COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. ‘CO’ stands for corona, ‘VI’ for virus, and ‘D’ for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as ‘2019 novel coronavirus’ or ‘2019-nCoV.’ The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold. The virus is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person (generated through coughing and sneezing). Individuals can also be infected from and touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and touching their face (e.g., eyes, nose, mouth). The COVID-19 virus may survive on surfaces for several hours, but simple disinfectants can kill it. The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis. Many countries have rightly decided to close schools, colleges and universities. The crisis crystallises the dilemma policymakers are facing between closing schools reducing contact and saving lives and keeping them open allowing workers to work and maintaining the economy. The severe short-term disruption is felt by many families around the world: home schooling is not only a massive shock to parents’ productivity, but also to children’s social life and learning. Teaching is moving online, on an untested and unprecedented scale. Student assessments are also moving online, with a lot of trial and error and uncertainty for everyone. Many assessments have simply been cancelled. Importantly, these interruptions will not just be a short-term issue, but can also have long-term consequences for the affected cohorts and are likely to increase inequality.

Going to school is the best public policy tool available to raise skills. While school time can be fun and can raise social skills and social awareness, from an economic point of view the primary point of being in school is that it increases a child’s ability. Even a relatively short time in school does this; even a relatively short period of missed school will have consequences for skill growth. But can we estimate how much the COVID-19 interruption will affect learning? Not very precisely, as we are in a new world; but we can use other studies to get an order of magnitude.

Unfortunately, the educational sector is a part of the receiving end. According to UNESCO, an estimated 1.725 billion learners have been affected as a result of school closures, representing about 99.9% of the world’s student population as of April 13th, 2020. **Embracing technology**To cushion the effects of the pandemic, the world is embracing technological innovations. Virtual interactions are increasingly adopted to replace face-to-face engagements and limit the total disruption to many sectors. UNESCO has recommended the use of distance learning programmes, open educational applications, and platforms by schools and teachers to reach learners remotely.

These could include integrated digital learning platforms, video lessons, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and broadcast through radio and television. The success of these recommendations hinges on the use of high-technology or low-technology solutions, which are based on the reliability of local power supply, internet connectivity and digital skills of teachers, students, parents, and caretakers.

**But every student can’t afford this** as pleasant as this solution is, it is said that students from under-served low-income communities will be left out and unable to access learning during this period. In Nigeria, many states have embarked on airing school lessons on radio and television and this is highly commendable.