

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF COVID-19 AND BEYOND

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**The information about how COVID-19 has affected the development of distance education. A large number of problems in education during this period and ways to solve them are described.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the educational field and has created great problems in this area.

Nowadays, education is an inalienable right of every person. One of the strategic goals of the United Nations is to ensure high-quality education throughout the world, regardless of the social conditions of life and the level of development of people. However, now this goal is under threat. Even before the outbreak of the epidemic, according to UNESCO statistics for 2020, about 800 million adults in the world remained illiterate. The crisis that arose during the coronavirus can lead to a significant deterioration of the situation in the field of education.

However, the global epidemic has added new difficulties to the existing ones. Among the main problems of education in the context of a pandemic are:

- inability to organize full-fledged distance learning;
- insufficient technical preparedness of the teaching staff;
- difficulties with the technical support of students;
- unavailability of educational materials in the conditions of distance learning;
- reduction of the general economic level of people;
- unavailability of primary education for children from poor families;
- full stop of the educational process in backward and developing countries;
- outflow of pupils and students from educational institutions;
- the use of child labor in backward countries instead of education;
- increasing social inequality in society.

The pandemic has had a tremendous impact on education and caused significant consequences in it. All levels of education were affected: preschool, school, vocational and, of course, the higher education system in all countries. Let us consider the problems of each stage separately.

Speaking about the consequences in preschool education, they hinder the performance of important functions, such as:

- development of socialization skills in children;
- education of children, instills social norms in them;
- development creativity and thinking skills;
- teaches basic knowledge;
- prepares for school;
- provides full-fledged care and hot meals, which is especially important for underdeveloped countries.

Considering school education, it is very important for the child to interact with the teacher. This allows you to maintain a high level of motivation and involve children in the educational process. It is almost impossible to translate school education into an online format during the pandemic. Young students are not yet able to study the material on their own, concentrate and sit still one place for a long time. All this can lead to the fact that children will not be able to return to the normal rhythm of study.

Most of all, the coronavirus has had a negative impact on vocational education. After all, in order for young specialists to perform their duties efficiently, they need to undergo internships and gain practical experience. Students of these specialties cannot participate in such programs, which closes their access to quality education [1].

In comparison with other levels, the sphere of higher education turned out to be the most resistant to the pandemic. Universities immediately switched to distance learning. However, not all universities were ready for such a transition. Universities in backward and developing countries could not provide the necessary technical equipment and stable Internet, which significantly reduced the quality of the educational process. Moreover, not all subjects can really be taught remotely. Medical specializations, engineering and other applied fields have not yet found a correct solution to reduce the consequences for higher education during the coronavirus period.

However, there are solutions to all of the above problems in education, which allow reducing the negative consequences of the pandemic's impact on the education system. Among them are the following activities:

- use the online format in education;
- switch to distance learning everywhere;
- apply alternative methods of education;
- increase the level of technical training of teachers;
- apply methods of continuous assessment of the level of education.

Education and the coronavirus pandemic cannot be imagined without distance learning. This is the first thing that educational institutions of many states did when governments decided to declare lockdowns in connection with the epidemic.

However, the backward and underdeveloped countries of Africa, South America and Asia do not have sufficient technical means to organize classes in an online format. Therefore, they use other types of distance learning:

- conduct training lessons on the radio;
- launch educational programs on television channels;
- distribute printed educational materials.

Speaking about the use of the online learning format, classes were mainly held in Zoom, Skype, Discord and other educational platforms. This has become a salvation for many universities and other educational institutions.

However, in addition to the online method, there were alternative methods of education. Among them:

- adaptive learning;
- interactive and experimental approaches;
- self-learning methods and strengthening the role of independent work;
- team training;
- mixed learning format (online-offline mode);
- modeling and game techniques.

The pandemic has had a strong impact not only on students, but also on teachers. Unfortunately, many teachers were not ready to switch to alternative teaching formats. They lacked the knowledge to successfully use learning platforms and organize lessons in a new mode for themselves. All this led to the need for additional training of the teaching staff and the organization of assistance to experienced teachers so that they could quickly acquire the necessary work skills.

Summing up, the pandemic had both a negative impact on education, leading to a possible decrease in education in the future, and a positive one, which made it possible to reduce the incidence of coronavirus and actively use new methods in education.

**References:**

1. UNESCO Statistics of Education and Literacy — [Electronic resource]. — Access mode: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/literacy> — Date of access: 31.03.2022.