<u>**Corporate Peer Discussions: Funding Educational Access During COVID-19**</u>
Summary of Key Themes and Best Practices on Corporate Response

Virtual convenings held on April 13 and April 15, 2020
Convening Organizations: ACCP, CECP, COF, and POL
Association of Corporate Citizenship Professionals (ACCP), Council on Foundations (COF), Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (CECP), and Points of Light (POL), which collectively represent more than 400 of the most socially and environmentally responsible global companies, are joining forces to support leaders of corporate purpose and to advocate for the field by convening dialogue on relevant solutions and to share best practices. While some companies are still assessing their response, we have already seen hundreds of corporations respond to the COVID-19 crisis with courage and determination. Their leadership sets an example for the sector to follow. In the sessions on Funding Educational Access During COVID-19, 24 member companies participated.

Key Themes and Best Practices

With 91% of students around the world and 32 million in the US alone currently out of school due to COVID-19, companies participating on the peer-to-peer calls are stepping up to help respond to educational needs and help to keep some sense of normalcy during the pandemic. At this time, digital technology and skills are essential as educators grapple with limitations of distance learning and struggle to filter through volumes of new content.

Philanthropic Response in Education

- Companies with partnerships with schools are helping to bridge the food security gap for children.
- Virtual food drives through YouGiveGoods can mobilize employees to donate safely to food pantries.
- Law firms are helping parents and families with legal needs they might have related to COVID-19.
- Many companies are increasing corporate matches on employee charitable donations to organizations addressing COVID-19 and lowering the minimum employee donation amount to participate.
- Companies are also using Employee Assistance Funds (EAFs) to help employees affected by COVID-19.
- Companies have donated to local funds such as the NY Fund for Public Schools that are helping families and educators get online and work effectively in the new remote learning environment.

Providing Teachers and Students with Support and Content

- Companies are providing educators with a variety of accessible content, including:
  - The facts about viruses and outbreaks.
  - Videos showing how flexible Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) skills and careers are at the heart of finding the solution to COVID-19.
  - Supplemental information about career paths, workplace skills, and types of jobs that exist.
- For companies with existing student and teacher-facing content, they are adjusting and shifting it to be virtual, task-based, and focused on independent work to accommodate the shift to online learning.
- Companies are partnering with sites like Khan Academy to provide lesson plans and adaptable curriculum.
- For 50th anniversary of Earth Day, science museums are providing virtual presentations, and companies are providing virtual field trips with educator guides aligned to STEM education standards.
- IBM is offering a Skills webinar series targeted at high school students, parents and teachers that features IBM employees sharing hot tech skills in fun and engaging ways: https://www.ibm.com/skills/students/
- LabExchange is a new platform with Harvard and Kahn Academy for science labs virtually.

Focus on Equity and Access

- The shift to online and remote learning has the potential to exacerbate inequity in education, since not all families have internet access and not all school districts provide students with computing devices.
- Companies have an opportunity to focus on students with a higher level of disadvantage.Some companies are providing connectivity for ipads for students learning virtually to help close the gap.
- Readiness for e-learning was inconsistent before the pandemic. Furthermore, e-learning, especially in younger grades, requires a significant commitment from an adult and not all children, especially children of frontline workers, have an adult available to supervise their learning.
- EdTech and content curriculum companies that have a digital learning platform are making content available to all teachers, regardless of whether their district pays for a subscription.
- Some companies are refurbishing electronics for needy families through organizations like Comp-U-Dopt.
- To address the digital divide, efforts need to be made locally with foundations and government as well as corporations banding together to provide hotspots (sometimes mobile busses) where access is needed. There is a need to work with telecom providers to create longer term networks in areas without access.
- EveryoneOn is a nonprofit connecting low-income families to affordable internet access. One participating company was working with them to provide hotspots and 3 months of internet access for families in their enrichment programs, and computing devices to families that do not have them at home.

Social-Emotional Support

- As the closure of schools prolongs, companies and educators realize that once effective lines of distance learning are established, the social-emotional needs of children need to also be attended to.
- There are growing concerns among youth development practitioners about the relevancy of after school programming as students and educators navigate online learning.
- Social-emotional learning guides and apps are being made available to students of all ages.
- Learning or volunteer projects that can be easily accessed by families provide opportunities for remote workers to foster connection and learning with their children at home.
- Toy-making companies are providing product donations of toys and games to accompany food donations and school supplies being distributed by organizations like Save the Children and No Kid Hungry.
- #DoGoodFromHome campaign encourages acts of kindness and donates toys for doing good deeds.
- New York Life is providing an "Ask the Expert" programs about how to talk to children about COVID-19 and supports and resources for families experiencing loss since they cannot grieve together right now.
- There is an expectation that domestic violence and child abuse will rise during these times of quarantine, yet many instances will go unreported because youth will not be interfacing with daycare workers, teachers, and youth services professionals who have the skills to identify and address children's needs.

