State of the art about COVID-19 impact in Santiago University
Cape Verde

Eduardo Moraes Sarmento, CEsA-CSG, Lisbon University, Portugal & Lusófona University, Portugal (emoraessarmento@gmail.com)
José Mascarenhas Monteiro, Santiago University, Cape Verde (jlmascarenhas@hotmail.com)

ABSTRACT
The COVID-19 pandemic become a critical challenge for the higher education sector worldwide. Under such a circumstance, the exploration of the capacity of this sector to adapt to such a state of uncertainty has become more of huge importance. In this chapter, we critically reflect on the Cape Verdean teaching experience during the early COVID-19 lockdown in this country. This is an exploratory case study based on a qualitative approach with an aim to reflect about new practices of teaching under a pandemic emergency. Based on the teaching experience of teaching in Santiago University, we explain how this university has changed from a face-to-face to an online teaching system and stress the challenges and opportunities that appear from this transition process. This chapter concludes that this strategy has become an opportunity to the university since it consistently raised the number of international students cooperating with them and also that the more adaptive and resilient approaches to online teaching were also a success.
Keywords: COVID-19, Cape Verde, Online Teaching, Santiago University, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION
In November 2019, the world woke up to a new reality as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic that began in Hubei province and spread worldwide in March 2020, being considered one of the most challenging tragedies since the second world war (United Nations, 2020). WHO reported COVID-19 as a dangerous and threatening disease on January 30, 2020 while on March 1, 2020, it was declared as a pandemic (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020).
The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was not limited to national borders, nor were its effects. This has led the world to severe inequalities, has affected many individuals and mainly college
students as well as the education systems of many countries and disrupted the traditional education system (Doyumğaç et al., 2021).

Due to the closing of teaching sets, universities replaced traditional teaching with a remote system that started to characterize part of a new reality, requiring new pedagogy and teaching methods for teachers and, in parallel, that students could have access to remote teaching, which is reflected in the need for computers and an efficient internet network (Schleicher, 2020).
In this context, all countries had to adapt in order to find how to contain COVID-19 transmission chains. One of the areas heavily affected by pandemic was the Higher Education, as happened in Cape Verde.
In general, in order to ensure the continuity of education, despite the closure of higher education institutions, many countries have chosen to offer new technologies and offer online classes and learning system different from those offered in the classroom. However, in many cases, universities did not have the experience and time to adapt conveniently to what in many cases affected as assessments and disrupted student learning trajectories and progression (NCES, 2019).
In this paper, we focus on a case study from Santiago University in Cape Verdean to better understand what measures this University has taken in order to face and overcome the pandemic COVID-19 situation in this archipelago.

BACKGROUND
The emergence and unprecedented spread of the COVID-19 as a global pandemic has been posing substantial challenges to the practices of everyday life. There has been a surge of interest to explore the dynamics of online education across different contexts amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Rapanta et al., 2020).
Many higher education institutions worldwide, had to inevitably made urgent adjustments to cope with the pandemic situation. In order to remain competitive and to deal with arising uncertainties and changing situations, many universities as well as academics had to readapt their behaviour towards teaching. The most significant aspect was the fast transition of higher education to online provision as well as the enforced digitalisation of pedagogical approaches for both the academic community and students (Rapanta et al., 2020).
Since the beginning of 2020, we have seen a consistent increasing body of knowledge exploring the capacities and challenges of online education (Dumford & Miller, 2018) in the academic field. Even though there are several reasons for this, being the pandemic the major one, there is no doubt that the use of up-to-date online technologies was possible due to the better power of communications technology as well as the new students’ profiles who become “digital natives” (Nastaran & Hesam, 2021).

As a result of this proliferation of online teaching mostly in higher education worldwide, there has been a huge discussion about the challenges and benefits associated with this kind of teaching for both instructors and students. It has been argued that students assessing online classes may be less likely to participate in collaborative learning activities compared to their counterparts in face-to-face classes (Dumford & Miller, 2018).

It is important to notice that the education conducted with digital tools is often associated with different terms (e.g., distance, online, open, flexible, blended just to name a few) as well as different names are used for online education (e.g., internet-based online courses) (Doyumğaç et al., 2021). Usually, online education is associated with all information and communication technologies-based learning approaches where courses are mostly instructed online and therefore require an internet connection. Distance education is different since it includes online education, and the courses are both ministered online or offline. In this chapter, we use online education to indicate all forms of education except for face-to-face education.

