HOME-BASED LEARNING HANDBOOK

LESSONS LEARNED FROM MIGRANT EDUCATION IN TAK PROVINCE, 2020-21

OCTOBER 2021
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PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

This Handbook documents the Home-Based Learning and other alternative education methods utilised by migrant education stakeholders in Tak Province in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Although different approaches to education are suitable for different situations, this Handbook outlines the response used by education providers in this context in Tak Province, and can offer some experience-based advice on how to continue delivering education in emergency situations.

The Handbook will include sections on procedure, costs, materials needed, as well as challenges and alternative methods of learning.

DURING HBL, TEACHERS ENSURE ALL STUDENTS’ TEMPERATURES ARE MEASURED, AND EVERYONE HAS MASKS AND HAND SANITIZER
For schools around the world, the COVID-19 crisis caused unprecedented challenges to education access in the 2020-2021 academic year. According to UNESCO, more than 1.4 billion learners were affected by country-wide school closures in 165 countries worldwide. Many of these schools – including the Migrant Learning Centres (MLCs) in Thailand – remained closed for the entire school year. School closures impact not only students, teachers, and their families, but also potentially have extensive consequences for societies and economies around the world.

For MLCs in Thailand, the impacts of COVID-19 and the resulting lockdowns have far-reaching effects, exacerbating existing problems faced by migrant communities. There are approximately 4 million migrant people from surrounding countries currently living in Thailand, and around 300,000 - 400,000 of these are children*. Many of these undocumented migrants are employed in unreliable, seasonal work, and live in basic conditions. The economic impacts of COVID-19 have caused many to receive delayed wage payments, or to lose work entirely. This has also led to children dropping out of education in order to support their families, either by caring for younger siblings or working themselves**. Furthermore, it has prevented the majority of migrant students’ parents from being able to support their MLCs financially through yearly or monthly fees.

It has been vital, therefore, to ensure that migrant children continue to have access to education, and face-to-face time with their teachers and classmates, to keep them learning, engaged, and safe. These needs led to the initial course of “Home-Based Learning”, which was first delivered by MLC teachers in June 2020.

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** Sasaki, M. & Tyrosvoutis, G. (2020). Education Reimagined. Covid-19 Emergency Response for Migrant Education. TeacherFOCUS. Available at: https://0e20422b-7659-4a4c-90c2-4dc514d5f944.filesusr.com/ugd/033e38_9b75a4afe8da4640aceb1a4d629c7752.pdf?index=true
WHAT IS HOME-BASED LEARNING?

Migrant students tend to live in areas close to their Migrant Learning Center (MLC). When the Migrant Learning Centres (MLCs) were closed at the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year, teachers began to travel between those areas and conduct classes in the nearby migrant communities. The lessons took place in any safe location that was available. Teachers travelled to communities on a daily basis, either by motorbike or by the school car, to ensure that their students continued to learn while the MLCs were closed.
HOW DOES HOME-BASED LEARNING DIFFER FROM SCHOOL?

The primary thing to consider when transitioning from school-based to home-based learning is that the students will have less contact time with their teachers. Teachers will need to create new schedules and weekly plans, not only to coordinate teaching times amongst teachers for different grades, but also to establish how much of the curriculum can be covered within this home-based learning period, and which subjects and topics will be focused on. If Home-Based Learning will be required for a significant portion of the academic year, schools should establish a minimum amount of the curriculum that they wish to cover, and aim to complete that amount within the academic year. The end-of-year exam or tests can then be based on that minimum.

Some key areas that will need additional support at the onset of Home-Based Learning include transportation and communication. With teachers travelling to students' communities daily, they will incur more transportation costs. More support for communication costs - such as phone calls and internet data fees - will also be needed to help teachers to coordinate the Home-Based Learning with each other and with parents.

Schools and the organisations supporting the schools will also need to assess what training can be given to teachers to support their delivery of Home-Based Learning. If other schools or organisation partners (for example, mother organisations, donors, or other network groups) have experience with Home-Based Learning techniques, they can be contacted to provide training or share experiences. Other training related to the specific context should also be sought - for example, MLC teachers under Help Without Frontiers Thailand Foundation (HwF) also received training on COVID-19 prevention, which included the need to measure and record student and teacher temperatures regularly, and how to wash hands and wear masks properly. Training should also be provided on any technology being used to support Home-Based Learning - for example how to set up and use portable WiFi devices.

The following sections will outline how to plan, prepare and deliver Home-Based Learning.
1. **Assess Student Mapping** – determine which students live in which communities.

2. **Find Safe Suitable Home-Based Learning Locations.**

3. **Schedule Teaching Sessions** – plan the schedule by calculating the time required for each class in each community.

4. **Budget for Materials and Transportation** – assess the budget needs for Home-Based Learning, how much is available and how much is still needed (conduct fundraising if required).

5. **Coordinate with Parents** - alert parents of the changing situation and regulations, explaining why the school is closed and how Home-Based Learning will be conducted.

6. **Acquire Permissions** – speak directly with local leaders, as well as district/national authorities in relevant ministries to alert them of the plans and to follow necessary regulations.

