

**RECOMMENDATIONS of E-NET PHILIPPINES on  
SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 391 – BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM (COVID-19)  
Senate Hearing, 11 June 2020**

**(Submission to the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture, 10 June 2020)**

The issue on access to quality and equitable education is more challenging now and even after the lockdown that may bring a “new normal” lifestyle like social distancing, wearing masks, and frequent hand washing. How could and would marginalized, excluded, and vulnerable learners adapt into this high technology learning? How would they practice frequent hand washing if there’s shortage of water supply in schools and their houses? Even if the home-based study is implemented, physical distancing is still an issue since most of the houses of urban poor learners are too small averaging to about 15 square meters with an average of 5 members of the family. How would the well being of teachers be addressed? Would these learning modes lessen or increase their workload?

Aside from almost 28 millions affected students in public and private schools, and more than 2 millions ALS enrollees, this pandemic also affected indigenous people, and about 3.8 million Filipinos age 6 to 24 years old were out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY) and 12.8 million Filipinos age 31-59 years old have not completed their basic education (2016 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey, APIS).

Learners with disabilities are the most vulnerable in this pandemic. The budget appropriation for Disability-specific appropriations for Learners with Disabilities (LWDs) is only 0.44% of the annual Department of Education (DepEd) budget.

While this pandemic has certainly disrupted society’s normal functions, and is disproportionately affecting marginalized sectors and the learners within them, it is high time to look for creative, alternative solutions to learning, and advocate for reforms and improvements in the education sector.

We thank you for seeking the recommendations of E-Net Philippines in ensuring the continuity of Basic Education amid COVID-19 pandemic. The following are the recommendations coming from E-Net member-organizations during our online consultation in Mindanao, Visayas, Luzon, and National Capital Region:

**A. On Legislation**

1. Expedite the passing of ALS and Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities into laws.

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2. Revisit and scan existing laws such RA 10821 “Children’s Emergency Relief and Protection Act” and RA 10121 Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Management and determine how would these aid in education in the new normal.
3. Ensure equitable financing on education in emergency situation for marginalized, excluded and vulnerable sectors of the society whether arising from COVID pandemic, disaster or armed conflict.
4. For budgetary requirements, appropriations for debt payments could be realigned in favor of education needs.

## **B. On ensuring health and wellness of education frontliners and learners**

### **B.1. Education Frontliners - Teachers**

1. Conduct mass testing to all teachers and school leaders since they are the frontliners in this situation.
2. Provide psycho-social/psycho-emotional online sessions with the teachers to prepare them for teaching in this new normal.
3. Provide hygiene kits to teachers during face-to-face sessions in school and home/community visits to learners – this include masks, eye glasses, 70% alcohol or hand sanitizer with required alcohol content, anti-bacterial liquid soap, among others.
4. Provide monthly medical check-up for teachers as preventive measure and for keeping them well.
5. Provide hazard and hardship pay.

### **B.2. Learners**

1. Provide hygiene kits to learners during face-to-face sessions in school and group sessions in the community - this include masks, eye glasses, 70% alcohol or hand sanitizer with required alcohol content, anti-bacterial liquid soap, among others.
2. Continue the provision of feeding program to all children in public schools whether they are in school or at home study. Ensuring the nutritional needs of the children in this difficult time is crucial to keep them healthy and ready for study. Most of the parents of these children have been affected with the no work, no pay policy during ECQ, hence, the more the children need food support. Food support can be in the form of nutritious relief goods.
3. Continue the provision of immunization to all children in public schools.
4. Provide psycho-social/psycho-emotional sessions/activities attuned to the needs of the learners.
5. Device mechanism to protect the learners from attacks of cyber bullying and other forms of abuse.

### **B.3. Facilities and Utilities**

1. Ensure once a week disinfecting the classrooms and the entire schools.

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2. Ensure supply of clean water in the classrooms or in designated areas in the schools.
3. Ensure the repairs of dilapidated classrooms and other facilities in schools.
4. Ensure proper ventilation in the classrooms and school premises.
5. Lessen the number of learners in the classroom when face-to-face session is necessary and shorten the days and/or hours of children exposure in the school as well as the teachers.

### **C. On ensuring necessary infrastructures for learning**

1. Establish a database on the number of learners and teachers per division and determine the number of learners and teachers with gadgets and access to Internet, and mobile phones with data, and learners who need printed instructional packets. Utilize to the fullest the available data and information from Learner Information System (LIS), 4Ps, FLEMMS, Last Mile Schools (LMS), etc.
2. Map the appropriate learning venues in the barangays and identify local resource persons that could be tapped in conducting community-based sessions.
3. Provide gadgets, loads, and budget for Internet use by utilizing unused allowances and by tapping the services of Internet providers.
4. Take the full advantage of using the radio and TV especially government-owned Radyo ng Bayan and PTV4.
5. Provide hardship allowance to teachers in going to remote areas where Internet is not accessible. For the learners to access online learning apply 20% discount in buying loads.
6. Continue face-to-face classes in the less affected or COVID-free barangays, city or municipality observing minimum health standards like physical distancing, wearing masks, and washing hands. Thus, the schools should be equipped with proper ventilation, clean water and soaps, cleaning materials and disinfectant and part of the learning is the learners help in cleaning their classroom everyday.

### **D. Support mechanism**

1. Capacitate the parents, guardians and older siblings in supporting the learning of the learners in terms of attitudinal formation, knowledge enrichment, and skills development.
2. Localization. Assign the teachers in the barangays, cities or municipalities where they reside.
3. Train the children to become peer tutors. Currently, Unang Hakbang Foundation in Mandaluyong City has 25 peer tutors and they will be tutoring 2-4 kids within their neighborhood. About a hundred kids will be reached in this initiative.
4. Develop and enhance the alternative learning system (ALS) as venue for learning and mechanism for moving up to higher level.
5. Ensure disability-specific education modalities and technologies.

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6. Collaborate with the barangays and local government units on how to make their localities a learning environment.
7. Encourage the students to do projects beneficial first and foremost to them and to the family and community.
8. Collaborate with civil society organizations and private sector to seek their assistance and services to education in the new normal.
9. Activate and make mandated structures functional in the service of education continuity and enhancement like PTA, Local School Board, barangay Education Committee, LCC local council, among others.
10. Modify the voucher system and make sure it served the MEVS. Ensure the proper implementation of GASTPE. Review its implementing guidelines to give free education to poor learners.
11. Align the implementation of 4Ps into the new normal.
12. Mandatory creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Committee (OSHC) in all schools and conduct capacity building to all OSHC members.

#### **E. On Private Educational Institutions**

Essentially learning centers of Unang Hakbang Foundation in Mandaluyong City will be closed. Like UHF, in most small private schools, the big threat among the faculty and non-teaching personnel is the security of tenure. Because of the migration of students from private to public school the faculty and personnel will lose jobs. After April, teachers and personnel have no more salaries. Immediate actions are to be taken:

1. Flexible tuition fees in private schools.
2. Include teachers who are on job order or contract of service in the government subsidies or social amelioration pay, etc.
3. Since DepEd is part of Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF), we appeal to the department to convey to other concerned government agencies like the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) regarding the provision of social amelioration to displaced teachers due to migration of learners from private to public school, and closure of schools, and those who did not received salaries as they were affected of the “no work, no pay” policy.

Respectfully yours,



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