The most prominent online education system is e-learning that covers digital learning technologies. Complementary to the online education and e-learning, we find the concept of distance education that is nothing more than the foundation of online learning (Doyumğaç et al., 2021).

So, as we can see, there are a multitude of definitions, discussions, and concepts that are regularly used to describe non-face to face and distant education, and generally it was called e-learning, online education, and distance education.

Therefore, nowadays, the most important question is to find out how the emerging technology can be used to support teaching and learning activities and therefore implement new models based on these tools and services to engage students on a deeper level. There has been different perspectives about advantages and disadvantages of this new reality.

There is no doubt that online education may arise some challenges such as communication, interpersonal, and practical skills among students, and sustaining student retention rates, along with
training and support to effectively use online technologies as well as cyber security risks (Nastaran & Hesam, 2018).

But instructors may also face several problems “when adapting to certain activities (e.g., continuous assessment and performance assessment) to the online setting without losing content knowledge or interactions between peers and/or instructors” (Nastaran & Hesam, 2018, 3).

In this context, the most important challenge is to understand if technology will drive the redesign of teaching and learning instead of changing on-campus classes (Herrington et al., 2010).

There seem to have no doubts that online learning can act as a complementary approach to face-to-face training meaning that today’s blended learning approaches are able to connect students for synchronous learning activities (Skulmowski & Rey, 2020).

So, what we find in many cases is the implementation or delivery of a mixed model in higher education with the combination a face-to-face with an online approach and technology. Under this scenario, a multifaceted approach is required to enable effective blended teaching as well as learning (Gierdowski, 2019).

The most important question here is to find out whether students favour a blended learning design or other fully face-to-face or online options as their preference for course delivery models. Nowadays, we find that technology will inevitably have impacts on students’ choices between higher education providers and this aspect will be crucial for the future of universities and the academic community despite the widely held critique of higher education’s digital transformation in the wake of rapid technological innovation (Marshall, 2018).

In some cases, students would rather keep some forms of blended learning environments since they see in-class lectures as an opportunity to engage with teaching staff, peers, and course content. They also face technology as a useful way of engagement (Gierdowski, 2019).

But this situation can also be a problem because in some cases students face problems with the accessibility to stable internet connection due to the low rate of Wi-Fi reliability in dormitories/campus housing and outdoor areas. So, it is easy to understand that student’s preferences (e.g., learning environments, technology experiences, and use in the classroom) may be considerably influenced by the changing landscape of the student demographics (Gierdowski, 2019).

So, one of the immediate impacts of the outbreak left many higher educators with limited choices to the transition to digital interfaces but also that several academics who were forced into new
technology-enabled forms teaching suffered from great stress and disorientation (Watermeyer et al., 2021).

In some cases, this increased importance of the ways in which technological advancements were imposed created significant challenges to the academic integrity management since many lecturers felt some kind of difficulties while others were overshadowed by the “affordances” from the online migration as well as the new online pedagogies (Watermeyer et al., 2021).

However, in some cases, some higher teaching institutions stressed the positive opportunities since this situation allowed to achieve a better professionalisation of academics as pedagogues as well as further incentivising better practices (Watermeyer et al., 2021).

So, as we can see, there is a growing field of digital transformation discussion about the main impacts of emergency adoption and experimentation of online and other forms of technology on the role of the academic community and also the long-term future of higher education (Williamson, 2020).

This arises another issue related to motivation. According to Dörnyei (2020) regardless the traditional or e-learning learning context, it is a huge job to consider the myriad of distractions in the new century where distance education achieved a top priority due to its several benefits: broader access to educational activities, learning opportunities, as well as concerns regarding students and instructors’ skills (Campbell & Sarac, 2018; Meşe & Sevilen, 2021).

Motivation in online courses has progressively been receiving attention in recent years (Kyewski & Kramer, 2018; Özhan & Kocadere, 2020) mainly in the context of a virtual classroom since motivation in an online course is extremely important because students are inclined to participate less (Kyewski & Krämer, 2018).

In order to overcome this aspect, various elements have been suggested to interact with online learning motivation in an effort to address the problems of attrition and participation (Meşe & Sevilen, 2021). Learners experience lower levels of motivation when they skip classes or do not participate in the activities.

