

## Making School More Inclusive, Accessible, and Sustainable for Learners with Disabilities Post COVID-19

Thursday, 2nd December, 13:00 – 15:00 (Bangkok Time) via Zoom



### International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2021 Regional Webinar

#### Making School More Inclusive, Accessible, and Sustainable for Learners with Disabilities Post COVID-19

#### Compiled Q&A

**Q1.** The world over, teachers express lack of expertise. Do you think it is actually lack of opportunity to develop expertise? Beginning teachers (and I remember) feel insecure about their practice in general but quickly develop confidence once they start teaching. Inclusive practice may also need this time for confidence and expertise to develop rather than more pre-service preparation.

**Beyond Education:** Teachers need pre-service and in-service support which builds their understanding and implementation of inclusive practices based on learner centered teaching, universal design principles and rights-based approaches. Most pre and in service training does not address this.

Another recommendation of the mapping report is the formation of communities of practice (COP) in schools, wherein teachers are encouraged to continuously reflect about issues on IE in their school, collaboratively formulate solutions, and immediately apply what they learn in their classroom practice. Evidence supports that school-based professional development activities such as COPs are more effective in building agency, confidence, knowledge and skills.

**Q2.** While achieving full accessibility takes time, children with disabilities have a right to enjoy reasonable accommodation. As reasonable accommodation is applied at an individual basis, some examples in this region would be helpful for all. Do you have such example?

**Beyond Education:** An example is Bhutan's IE programme - The Ministry of Education follows a twin-track approach wherein children with disabilities are included in mainstream classes while at the same time, given individual support according to their needs. If necessary, a support teacher joins the class, teaching alongside a mainstream teacher. The support teacher helps modify teaching and learning strategies to ensure accessibility of the lessons for the child. If absolutely needed, remedial sessions after class or at another time are provided to CWDs. There is a team for Special Educational Needs in each school implementing the IE/SEN programme providing support to teachers.

**Q3.** Dr. Daniel Mont developed an adapted version for UNICEF of the WG questions specifically for EMIS ([https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/2956/file/monitoring\\_education\\_participation.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/2956/file/monitoring_education_participation.pdf) p.61), to make them more suitable for monitoring in school contexts (phrased in terms of difficulty participating and learning). But given that there are often limited options / expertise for early identification in many areas - what do you think could be some ways to address this, and what role should schools / child care providers (child care/nursery) play in early diagnosis and intervention?

**Beyond Education:** If we look at the evidence emerging across the Asia Pacific region, we can see some examples of WG questions being adopted in early identification screening approaches with promising results. The key issue which need to be addressed involves more rigorous approaches to cross sectoral planning and implementation.

**Q4.** Did the study/Mapping of disability-inclusive education practices of different countries reviewed the Education Policies to ascertain how the policies address this important aspect, especially in perspective of achieving SDG 4? I am sorry if the presentation already covered this, but i got offline for some time, so maybe missed.

**Beyond Education:** Yes, the mapping included a review of education and disability policies across the region and the extent to which it promotes disability-inclusive education. On the whole, inclusion is endorsed in laws/policies. Policies dedicated specifically to inclusive education have been adopted in Afghanistan and the Maldives. Sri Lanka has a draft policy. You can refer to the report (pp 25-36) and the country profiles for country-specific findings.