

# A Disability Inclusive Education Response to Covid-19

18 August 2020 at 1:00PM (Bangkok time) via Zoom



## Background

Approximately 15 per cent of the world's population live with some form of disability<sup>1</sup> and estimated 690 million people with disabilities<sup>2</sup> are in Asia and the Pacific region. Despite many benefits of inclusive education, segregated models of education delivery are the most prevalent practice in Asia and the Pacific. This practice is rooted in social stigma and discrimination against children with disabilities leaving more than 190 millions of children with disabilities<sup>3</sup> isolated from the school community and quality learning.

The current COVID-19 crisis revealed many underlying vulnerabilities and inequalities of educational system. It is affecting over 91% of the world's student population and many countries are adopting remote learning practices to reduce the learning disruption. However, children with disabilities are facing even greater challenges following the move to online teaching programmes including digital exclusion and the risk of being left behind due to the absence of appropriate assistive equipment, access to internet, accessible materials and support. For example, an estimated 0.5 per cent of books in developing countries are available in the accessible formats required for persons with visual, intellectual and learning disabilities. ICT applications and distance learning, if made available and accessible, have the potential to assist and empower children with disabilities and improve their social and economic integration of children with disabilities in society by enlarging the range of activities available to them.

In this background, this webinar aims to bring regional and national level education stakeholders including UNESCO, UNICEF, Civil Society Organisations, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), donor agencies together to understand how Covid-19 has impacted on the education of children with disabilities and discuss actions to ensure children with disabilities are able to return to school.

The following questions will be addressed during the webinar:

- 1) Experiences of distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic: what have been the experiences of children with disabilities and their families during the epidemic? What have been the main issues/concerns? What has worked well to ensure children with disabilities are not left behind?
- 2) Ensuring children with disabilities are not left behind. What can be done to mitigate the risk of children with disabilities being left behind as children return to school. (e.g. access to technology; government monitoring of children returning to school)? What can be done to bridge the learning gaps between children with and without disabilities?

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Includes those with physical disabilities, those who are blind or experience low vision, deaf or hard-of-hearing, and those with learning disabilities, cognitive/developmental disabilities, psychosocial disabilities, deafblind, and those with multiple disabilities.

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF, 2015.

- 3) What practical actions can be taken in the short, medium and long term to enable children with disabilities to return to school and reduce the education gap between children with disabilities and their peers without disabilities?

The answers to these questions will make an important contribution to develop strategies to build more inclusive and equitable education systems after the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Objectives:**

- 1) To share evidence and experiences of how Covid-19 has impacted on the education of children with disabilities, from the perspectives of children themselves, their families and teachers.
- 2) To share examples of good practice and successful disability inclusive education responses to Covid-19.
- 3) To propose suggestions on specific actions that can be taken to support children with disabilities to return to school and mitigate the risk of a widening education gap between children with and children without disabilities.

**Audience:**

The audience for the webinar will be regional and national level education stakeholders including UNESCO, UNICEF, Civil Society Organisations, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), donor agencies.

**Working Language**

English will be the working language of the webinar.

**Dates and format**

Dates: 18 August 2020

Time: 13:00 – 14:30 (Bangkok time)

Format: Via Zoom (link will be provided upon registration)

**Webpage:**

<https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/disability-inclusive-education-response-covid-19>

**Registration:**

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_xli\\_m44UQD6gvVTsKkgr9Q](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_xli_m44UQD6gvVTsKkgr9Q)

**For more information, please contact**

**Section for Inclusive Quality Education**

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## Agenda

<b>Tuesday, 18 August 2020</b>	
<b>Moderator: Elaine Green, Head of Influencing, Campaigns and Public Affairs , Leonard Cheshire</b>	
<b>13:00 – 13:05</b>	Welcome and introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ms. Maki Hayashikawa, Chief of Section for Inclusive Quality Education, UNESCO Bangkok</li><li>• Ms. Barkha Henry, Regional Manager, Programme Development &amp; Resourcing, Leonard Cheshire EAPRO</li></ul>
<b>13:05 – 13:15</b>	Perspective on the impact of COVID-19 on children with disabilities in the region <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ms. Erin Tanner, Education Specialist, UNICEF EAPRO</li></ul>
<b>13:15 – 13:55</b>	Presentations (8 minutes each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. Tolhas Damanik, Executive Director, Wahana Inklusif Indonesia Foundation, Indonesia</li><li>• Mr. Abdus Salam, Chief Executive, Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK), Bangladesh</li><li>• Ms. Leila P. Areola, Director IV, Bureau of Learning Delivery, Department of Education, Republic of Philippines</li><li>• Ms. Nantanoot Suwannawut, Academic Officer, Ministry of Education, Thailand</li><li>• Ms. Sunanda Mavillapalli, Global Head of Operations and Programmes, Leonard Cheshire</li></ul>
<b>13:55 – 14:25</b>	Q&A and Discussion
<b>14:25 – 14:30</b>	Summary, Key Messages and Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ms. Erin Tanner, Education Specialist, UNICEF EAPRO</li></ul>