7. **Prepare Materials** – in addition to preparing lesson plans and selecting/designing related learning materials that align with education objectives and suit learners’ demand, also ensure that the identified locations are equipped with mats, whiteboards, and other needed materials.

8. **Deliver Home-Based Learning** – start the classes in the communities.

9. **Monitoring** - ongoing checks of student learning and attendance, local regulations, and mental health
HBL ENSURES MIGRANT CHILDREN CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THE QUALITY EDUCATION THEY DESERVE
HBL Procedure

**ASSESS**
1. Assess Student Mapping – determine which students live in which communities
2. Find Safe Suitable Home-Based Learning Locations
3. Schedule Teaching Sessions – plan the schedule by calculating the time required for each class in each community

**BUDGET**
4. Budget for Materials and Transportation – assess the budget needs for Home-Based Learning, how much is available and how much is still needed (conduct fundraising if required)

**COORDINATE**
5. Coordinate with Parents – alert parents of the changing situation and regulations, explaining why the school is closed and how Home-Based Learning will be conducted
6. Acquire Permissions – speak directly with local leaders, as well as district/national authorities in relevant ministries to alert them of the plans and to follow necessary regulations

**PREPARE**
7. Prepare Materials – in addition to preparing lesson plans and related learning materials, also ensure that the identified locations are equipped with mats, whiteboards, and other needed materials

**DELIVER & MONITORING**
8. Deliver Home-Based Learning – start the classes in the communities
9. Monitoring – ongoing checks of student learning and attendance, local regulations, and mental health
STUDENT MAPPING

Teachers should know how many students they have, and in which communities the students live. It is helpful to start with this student mapping from the beginning of the school year. This way, if home-based learning becomes a necessity, teachers will be able to effectively plan and coordinate the home-based learning classes by community at short notice.
Home-based learning should be conducted in a place that is safe and appropriate for the students. Examples from home-based learning in Tak Province included monasteries, football fields, school playgrounds, community spaces, and students' homes. At the start of the year, when the regional weather was dry, some classes were held outside, under the shade of a tree.

Some things to consider when finding a location for home-based learning:

- Research your proposed area first, to make sure it is appropriate
- Avoid conducting classes close to busy roads or intersections
- Stay away from areas that have a reputation for drug or alcohol use
- Make sure to speak to local authorities (for example, village head) first to get their permission, and to learn about any related regulations that have to be followed (for example in the COVID-19 context: social distancing, wearing a mask, hand washing, etc.)
- Avoid busy and noisy areas, for example, close to factories
- Ensure that the teaching area is hygienic, and has access to working toilets
- Try to find a location where students won't be distracted
CHILD PROTECTION

Schools are supposed to be safe places for students. When schools are closed, children are spending more time in their homes and around their home communities. This increases the risks of children becoming involved in harmful activities, such as gambling or drug use, as well as the risk of facing child abuse.

Teachers conducting home-based learning should take extra care to observe their students. Teachers should look out for common signs of child abuse, such as changes in behaviour, withdrawal from friends, and unusual bruising or other physical signs.

Schools should also be observant concerning the other people local to the home-based learning location. Students should be watched over and monitored during their home-based learning class, and care should be taken to observe other people in the area, whether community members or external visitors. As with regular situations when schools are open, any suspected child protection issues should be reported as soon as possible to the relevant parent organisation or child protection expert.
Parent engagement in their children’s education is critically important, especially when schools are closed. As this method of teaching takes place in and around the students’ homes, it is a good idea to include the students’ parents in the learning where possible. Often parents want to join or observe home-based learning sessions, and encouraging them to do so will help parents to understand the lessons and enable them to support their children with homework afterwards.

Schools and partner organisations should take initial steps to inform parents of the need to conduct home-based learning, helping them to understand the current situation and why home-based learning is important.

In addition, parents should be encouraged to support home-based learning through home life. This can include maintaining a consistent routine for children, that both accounts for lesson time and keeps children active and learning when not in class; promoting positive discipline, which respects the rights of the child and doesn’t resort to any abuse of those rights (HwF conducts positive discipline training for parents and teachers as a separate parallel activity); and supporting children with their out-of-class learning, whether by helping them with their homework, encouraging learning through play or independent study, or by any other means.

Schools and teachers should be aware that some students might be shy to participate if their parents are nearby or observing the lesson.
NO MATTER THE LOCATION, HBL ENABLE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN FEEL SAFE AND CARED FOR
COST & RESOURCES REQUIRED

Many of the standard materials required for Home-Based Learning are the same as those needed for learning in school – for example, basic stationery needs such as pens, pencils, and notebooks.

Additional materials can also help to facilitate the delivery of Home-Based Learning. In emergency situations that require Home-Based Learning, schools or a school’s umbrella organisation may be able to receive these materials through emergency support. If not, schools may have to budget for these materials themselves if possible.

Some examples of useful resources for Home-Based Learning include:

- **Floor Mats**: as the locations of Home-Based Learning can vary, floor mats can be a useful item to have for students to sit on during their class, allowing them to sit indoors or outdoors and keep their clothes clean.

