

A Disability Inclusive Education Response to Covid-19

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



Questions and responses from the webinar

Questions to Panelists	Responses
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
<p>Do you envisage the need for support from volunteers and parents during the initial stages as authorities are very stretched at the moment and Children with Disabilities need more individual attention?</p>	<p>Ms. Erin Tanner, Education Specialist, UNICEF EAPRO, Thailand This is likely, but should not be accepted as the norm. Reliance on volunteering or familial systems often lead to the child not getting the appropriate support they need. Taking critical measures to protect education work forces from burn out, including principals, teachers and teacher aides is crucial. Acknowledge the stresses within their own households; the requirements to adapt to new teaching methods, technologies and policy settings; the increasingly resource-constrained working conditions; and the enormous challenge of differentiating the curricula to accommodate increasingly varied learning requirements as waves of COVID-19 interrupt students' learning in disparate way.</p>
<p>How do you visualize schools and community-based program organizations collaborate as to reaching out to parents with children and youth with disabilities as usually schools have their own set of structured learning program?</p>	<p>Ms. Nantanoot Suwannawut, Academic Officer, Ministry of Education (MOE), Thailand Currently, there are some community-based programs initiated by the MOE, eg. turning homes to classrooms and changing parents to teachers and chronic illness program for hospitalized children. These programs were implemented through nation-wide branches of special education centers. Examples of activities include educating parents about the rights of their children, teaching techniques, and basic rehabilitation knowledge. There is no core curriculum yet for these programs. The MOE is planning to work on standards or guidelines, but customization and adaptation are also needed to serve specific context and individual needs. A set of standards or practical curriculum will be created in the future, with the involvement of all stakeholders.</p>
<p>How about those students with disabilities who cannot attend online classes for places where face-to-face session are suspended? (if they have no access to technology)</p>	<p>Ms. Sunanda Mavillapalli, Leonard Cheshire During Covid-19 we have learnt so much more about how children with disabilities and parents are managing home learning. Families have limited access to digital either because of poverty and lack of digital devices or the programmes are just not accessible for children with disabilities. The majority of children are learning by using school textbooks and revising from their school notes. Parents are concerned about their children falling behind and they feel they lack the skills to support their children at home. Many parents would prefer if they could have a home tutor to support their children. Therefore, Leonard Cheshire produced a guide for parents (please refer the link below) to provide encouragement and support to home learning. We are also exploring options of community-based learning for example in Zambia the project is working with schools to provide study packs for children with disabilities. These will be collected from the school by community volunteers and delivered to the children's homes. The packs would then be collected after two weeks by the volunteers and taken back to the school. In Kenya we are exploring the possibility of forming small learning groups in the community led by a teacher. We will also provide vulnerable homes with radios so that children can access radio learning programmes.</p>
<p>What alternatives are done in cases where there are many cases of COVID-19 in the residential areas of learners with disabilities?</p>	<p>Leonard Cheshire has published a resource pack that provides advice and guidance for parents and caregivers on how best to protect and support their children with disabilities during the pandemic. Please follow the link below to download the guidance note. https://www.leonardcheshire.org/about-us/coronavirus/our-international-coronavirus-policy</p>