According to Allen and Seaman (2008), we find diverse universities that provide online education to expand their student base. But in order to prevent the interruption of education during the COVID-19 pandemic, many educational institutions around the world started to provide online courses (e.g., distance education, video education, open education). During the COVID-19
pandemic, education was mostly conducted online because universities were forced to switch their programs to one of online delivery overnight (Liguori & Winkler, 2020). This transition to distance education was in many cases difficult for teachers and academicians because they weren´t ready to determine the method they need to adopt, were limited to one-on-one interaction with students and mostly because this process has been more difficult for people with socioeconomic disprivileges (Tanhan & Strack, 2020). However, online education can be as efficient/effective as face-to-face education and internet-enabled and tangible user interface allows students to perceive online education positively (Doyumğaç et al., 2021).

In contrast, if online education could lead instructors and students to resort to unethical plagiarism, in reality there was no significant difference between learning outcomes in online and face-to-face education (Doyumğaç et al., 2021).

Certain online education factors such as quality, flexibility, sensitivity, communication and technical support services may positively affect student views on online education and create positive perceptions about online learning (Singh & Hurley 2017).

In this case, all the education institutions that switched to online or distance education without a proper preparation during the COVID-19 pandemic, should pay attention to the problems and provide flexibility for students and instructors, recognize their sensitivity, and provide technical support to conduct more efficient online or distance (open) education services (Doyumğaç et al., 2021).

Naturally, the online education services and facilities available in nations or universities vary and thus it is important to be aware of them because they can turn into an undesirable barrier.

**MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER**

1. **The COVID-19 Pandemic: the case of Cape Verde**

Notwithstanding these diseases have assumed alarming proportions in some geographical contexts, even reaching the epidemic category, there is no doubt that COVID-19 is the most striking health phenomenon of the new times, having, in the form of a pandemic, reached almost every country in the world. According to https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus (2021), the current status, on 05/17/2021, 533 days after its emergence, COVID-19 had already reached 222 countries, with the following world record still most critical:
1. Number of infected countries: 222;
2. Total number of infections: 163,964,170;
3. Total number of deaths: 3,397,125 (2.1%);
4. Total number of recovered: 142,557,130 (87%).

This novel phenomenon has expanded, in an unpredictable and uncontrolled way, for almost all over effects, for the world economy, mainly for the SIDS, as is the case of the Cape Verdan one, endowed with a high index of almost existential vulnerability considering the respective scarcity, throughout history, of the following resources: environmental, geographic and socioeconomic.

This austere COVID-19 pandemic crisis, which, since March 19, 2020, has indelibly constrained Cape Verdan government performance, namely in terms of pre-established goals for the IX legislature, even compromising those of the X Legislature, which now begins, namely, with regard to the average growth of the GDP, in the order of 7% and, consequently, with regard to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, inherent to the long-term SDGs, thus endangering the Agenda / Ambition 2030.

This latent danger is even more evident when we carry out a comparative analysis of the pandemic dimension in the Cape Verdan context, in relation to that of other CPLP countries, as shown in the following graph:

Graph 1 - Evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in CPLP

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1 According to the website http://www.tcv.cv/index.php?paginas=47&id_cod=94823, “on March 19, the first case appeared in Cape Verde. It was in Boa Vista: an English citizen, aged 62, who would die days later, also becoming the first death in the country. Six more days went by and on March 25, the first case appeared in Cidade da Praia, the first infected Cape Verdan. The country is in turmoil and on the 28th of the same month, the President of the Republic declares a State of Emergency throughout the archipelago. It is the first time that this has happened in the history of Cape Verdan democracy”.
A careful reading of the graph shows that, from a static perspective (cumulative data up to 10-31-2020), Cape Verde was the penultimate CPLP country with the worst performance, in terms of population contagion by COVID-19, showing an incidence rate in the order of 1.56%, being only surpassed, in this drama, by Brazil, which presented a rate of 2.59%.

Updating the statistical data from COVID-19 up to 05/17/2021, Cape Verde presented the following health situation:

1. (122nd) / 222 Place in the world ranking;
2. Total number of infections = 22,358 (28,168) / 12,974 (Island of Santiago);
3. Total number of deaths = 203 (249) / 138 (Island of Santiago);
4. Total new cases in the day = 113;
5. Total number of recovered = 19,206 (25,923);
6. Total number of active cases = 2,935 (2,896) / 1,832 (Island of Santiago);
7. Total number of serious cases = 23;
8. Total number of tests = 144,736;
9. Positivity rate = 24.6%;
10. Total number of estimated population = 560,901.

This potentially serious health situation in Cape Verde has naturally had repercussions at a multisectoral level, especially in the educational sector. This has been a sector that has also been affected by successive states of: alert, contingency, calamity and emergency, decreed by the Government, with the exception of the last one, which must be decreed by the President of the Republic of Cape Verde, under the Government's proposal, and, previously, ratified by the Assembly of the Republic, for implying serious restrictions on constitutionally guaranteed individual and collective freedoms.

