

# Open-Source-Based Communication-System for R&E Community. The Case for SomaliREN VC.

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Educational institutions - schools and universities in Somalia are based only on traditional learning; they follow the conventional face-to-face classroom lectures. The sudden outbreak of a pandemic called COVID-19 caused by a Corona Virus shook the entire world. To help contain the pandemic, the ministry of Education, Culture, and Higher Education(MOECHE) of Somalia ordered the closure of schools and universities to help control the virus as social distancing is the best way to prevent COVID-19 and overcrowded classrooms pose a challenge for distancing.

SomaliRENs' member institutions, most of which are privately run, faced an economic crisis following the country's suspension of teaching and learning. They rely on students' tuition to sustain their institutions. To ensure continuity of operations and avoid a significant disruption, Somali-REN provided relief to its member institutions by offering its customized video conferencing platform, which universities are now using for remote teaching and learning. This is a free open-source-based research and education communication-system using BigBlueButton, specially designed for academic institutions with comparable features and quality to commercial ones such as Zoom and Cisco Webex.

Keywords: VideoConferencing Platform, BigBlueButton, R&E Community.

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