

HMDC Presents... UNESCO: Sample Position Paper

HMDC Presents... Sample Position Paper: UNESCO: COVID-19 Education and Technology Gaps

THIS IS A MODEL TO LEARN FROM, NOT TO COPY. We use this sample to see how one real country's facts fit into the four HMDC parts on one page. We read it once for the ideas and a second time for the shape. Then we close it and write our own paper about our own country in our own words. Harvard asks for our own work, so even if one of us is assigned Botswana, we start again from our Country Report and never reuse these sentences.

THE SAMPLE PAPER

Committee: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) **Topic:** COVID-19 Education and Technology Gaps **Country:** The Republic of Botswana

Background of the Topic. The Republic of Botswana believes that the pandemic did not create the education gap; it exposed a gap that was already there. When schools closed, at least 463 million schoolchildren could not use any form of remote learning, and about 72 percent of them lived in the poorest households (UNICEF, August 26, 2020). The root cause is unequal access: internet use is 94 percent in high-income countries but only 23 percent in low-income countries (ITU, November 17, 2025). The harm is still growing, because the number of children out of school has risen for seven years in a row, to 273 million (UNESCO, March 25, 2026).

UN and International Action. Botswana supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education, adopted in A/RES/70/1 (2015), and the global COVID-19 response set out in A/RES/74/306 (2020). Botswana welcomes UNESCO's Global Education Coalition, launched in March 2020 (ReliefWeb, Last Accessed: October 2026), and Giga, the ITU and UNICEF project to connect every school by 2030 (ITU, June 25, 2025). However, Botswana notes two clear gaps. Countries spent on average only 3 percent of COVID-19 stimulus money on education (World Bank, March 30, 2022), and about one-third of national learning platforms built during the pandemic later stopped working (UNICEF, December 21, 2022).

Our Country's Policy. Botswana's national interest, which it will not compromise, is that every child keeps learning during any crisis, including rural children whose families own only a basic phone. Botswana's experience shows that this is possible. In a trial with about 4,500 Botswana families, weekly text messages plus short phone calls from teachers raised maths learning, at a cost of about US\$19 per child (Nature Human Behaviour, June 13, 2022). In 2025, Giga connected more than 700 schools serving over 400,000 learners in Botswana (Giga, June 22, 2026). Botswana's policies on how fast to connect schools, and how to share the cost, are open to negotiation.

Proposed Solutions and Expected Opposition. Botswana proposes, first, that every member state adopt a national emergency learning plan built on low-tech, two-way teacher contact, such as phone calls and radio in local languages. Second, Botswana proposes a pooled financing fund to speed up Giga, with every newly connected school protected by child data privacy rules. Third, Botswana proposes that UNESCO support catch-up teaching such as "Teaching at the Right Level," which experts rated a "Great Buy" (World Bank, May 9, 2023). Botswana expects some donor states to object to new costs, since aid to basic education may have fallen by as much as 26 percent in 2025 (Center for Global Development, September 22, 2026). Botswana will answer that phone-based learning is among the most cost-effective learning programs measured, and that pooled funds let every state share a small part of the price.

HOW THIS SAMPLE IS BUILT

1. **Building the background from Part 1A:** We took three harms from Part 1A of the HMDC report (E1, E12 and E42) and chose the ones that matter most to a poorer, more rural country. We named the root cause, unequal access, in one sentence, because Harvard asks for both the problem and its cause.
2. **Building UN action from Parts 2A to 2C:** We picked two resolutions from the table in Part 2C (A/RES/70/1 and A/RES/74/306) and two UN programmes from Part 2A (E28 and E34). Then we used Part 2B, "What Is Working and What Is Not," to point to two gaps (E29 and E22), because gaps are where our solutions belong.
3. **Building our country's policy from Parts 1B and 1C:** Botswana appears in the report twice, in the phone-call trial (E17) and in Giga's 2025 results (E15). We turned those facts into proof that our firm interest is realistic, and we used the last sentence to show the chair where Botswana can make a deal.
4. **Building the solutions from Parts 1C, 1D and 3D:** Each solution comes from a solution section of the report. They are low-tech learning (1C and E18), Giga financing ideas (3D, item 3) paired with privacy protection (E40), and catch-up teaching (1D and E19). We kept each solution to one or two sentences so the chair can read all three quickly.
5. **Predicting the opposition from Part 3A:** Part 3A shows that education aid is shrinking (E36), so we expected donor states to worry about cost. We answered with the cheapest proven program in the whole report (E17), which turns their objection into a reason to support us.