2. The pandemic effect in Cape Verde. Study case of Santiago University (SU)

In the ending of the 20th century, several higher institutions were proposed in order to fulfill the growing needs of different professional activities in the areas of education, agriculture and maritime industries (World Bank, 2012; Langa, 2013). However, the first universities in Cape Verde only appeared in the first decade of this century, with the opening of the Jean Piaget University, in 2001 (Rodrigues, 2019). As a matter of a fact, between 2008 and 2020 all Higher
Education Institutions started to operate (Langa, 2013), with the exception of the Technical University of the Atlantic, which was born (from a split with the existing structure of the University of Cape Verde) in 2019 (Higher Education Regulatory Agency, 2020). At the present moment, Cape Verde has a diversified and balanced training offer, although mostly centered on two islands (Santiago and São Vicente), although with strong measures to encourage the inclusion of students from other islands.

It is interesting that we find a majority of women attending Higher Education and completing their training (Cape Verde, 2017) which may indicate an important role in ensuring social justice and a greater social and cultural relevance for this teaching subsystem (Rodrigues, 2019).

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Cape Verde, especially those based on Santiago Island, which hosts about 56% of the Cape Verdean population, were strongly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially by the state of emergency decreed, at national and/or regional level, which forced the whole country, or part of it, to be confined for a long period of time.

According to the information provided by https://www.dw.com/pt-002/covid-19-cabo-verde-prolonga-estado-de-emerg%C3%AAncia-em-santiago/a-53431101, the first 20-day state of emergency period began on March 29 and lasted until April 17 in all of the country's islands, later moving to 15 days on the islands of Santiago, Boa Vista and São Vicente. Since May 3 and until this Thursday (14-06-2021) this period of exception applies only on the islands of Santiago and Boa Vista, the only two with active cases. President Jorge Carlos Fonseca extended until May 29 the state of emergency only in Santiago.

Faced with this anomalous and unforeseen situation, Cape Verde Higher Education Institutions had to quickly equip themselves with the infrastructural, technological, didactic and pedagogical conditions, in order to save the 2019-2020 school year, which was already at the start of the 2nd semester and, later, to guarantee the operationality of the new academic year of 2020-2021, in conditions of credibility, attractiveness and competitiveness for the members of the academic community already recruited and, in particular, for the new members, who do not believe in a strange distance learning system, still in an experimental phase, in an almost planetary context, especially in the Cape Verdean reality, whose novelty almost always arrives with a relative delay. University of Santiago, however, was once again at the forefront of Higher Education Institutions in this country, having anticipated the pandemic crisis. In this sense, this University implemented, already last year after the pandemic crisis, an instrument through which it already taught distance
learning courses in almost the entire country, for the training, through telemedicine, of courses to complement the degree in nursing, for technicians in the area, with accumulated professional experience.

It is important to note that despite being only 12 years old, the University of Santiago has already been evaluated for two consecutive years as one of the best Higher Education Institutions in Cape Verde.

Fundamentals of institutional resilience

The ephemeral experience referred above allowed this Higher Education Institution, albeit symbolically, to leave with some competitive advantage, in relation to other Cape Verdean counterpart institutions, assuming a position of a certain pioneering spirit in this field, overcoming, without a start, this critical crisis pandemic, both by its teachers, students and non-teaching staff, thanks to the following institutional measures, timely and vigorously implemented:

Anti-COVID-19 measures adopted by the University of Santiago

Based on institutional information, we can summarize the main institutional measures implemented by the University of Santiago, with a view to preventing contagion at intra-community level and maintaining the teaching-learning system, which constitutes the reason for being of this young Higher Education Institution. This University of Santiago was founded and inaugurated on 11/24/2008:

(i) The commitment to distance learning is being materialized on the basis of a strong investment in the timely training of the University of Santiago community, especially of teaching staff and students, through the Moodle system, in the framework of a partnership with the Polytechnic Institute of Santarém (Portugal) that started last year and has been recently reinforced, within the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic, with substantial investments made in the technological area;

(ii) Creation of all institutional and integrated conditions for the prompt start of classes, in a B-learning regime (mixed face-to-face and virtual classes), through, in particular: measures of access to classes, within the scope of the actions of the Virtual US, now in the past school year, in a state of emergency, conditions were created for the resumption of teaching activities, online, this time in early May 2020, through the installation of internet, smart TV, cameras for image capture, microphones, tripods, digital boards and other accessories to support the transmission of classes,
in all classrooms, in Assomada and Praia. Internet was also made available to all teachers, so that they could teach virtually, at institutional expense, as well as the use of digital platforms, such as: Moodle, Google Meet, Zoom, Portal do Aluno and Exam.net;

