

## LEARNING GAP: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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The closures of schools in 2020 because of the global COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the learning gap among students in the Philippines. It created challenges in the delivery of instruction to students. Governments will need to concentrate on reducing the learning gap and becoming ready for the next crisis because pandemic school closures in Asia, including the Philippines, widened the educational divide.

Point (2021) explained that students around the country have experienced large learning gaps as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but adolescents who are subject to systematic injustices were disproportionately affected, which widened gaps that already existed within our educational systems. Teachers are currently faced with the difficulty of meeting pupils where they are while also overcoming the learning gap caused by the pandemic.

According to reports of Uaminal (2021), in the Philippines, three (3) million students decided not to enroll in or continue their education beyond the basic education level during the school year 2020–2021 (also known as "the pandemic school year"). To put this figure into perspective, consider that it is almost as many people as those who live in Metro Manila's densely populated city of Quezon City (2.94 million). This occurred despite the fact that schools launched a large enrollment and registration effort and that the start of the school year was pushed back by four months, from June to October. The COVID-19 pandemic caused these children to have a "gap year," making the "no student left behind" policy more of an aspiration than a practical reality.

Because of this, the Department of Education created a recovery plan to resolve the existing problems in schools. Extending the school calendar, expanding learning time, creating learning support centers in schools and community-based learning spaces, carrying out summer learning remediation and intervention programs, and hiring more learning support assistants are all part of the recovery plan.

The DepEd also said that it would enhance current learning strategies like reading, routine home visits, hosting online and in-person study groups, and involving parents and communities in students' education.

#### *References:*

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Uaminal, J.M. (2021). The students who are left behind: pandemic-induced gap year in the Philippines. Retrieved from <https://asaa.asn.au/the-students-who-are-left-behind-pandemic-induced-gap-year-in-the-philippines/>