

The Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on Education Inequality for Special Needs Education  
: How can teachers re-include children?

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This research examines the adequateness of teacher policy for inclusive education in the local context. COVID-19 had a dramatic impact on children's education. Many schools have been closed and many children were deprived of the opportunities to learn. In fact, schools were closed for more than 168 million children in the world for almost an entire year due to COVID-19 (UNICEF 2021).

These impacts hit vulnerable children harder than others. These groups of children include children living in poverty, children with disabilities, children in out-homecare, children in detention, and also refugee children and children at risk of child labor. For example, under COVID-19 crisis, distant learning became popularized quickly in the world. However, it is more difficult for children in poverty and children with disabilities to get access to the necessary equipment used for distant learning. As a result, education inequality is now widening. To solve these problems, we should not only think about the use of ICT in education, but also teacher policy.

What kind of teacher policy should be adopted to promote teacher support cost-effectively and sustainably? One solution is having volunteers to support teachers. These volunteers should not be limited to those with teaching experience but could include local residents and university students. It has also been found that encouraging children to teach each other is important and contributes to effective inclusive education practices. Since there is a limited budget, there is now a need to support teachers with various interventions and efforts.