2014-2018: Connectivity, Transparency, Efficiency. | https://siteal.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sit_accion_fi les/siteal_honduras_5049.pdf | Provides a background of the Honduran digital agenda, explains the ICT situation in the country, focuses on the foundations and strategies, and describes the implementation of the agenda, as well as monitoring and evaluation (Poder Ejecutivo & Secretaría Técnica y Cooperación Externa, 2013). |

Appendix B

User facts on national learning platforms employed for digital learning in Honduras at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic

| Platform | SEDUC- Emergencia | Youtube Channel: Repositorio Vídeos SEDUC | Portal Educativo de Honduras: EduCatracho | Facebook page of Portal Educativo Educatracho | Centro Educativo Virtual (Virtual Educational Center) | Open Data Kit (ODK) |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| Mobile data use | Needed | Needed | Needed | Needed | Needed | Needed |
| Type of platform | Open to all types of learning | Lessons through Videos | Open to all types of learning | Open to all types of learning | Open to all types of learning | Open to teachers & administrators |
| Focus | Core subjects in Basic National Curriculum Plan (CNB) from preschool- Gr.12 | . Core subjects in CNB from preschool- Gr12. . Video lessons | . Core subjects in CNB from preschool- Gr12 . Relevant resources for teachers, students, and parents . Links to online workshops for teachers, statistics, and other relevant information | . Workbooks available in PDF for download . Announcements and posts applicable to all grade levels | Resources for all grade levels in the education system and all subjects | Tracking attendance and capturing evidence of student learning |
| Type of software | App available at the Google Play Store for phones and tablets. Made with glide | YouTube Videos | Website/portal created by the Secretariat of Education | Facebook | A portal available through the Secretariat of Education's website | Information not available |