

Webinar Briefing Paper

Session: 6 Way Forward: A Message of Hope and Engagement for Teachers and Equitable Education

Date: 30 October, 2021

Time: 15.20 – 16.00

Session Overview

Speakers

- Dr. Supakorn Buasai. Acting Managing Director, Equitable Education Fund, Thailand
- Mr. Suphat Champatong (Ph.D.) Permanent Secretary and Vice Chairperson of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO
- Ms. Kyungsun Kim. UNICEF Thailand Representative
- Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi. Director of UNESCO. Bangkok, Thailand
- Dr. Ethel Agnes P. Valenzuela. Director, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization.
- Mr. Prasert Teapanart. National Director, Save the Children Thailand.

Moderator

- Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi. UNICEF, Thailand

Session Summary

This session focused on the experiences of different organizations including organizations at the national level, international organizations acting within Thailand, as well as regional organizations. They detailed the steps that their organizations have been taking and their goals for equitable education.

The Ministry of Education of Thailand has provided subsidies for students, assisted shared knowledge between teachers, and developed teachers' skills. The Equitable Education Fund has worked closely with the Ministry of Education especially when assisting the poorest students to access education. The Fund has worked closely directly with teachers through the Princess Maha Chakri Award Foundation. In addition, they have cooperated with UNICEF for future plans to improve education. UNICEF has been implementing education for reaching the unreachable. They have focused on evidence-based initiatives to identify the digital gap in education. They have focused on early childhood development and have reached out to those most in need by supplying resources. They realize that mental health is also important and they have focused on improving the mental health of students and educators. Save the Children has been initiating child's right analysis. They have been enabling parents to act as teachers at home and have put this into context in areas like the South of Thailand. SEAMEO has taken its strong presence in the region with over 26 regional centers and used them to help disabled children by providing training for teachers and improving the literacy rates of students. Finally, UNESCO has worked on global education alliances and partnerships but they have also focused on teachers. They have provided courses for teachers and government officials to help equip them with the tools they need.

Recommendations

The activities and programs to improve education must help enable teachers and promote capacity building of the teachers. Strategic alliances and partnerships between organizations at the local, national, and regional levels must reflect this commitment to equitable education and using teachers as a tool to achieve this.

Next Steps

The messages from the partners all point to the fact looking forward is not enough, there must be a commitment to take action. Cooperation and communication are key between the different stakeholders to ensure that policies are evidence-based and lead to results.

Speaker Remarks

Dr. Supakorn Buasai, Aciting Managing Director, Equitable Education Fund, Thailand

“While the situation is improving, it remains a challenge providing quality education to the 5% to 10% of children and youth who are the poorest.”

Mr. Suphat Champatong Ph.D. Permanent Secretary and Vice Chairperson of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO

“The pandemic was the ticket for us as educators to revisit and redefine innovative ways to overcome not only the challenges of access to quality education but also how to enhance inclusive education and ensure that no one is left behind.”

Ms. Kyungsun Kim. UNICEF Thailand Representative.

“At UNICEF Thailand, we are committed to supporting the Royal Thai Government in helping every school to safely open, accelerate catch up and academic achievement, target the needs of students hurt most by the pandemic and build school communities where all students feel like they belong.”

Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi. Director of UNESCO. Bangkok, Thailand.

“The global education coalition launched by UNESCO in March 2020 is a unique platform for collaboration and exchange in protecting the right to education during this unprecedented learning disruption.”

Dr. Ethel Agnes P. Valenzuela. Director, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization.

“Teachers have to adapt and to adopt to the new alternative ways so that children will learn and that equitable quality education will be for everyone. But that is hard because we are still in harsh economic and education crisis. The education disruptions and school closures caused by COVID-19 have confirmed the critical role of teachers.”

Mr. Prasert Tepanart. National Director, Save the Children Thailand.

“Save the Children has been working alongside with the government of Thailand be they the Ministry of Education or different ministries located in different locations in Thailand to inspire breakthroughs in the way that the world treats children.”

Key Evidence

New technologies, distance learning models, and utilized technologies have been adopted during the pandemic. High vaccination rates have raised hopes of returning to school, but there are still those that do not have access to teachers and education.

Challenges, good practices

Technological abilities of some actors is still lacking, especially in older generations. Traditional teaching has been forced to adapt and teachers must adopt new methods. In the context of COVID-19, new skills must be promoted to address the widening educational disparity that has been witnessed during the pandemic.