

Learners Under Pressure To Finish Curriculum

By Marriam Tshehla

With the reopening of schools after they had been closed for a while, teachers – especially those teaching in public schools – have been under so much pressure and some do not even know how or where to start. If there is pressure on the teacher, the pressure on the learners is double. This is because learners do not only do one subject. The worst affected are the Grade 12s who have been under pressure even before schools were closed.

Schools are battling to make up for the lost days while also managing the hostile environment under which they have come to operate. Learners are not used to learning in such an environment and this could result in an increase in the number of dropouts. Learners are losing hope because of the pressure that they are facing at school. This may even lead to mental issues such as depression or worse for those who may not do well or fail at school.

Learners are stressed and the environment is traumatic. Sometimes, even the environment at home is traumatic, toxic and abusive, and the pressure to finish curriculum adds to that stress.

The most obvious impact of school closures has been on student learning. Unfortunately, even before this public health crisis, our country was already experiencing a learning crisis and inequality in the education system. During the lockdown we learned about the high inequalities in education and how people from working class families were lagging behind while other learners from private schools continued. We should speak out and fight the system that forces parents to take their children to schools and risk their lives.

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