Partnerships in Education

- Cross-sector collaboration and investments in digital technology such as Digital Empowers are helping to advance tech-driven solutions for the public good during COVID-19.
- Education is an area where in order to make a difference, companies need to work with government, NGOs, educators, and others to help create and provide accessible content and the systems to transmit it.
- Companies are tapping into partnerships and distribution networks with those who have access to the educator and student community, including:
  - District and governmental partners.
  - International NGOs like UNICEF and Junior Achievement Worldwide.
  - UNICEF Learning Passport provides continuity of education for disadvantaged kids, refugees, etc.

o Internationally, governments can be a partner in informing the response and reaching students.
o Associations like National Afterschool Association and others in STEM such as ISD, Computer Science Teachers Association, etc. can help provide learning development days for teachers and to prepare lists of resources to share with educators.
o Government relations teams can reach out to state departments of education to provide a point of contact and add supplemental content to a list of resources they are compiling for educators.
o Employees can share resources with their micro-networks of schools and families.

Virtual Volunteering Policies

- April is national volunteer month, and many companies, having canceled all their planned in-person events, are pivoting to engage their employees through virtual volunteer opportunities.
- Companies that offer Volunteer Time Off (VTO) are extending this to include virtual opportunities.
- Some companies have seen year over year increases in reported volunteer hours during this period, while others are seeing a demand for virtual offerings but struggling for participation from employees.
- Social campaigns were cited as a successful tactic in encouraging participation and sharing stories of kind acts. One company ran a Yammer campaign for 1,000 acts of kindness with a prize (donations to nonprofit organizations that the employee would select). Companies are being flexible with what qualifies as volunteerism, and some companies are currently providing employees with additional time to volunteer.
- Drafting a message for senior leaders to send to their teams has also helped with involvement.

Virtual Volunteering Offerings in Distance-Learning Education

- For companies with scientists or other subject matter experts, providing tutorials virtually through a program for education can be a meaningful virtual volunteer experience.
- Distance learning provides a great opportunity for virtual volunteering. Participating companies cited:
  o TutorMate pairs volunteers with thousands of young people learning to read and write.
  o Coding workshops, E-mentorship, Sharing career paths, Virtual tours and field trips
  o Translation services for remote learning
  o Red Cross Missing Maps program
  o Greenwood Project provides minority youth with a path into financial services field
  o Map Swipe: https://mapswipe.org/
  o Translators Without Borders: https://translatorswithoutborders.org/
  o Trevor Project: https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-involved/volunteer/
  o Bookshare: https://www.bookshare.org/cms/get-involved/volunteer
  o Career Village: https://www.careervillage.org/
  o TalkingPoints: https://talkingpts.org/
  o Technovation: https://www.technovation.org/
  o Science Buddies: https://www.sciencebuddies.org/about/how-to-volunteer
  o Hire Heros: https://www.hireheroesusa.org/volunteer/
  o Mercy Corps - Mini Mentor: https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/find-mentor-be-mentor-build-business
- Only a few companies had made new content or educational programs for virtual volunteerism at scale that could be rolled out across many geographies.

Technology and Capacity Building for Remote Learning and Research

- With readiness for e-learning inconsistent, companies with IT expertise are stepping up to volunteer to serve as a virtual helpdesk providing tech support for teachers grappling with technical issues of virtual learning, or to assist other nonprofits that are transitioning to virtual programming (museums, etc.).
- Volunteers can help teachers with technical side of online learning and tips for engaging students online.

Supporting Employees through Virtual Wellness Resources

- Companies are partnering with their HR and benefits teams to provide information on mental/emotional and physical well-being while working remotely, as well as tips for remote learning with children.
- Benevity platforms can contain COVID-19 material and earth day home science lessons to contribute to home school learning experience for employees and their children.

Challenges with Remote Learning

- Special Education services are challenging for educators to deliver effectively remotely.
- There is no standardized at-home curriculum.
- Teachers are overwhelmed with sorting through and distilling the volume of content for their lesson plans to fit their use-case, technical capabilities, and age of students by subject.

Impact on Higher Education

- College admissions processes are disrupted, with more students waitlisted because less students are accepting, opting to not pay for a selective college at this time. Colleges are preparing for the possibility of a virtual fall, which would raise questions about tuition, financial aid, housing, and many other issues.

Looking Towards the Future

- As we move towards the recovery phase, the focus for companies will be on scaling up reskilling, upskilling, and online learning opportunities.
- Companies on the call reflected upon the questions:
  - What does recovery in education look like?
  - What does recovery in the skills and workforce area look like?
  - How can programs evolve to address the inequities that exist within the educational system to reduce the opportunity gap in the recovery phase?

COVID-19 Resources from each partnering organization:

- ACCP: COVID-19 Resources for Corporate Citizenship Professionals
- CECP: COVID-19 Resources Recap for CEOs and Recap for CR Leaders
- COF: COVID-19 Resource Hub
- POL: COVID-19 Action Plan