



## All Children Reading–Philippines

### ACR–Philippines support for continuity of learning during COVID-19-related school closures

The first coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) stay-at-home order went into effect in the Philippines in March 2020, close to the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The Department of Education (DepEd) immediately began preparing to continue instruction under the worst-case scenario: strict quarantine measures and school closures, indefinitely. Delaying the 2020–2021 school year until October 2020 allowed time to modify the curriculum to the most essential learning competencies for early grades of primary school and to prepare digital learning resources to meet the needs of learners in a fully remote or blended environment. Resources were put on the DepEd Commons (an online repository of open access digital teaching and learning resources) and DepEd TV. The flexible nature of the All Children Reading (ACR)–Asia Task Order meant that ACR–Philippines could easily pivot to what DepEd most needed to do to support continued learning during the extended school closure. ACR–Philippines continues to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in the ways listed here and explained below.

#### ACR Philippines has pivoted to help:

- ✓ Increase availability of **digital learning resources**.
- ✓ Provide **hardware and software** to support use of digital learning resources, and management of teaching and learning.
- ✓ Expand the reach and content of **DepEd TV**.
- ✓ Provide video explainers to help **teachers** adapt to remote learning and access eResources on DepEd Commons.
- ✓ Disseminate **video explainers and social media messaging to encourage parents** to make the most of DepEd TV with their children.
- ✓ **Build the capacity of DepEd staff** to adapt to the impact of the pandemic.
- ✓ Train teachers in **formative assessment**.
- ✓ **Train health and education staff** to evaluate the conditions needed to reopen schools safely.
- ✓ **Study how students, families, and schools are adapting** to remote learning.

**Remote Learning Study.** Over the course of the 2020–2021 school year in the Philippines, researchers associated with ACR–Philippines followed 20 schools, 40 teachers, and 80 families across the country to understand their experience with teaching and learning during school closures. This longitudinal study involved data collections at three points in time from the same participants. Phone interviews were conducted with the home learning partners. Participating learners completed an informal literacy assessment based on an existing DepEd monitoring tool. The project has shared a series of briefs with DepEd to help inform policy and planning for the new school year. Topics include parent attitudes toward classroom reopening, challenges and solutions to remote learning, use of technology during remote learning, student engagement strategies, literacy instructional strategies, and supporting home learning partners.

**Digital Learning Resources.** ACR–Philippines immediately responded to a request from DepEd to support teachers to adapt self-learning materials to interactive, digital format using a simple eBook creator, Kotobee Author. ACR provided the software licenses for 200 eBook developers and training on best practices in developing interactive early literacy materials. The project created an eResource self-assessment toolkit<sup>1</sup> to provide guidance and criteria for creating resources and engaged a team to review

<sup>1</sup> [shared.rti.org/content/eresources-review-toolkit](https://shared.rti.org/content/eresources-review-toolkit)



and addressing GESI concerns in print and digital media; 523 teacher broadcasters had participated as of September 2021.

**Guides for Teachers and Families.** Within three months of the first school closures, working with FitEd and the TPD@Scale coalition, ACR–Philippines developed the “Teacher’s Guide to Remote Learning During School Closures,”<sup>3</sup> translated into multiple languages and supported by animated videos for wider dissemination. The Guide provides simple, rapid advice for teachers in terms of “what” to teach, “how” to teach, and understanding “who” the learners are in a remote learning situation. Given the popularity of platforms like Facebook and YouTube among teachers and parents, ACR–Philippines has continued to use social-media-friendly messaging for outreach purposes. In 2021, ACR–Philippines and partner teachers created an infographic, a short video explainer,<sup>4</sup> and social media cards to help direct teachers and parents to the eResources on the DepEd Commons and to encourage parents to watch DepEd TV with their children. These media are distributed by the Department of Education on their media platforms, including a Facebook Group that has over 5 million followers.<sup>5</sup>



Sample social media card for parent engagement

**Capacity-Building.** In March 2021, ACR–Philippines collaborated with the Curriculum and Instruction Department to enroll eight people in the International Development Institute’s online training: “Improving Learning Outcomes at the School Level Post Pandemic.” The project reconvened the same cohort of “alumni” for a follow-up session in August to share progress and plans for reopening. Additionally, six individuals participated in a UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning course: “Using data and information for crisis-sensitive educational planning,” which commenced in May and completed in June 2021. Participants in these two capacity-building opportunities connect regularly with each other and participate in other DepEd and USAID initiatives to maximize the learning opportunity. For example, the pandemic has raised important issues regarding how resilient education systems deploy alternative learning opportunities as a way to respond to crises. ACR–Philippines is supporting the **Education**

**Futures** Unit of DepEd to enroll in specialized coursework and to convene innovation and prototype development workshops related to learning spaces. Additionally, in partnership with DepEd Planning Department, the Bureau of Learners Support Services, ACR, and the Philippine Society for Public Health Physicians, we will organize a **public health data analytics** training to support post-pandemic decision-making regarding school reopening. The training will include modules on Introduction to Public Health in Schools, Prevention of Common Diseases in Children, Public Health Surveillance, and Using Public Health Data.



A Filipino child reads in a classroom ©RTI International

<sup>3</sup> Available online at: <https://tpdatscalecoalition.org/2020/04/coalition-covid-19-response/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRUa5BPOYLQ>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/DepartmentOfEducation.PH/posts/5055606374499016>