(iii) Conducting generalized training actions for the academic community, with a view to placing ICTs at the service of the B-learning regime, namely through the University of Santiago Virtual and Learning Management Systems (Moodle, Zoom, institutional email and others);

(iv) Student inclusion. With the pandemic situation almost 90% of students had regular internet access at home, although of poor quality and quite expensive. However, only half of the students, claimed to have access to a computer or laptop, and even fewer to printers or other technological materials that could be used to support classes. So, with the resumption of institutional contacts and dissemination/training in institutional online communication platforms, almost all the students with internet access said they had good access and felt comfortable when using the different online communication platforms (Rodrigues, 2020);

(v) Cancellation of all face-to-face university extension activities, namely, “Academic and Departmental Journeys”, “University of Santiago Communities”, “Archipelago Routes”, “RoteirUS Mundi”, cultural and sports activities, conferences, seminars, open doors, as well as public events that bring together a significant number of participants, in open or closed spaces, regardless of their nature. They can take place virtually;

(vi) Social action, volunteering and other activities aimed at collective well-being may be authorized, on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the health authorities;

(vii) Determination of the establishment of frequency limitations and organization of public attendance services, namely, with regard to the organization of queues and imposition of a minimum safety distance (1.5 meters);

(viii) Maintenance of the functioning of all classes in the undergraduate and masters courses, as well as all the Research and Extension Practices (PPE) and Dissertation guidance programs, in a B-learning regime, through the University of Santiago Virtual and Learning Management Systems (Moodle, Zoom, institutional email and others);

(ix) To this end, the Institution sought to act in two ways: in a first phase, approaching the country's telecommunications operators, obtaining more accessible internet packages for students and free access to the official platforms of the University of Santiago. At another time, following the lifting of some restrictions in relation to social distance, the classrooms and laboratories were prepared
to receive students, as well as the wi-fi internet. In this way, those who did not have access to the internet or technologies by their own means could use the institution's resources. This measure, in particular, proved to be particularly effective, with the recovery of several students who had returned to their family homes, unable to participate in teaching activities (Rodrigues, 2020);

(x) Reduction in the number of chairs in classrooms, in order to allow a minimum distance of 1.5 m between each student and the teacher;

(xi) Equipment of all classrooms and services with an alcohol gel dispensing device; television, camera and computer for online transmission of classes;

(xii) Functioning of classes under the B-learning regime, with a reduction in the number of students per classroom (never more than 15), ensuring minimum safety distance;

(xiii) During the first 2 weeks of classes, teams from the University of Santiago were developing awareness-raising actions on ways to prevent Coronavirus, including:

i. Actions to train activists to work in the academic community and beyond;

ii. Verification, at the entrance of the University, of the correct and obligatory use of masks, as well as the supervision of their use within the University premises and also of social distance;

iii. Hand disinfection at the entrance to the University;

iv. Offering one community mask to each student, at the entrance to the University;

v. Sensitization of the academic community about preventive care;

vi. Content broadcast on all televisions at the University of Santiago (classrooms and administrative services) about Covid-19, both videos produced by the US, as well as those by MSSS, INSP, WHO and others.

These strategic actions brought good results in successfully concluding the school year of the outbreak of the pandemic and laying the foundations for a promising start in the following year, based on the experience acquired, when many other Higher Education Institutions in Cape Verde were passing by, due to some difficulties in adapting to this new reality.

**COVID-19: from threat to institutional opportunity**

The advent of COVID-19, paradoxically, the great threat that hovered over Higher Education Institutions, especially in Cape Verde, ended up representing, for the US, a unique opportunity for institutional development, opening the doors to long-awaited internationalization. The table below demonstrates the positive impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the demand of the
University of Santiago by the international community:

Table 1 – Evolution of the Student Community University of Santiago 2019-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Bolanha-Assomada</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>1168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praia-ESTG</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>823</strong></td>
<td><strong>1363</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Santiago University (2021)

Under the sign of the pandemic, the start of the 2020-2021 school year at Santiago University took place, with a new operational paradigm, based on the following two major bets, which were expected to contribute to the consolidation of the respective future institutional project:

(i) Distance learning, with synchronous, asynchronous and mixed classes;

(ii) Postgraduate studies.

