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# Can the new COVID-19 normal help to achieve SDG4

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# Trends in Higher Education

- Mass higher education, internationalisation, marketisation, global knowledge networks → lead to more **fluid boundaries**
- Economic, social and political pressure on HEIs
- Social dimension
  - > Offer **alternative access routes** targeting non-traditional learners
  - > Guidance and counselling services available to students
- Follow more **flexible** modes of learning and a more **diversity-sensitive** student lifecycle management

# COVID-19 Pandemic

- Has affected 91% of all enrolled learners
- HEIs were **forced to**
  - > use a broad variety of technological tools
  - > create online content for remote learning for **all** students in **all** sectors
- led to a shift of teachers' mind-sets
- has the potential to bring benefits in accessibility to education for students across the world

# Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

- 17 goals and 169 sub-goals
- Promote sustainable peace and prosperity and protect the planet
- Adopt a sustainable approach to development in the economic, social and ecological fields
- **No** goal can be achieved **'without** the contribution of higher education and research'



# SDG 4

- *“By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have **relevant skills**, including technical and vocational skills, **for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.**”*
- ensure **inclusive and equitable quality education** and promote **lifelong learning opportunities** for all
- deal with **quality and equality** for **different phases** of education



# Target Outcomes

4.3	By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
4.4	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
4.5	By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
4.7	By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

# Outcome Target 4.3 – equal access to quality education

- Implications of Covid-19
  - > Significant effect on the access to HEIs and the educational process
  - > Pedagogical change from traditional approaches to modern teaching and learning methods
  - > Innovative approaches and sustainable methods for the delivery of digital teaching and learning
- Risks and challenges
  - > Socio-economic disparities became obvious
  - > May lead to more discrimination, especially among underrepresented student groups  
Level of digital skills varies greatly across nations

# Outcome Target 4.4 – relevant skills for decent jobs

- Implications of Covid-19
  - > Accelerating higher education in the context of the demand for 21st century (digital) skills
  - > Enables a substantial understanding of the use of digital media and technologies
  - > Provided valuable employability enrichment for graduates
- Risks and challenges
  - > Teachers need to have enough time to develop digital tools that support both the subject and generic competences of their students
  - > Digital inequalities that hinder the acquisition of digital skills and the associated competent participation in the labour market

# Outcome Target 4.5 – inclusion of vulnerable groups

- Implications of Covid-19
  - > highlighted the widening digital divide, the impact on mental, physical, social and economic factors
  - > women and people facing intersecting systems of oppression were found to be particularly more exposed to the pandemic
  - > increased inequalities between families with lower socioeconomic status and the more well-off
  - > existing problems of gender discrimination have been further exacerbated

# Outcome Target 4.7 – sustainable development

- Implications of Covid-19
  - > Implementation student-centred/competency-based learning approaches or are relevant for the sustainable development of students skills
  - > digital literacy, resilience and ethics are seen as driving forces in the development of the digital age and therefore represent a crucial pillar of education
  - > Fostering a sense of sustainable responsibility as well as digital resilience and safety is vital for learners to understand the positive and negative effects digital technologies and online tools may bring

# Conclusion of Literature Review

- Digitalisation and the new Covid-19 Normal
  - > allow for more **flexible** teaching and learning paths
  - > provide **personalised** e-learning material and online teaching and learning tools, irrespective of time and location
  - > foster cross-border cooperation that goes beyond narrow disciplinary and regional boundaries
  - > find common and sustainable solutions for **wicked problems** and **grand challenges**
  - > encourage both deep learning approaches and **21st century skills**
  - > set the ground for teachers that can **critically** assess digital tools and online environments together with their long-term implications



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