

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 Webinar

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Concept Note

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

Background

The first theme of IYPD was ‘full participation and equality’ which suggested that persons with disabilities must fully engage in the life and development of their societies to enjoy living conditions on an equal basis with others and have equal share in socio-economic development. IYPD also increased public awareness—understanding and acceptance of persons with disabilities—and encouraged persons with disabilities to form their organizations so that they could engage in any decisions that affected their lives in an equal partnership with other stakeholders.

The theme for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) in 2021 is “Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.” The theme strongly implies 2 main aspects:

1. COVID-19 has deeply affected persons with disabilities and imposed the long-standing systemic inequalities on them.
2. Persons with disabilities must lead the effort toward an inclusive, accessible, and sustainable world post COVID-19.

In the Asia-Pacific region, learners with disabilities are among the most excluded from education, facing serious barriers such as inaccessible school facilities, a lack of assistive technologies, classrooms and teaching and learning practices that are not inclusive, poor health, prejudice and discrimination. Therefore, learners with disabilities are less likely than their peers without disabilities to attend primary school; one out of two learners with disabilities are out of school. In some countries, the enrolment rate of learners with disabilities in primary school is less than 1%¹.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the situation for children with disabilities, especially those unable to access remote learning services in the face of school closures in almost all countries in the Asia and Pacific Region.

¹ UNICEF, *Ensuring an inclusive return to school for children with disabilities*, June 2020.

Now the global vaccination rate is soaring with over 50% of the world population fully vaccinated². Many countries are opening. Undoubtedly, schools in many countries will soon fully reopen. This is the time to promote 'Open Up Better' by putting in place mechanisms and measures to make schools more inclusive, accessible, and sustainable in partnership with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs).

IDPD 2021's observance is an excellent opportunity to promote inclusive education, highlighting progress made, including in the context of school reopening and building back better, and mobilizing support for the dignity, rights, and well-being of learners with disabilities in the region.

Webinar to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2021

The Disability-Inclusive Education in Asia-Pacific Working Group is celebrating IDPD 2021 with the following objectives:

- To celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2021 with the wider community (national, regional & global).
- To showcase key initiatives in promoting disability-inclusive education and the leadership of key stakeholders in advancing the rights of learners with disabilities
- To discuss issues and challenges learners with disabilities face, including after the reopening of schools and the implications of policies and practices at the national, regional, and international levels.

This will be done by:

- 1) Launching the *Mapping of Disability-Inclusive Education Practices in South Asia* report. This report, commissioned by the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, highlights inclusive education policies, strategies and practices implemented at all levels of the education system in the South Asia Region that are effective, or hold promise to be effective, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings of the comprehensive report will be shared, including key recommendations for moving the disability-inclusive agenda forward in the region.
- 2) Hearing from key stakeholders leading efforts to promote disability-inclusive education in their countries and communities in the region.

Target Audience

The target audience for the webinar includes regional, national, and international level education stakeholders (including OPDs, policymakers, and implementers) interested in making schools more inclusive, accessible, and sustainable.

Working Language

English will be the working language of the webinar. Live captioning and sign language will be made available during the webinar.

² Our World in Data, "Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations, 11 November 2021, https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations?country=OWID_WRL.

Dates and Format

Date: Thursday, 2 December 2021
Time: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Bangkok time (GMT + 7)
Format: Zoom

Registration

Registration is free and required in advance. Once you register, a unique join URL will be sent to your email.

Registration link: https://leonardcheshire.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zfxG7p3UQACUkJ-WhkAi_A

For more Information

Please see the webpage for the webinar: <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/making-school-more-inclusive-accessible-and-sustainable-learners-disabilities-post-covid-19>

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Moderator: Kyungah Kristy Bang, Programme Officer, UNESCO Bangkok

Agenda	
13:00 – 13:10	Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes) Nir Shrestha, UNICEF Disability Youth Advocate, Nepal Rosangela Berman-Bieler, Global Lead on Disability, UNICEF
13:10 – 13:50	Launch of the Mapping of Disability-Inclusive Education Practices in South Asia report (40 minutes) Introduction: Mita Gupta, ECD Specialist/Disability Inclusive Education Focal Point, UNICEF ROSA Presentation of study findings: Peter Grimes, Director, Beyond Education Q&A (5 minutes)
13:50 – 14:30	Panel Discussion (40 minutes) Panel Moderator: Tolhas Damanik, CEO of Wahana Inklusif Indonesia and Disability Inclusion Advisor for the IFES-ASEAN project, Indonesia Speaker 1: Dr. Salmah Jopri, Director of Special Education Department, Ministry of Education, Malaysia Speaker 2: Dr. Anjlee Agarwal, Founder/Executive Director, Samarthyam, India Speaker 3: Prashanti Pradhan, Co-founder and Chairperson, Phensem Parent Support Group, Bhutan Speaker 4: Ika Putri Mahardhika, Program Officer, Social Media, and Organization Development, Wahana Inklusif Indonesia
14:30 – 14:50	Q&A and Discussion (20 minutes)
14:50 – 15:00	Closing (10 minutes) Jim Ackers, Regional Education Adviser, UNICEF ROSA Sawang Srisom, Leonard Cheshire