This bet has already begun to bear fruit in the current 2020-2021 school year, materialized in an abnormal influx of new students to the University of Santiago:

(i) 50 foreign students, in master's and licentiate's courses, from: Mozambique, Angola, S. Tomé, Guinea-Bissau and the USA, being able, with a systemic vision/action, to mark, indelibly, the internationalization of the University of Santiago;

(ii) 100 students (in master's and licentiate's) from other islands: S. Vicente, Santo Antão, Sal, Boa Vista, Fogo, Brava, São Nicolau and Maio;

(iii) 230 distance learning students, including from Santiago, which makes the US no longer a project confined to the island of Santiago;

(iv) 220 candidates for master's courses, coming from all the islands of the country, for an average of about 40 students per course (including those from abroad), which even exceeds the demand verified at the degree level, allowing, thus, the opening of all accredited master's courses;

(v) National and foreign institutions have been increasingly aligning with Santiago University, namely through proposals for signing a protocol;

(vi) Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, which imposed a gloomy perspective of bloodletting, with regard to the admission of new students to Santiago University, paradoxically, with over 650 new students, there was an increase of about 300 more students, in relation to the
last year;
(vii) In short, the academic year 2020-2021 was the most sought after by the University of Santiago of all time.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The following recommendations are based on the case study results. During the COVID-19 pandemic in Santiago University, three major factors have contributed to facilitate education: the adequacy of technological infrastructure, free internet access and skilled teachers. Universities and other educational institutions as well as organizations had to improve the necessary infrastructure and also develop various solutions for internet access as well as to diversify distance/online education to different socioeconomic levels of the students. Even though these mixed online classes seem to have been a success it is necessary to implement various measures in order to measure the full principle of equal opportunity. In such cases, further studies could be implemented to ensure objectivity and justice in online classes and evaluations.
When classes are not conducted in a face-to-face physical environment, it is crucial that the University as well as the country provide an adequate technological infrastructure, internet access, and technological knowledge and competence both for students and lecturers.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS
This chapter focused on a major specific University in Cape Verde – Santiago University dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. It would be interesting to study the new strategies in a post-COVID-19 situation as well as the situation of all Universities in the different islands of this archipelago taking into consideration the population and student’s dimensions.
It would also be very interesting to analyze the potential differences between public and private universities in different islands.

CONCLUSION
As seen before, University of Santiago has fulfilled the noble role that guided its construction. However, for everyone to have the 2030 ambition, especially members of their community, in
times of pandemic, the fight will have to be, unquestionably, collective, so that no one is left behind.

Institutional data demonstrate that the COVID-19 pandemic brought great challenges to all of humanity. For, education, being, according to Nelson Mandela: "the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world", if nothing is done in favor of a genuine guarantee, ab initio, of equitable and generalized access to modernity, opportunity and competitiveness, regardless of the latitude where each individual was lucky / unlucky to be born and / or to live, may, paradoxically and dangerously, lead to a deepening of the gap that separates the luckiest from the most unfortunate, thus contributing to an unbalanced and unbalanced world, spinning at more and more speeds, leaving those who cannot find a place in the front row of this “development train” to increasingly plunge into the vicious cycle of poverty.

In this new context, despite the unknowns that the COVID-19 pandemic introduced into the equation, the signs of the new times must leave a streak of light on the horizon, to illuminate the path to a common future, which is intended to be within reach of this young and promising institution and its entire community.

REFERENCES


**ADITIONAL READING**


**KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

**Asynchronous learning activities** - self-paced learning activities that learners can use in order to get information based on their convenience. This is advantageous if one use these activities to train their team members since they are relatively low-cost and wide-reaching.

**Distance learning** – sometimes is referred as distance education. It begins with teaching through print media, before the Internet and can be provided simply through a mail correspondence.

e-learning (electronic learning) – this is a type of distance learning. It can be defined as including multiple formats and methods of instruction such as CD-ROM, Intranet, Internet and audio and video formats.

**Moodle platform** – worldwide open-source platform used by several higher education institutions, numerous schools, colleges, government organizations. This is an eLearning platform with multiple possibilities.

**Online education** – type of education where students use their home computers through the internet.

**Remote learning** – it is also referred to as distance learning and gives students who aren’t in a physical location for in-person education, access to online training materials.
**Synchronous learning activities** - it is a training activity in which all learners are participating simultaneously. It can happen either online or offline; in both cases, it is highly time-related. As a lecturer or as a facilitator, teaching sessions must be carefully planned and announced.