- **Whiteboards**: whiteboards are very useful teaching tools. Having a whiteboard at the home-based learning site – as well as whiteboard pens and duster – can help the teacher to deliver their lesson in more effective and engaging ways.

- **Portable Shelters**: for classes that take place outside, a portable (fold-up) shelter can provide shade for a small group of students as they study. For the home-based learning in Tak Province during the COVID-19 pandemic, these shelters have also been used as COVID-19 screening areas, where people can register their names and check their temperature.

- **Portable WiFi Devices**: access to a strong and stable internet connection can be difficult to find in many migrant or low-income communities. Having a portable hotspot device – equipped with a prepaid sim card – allows teachers to access the internet from their personal device wherever they go. This can be used to access educational videos, music, or other online resources that can support home-based learning.

- **Portable mini-speakers** are another useful item that can be used in conjunction with the WiFi Devices.
A4 Paper / Printing Costs: as Home-Based Learning cannot reach every student every day, it is a good idea to produce additional educational materials to supplement home-based learning classes. Creating homework sheets can help students to learn, and can keep them engaged with their education during the days when they are not in contact with their teacher. A4 paper is a regular need for the printing of these worksheets.

Transportation Costs: Home-Based Learning requires a greater amount of travel compared to learning that takes place at the school, for which a bus can pick up students and bring them to and from the school site on a daily basis. For Home-Based Learning, multiple teachers have to visit many communities each day, increasing the costs associated with transportation. This has been a big need in the Home-Based Learning for MLCs around Tak Province.

Communication Costs: Home-Based Learning requires a lot of coordination - between teachers, between teachers and parents, between schools and village authorities, and between organisations. Maintaining close communication ensures that Home-Based Learning runs smoothly and effectively, and that any challenges or barriers that arise can be addressed quickly. Teachers will need to keep their phones and data services topped-up so that they can communicate efficiently.
COSTING EXAMPLE

Student Number: 150  
Teacher Number: 7  
Number of Communities: 6  
Duration: 10 months (academic year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Unit Number</th>
<th>Unit Cost (THB)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Cost (THB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shelter (3x3 metre)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor Mat</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard Pen</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard Eraser</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WiFi Device</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Package (pre-paid sim)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4 Paper</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Stationery (pens, pencils, notebooks)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>120,470</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Doesn't include basic school costs such as teacher salaries and building rent costs.
Home-based learning is not an easy undertaking, and there are many challenges involved. Identifying these potential challenges at the beginning of the process can help schools to manage those challenges and reduce the potential risks. Some of the main challenges are:

**Teacher Stress** – it should not be underestimated how much time and energy it takes to conduct home-based learning. In order to reach every student at least once per week, teachers need to travel to multiple communities every day. A sustained need for home-based learning can impact the energy levels, stress and mental health of teachers – especially as home-based learning will likely be used in the case of an emergency or disaster situation. Care should be taken to make teachers aware of the available channels for support should they need it.

**Time Constraints** – as home-based learning takes more time due to teachers having to travel to different communities, there is less time for actual teaching. Students may only have one or two home-based learning classes each week. If the home-based learning approach is implemented for a long time, teachers will only be able to cover a limited amount of the curriculum within the academic year. Teachers should devise lesson plans and schedules in as much detail as possible, targeting a specific basic minimum of the curriculum that can be covered within the year. Other schools and organisations within the network should try to collectively agree on this minimum target, to support accreditation efforts at the end of the year.

**Multi-Age Learning** - students of the same grade or class do not necessarily live in the same village or community. As a result, it can be the case that teachers visiting a community to deliver home-based learning end up having to teach a group of students of different ages or grade levels in one class.
Environmental Factors – in addition to challenges in finding a suitable location, there are also other environmental factors to consider. In a place like Thailand, the rainy season can present a major obstacle for home-based learning. Heavy rainfall can be a daily occurrence for weeks at a time. In those particular months, new locations may need to be sourced for classes in communities.

Community Participation - it is important to include community members and local leadership when planning to conduct teaching in community spaces. Village heads should be consulted for permission prior to the delivery of classes, and community members in general should be made aware of the situation and made to feel included. This can be a big challenge for schools who do not already have a strong relationship with the wider community in which they usually operate. A big lesson learned from the home-based learning experience in Tak Province has been that community relations need to be made early and maintained - not only to facilitate strong relationships in general, but also to lay the groundwork for cooperation during emergency situations.

Psychological Impact on Students - school can be a challenging time for children at the best of times; in emergency contexts, the worries and stress associated with attending school can multiply. Children have to stay apart from their friends and classmates; their contact time with their teachers is reduced; and learning becomes more difficult. Teachers delivering home-based learning must take extra care to monitor the well-being of their students, and to follow up on any apparent or suspected issues.
During the second and third waves of COVID-19 in Tak Province, home-based learning could not be conducted due to additional restrictions on movement between communities. During these times, MLCs had to opt for other teaching methods in order to continue to reach their students - including online classes and printed worksheets. Later, as the COVID-19 situation began to improve, MLCs prepared for partial reopening, which would involve socially-distant learning in MLCs.

There are a variety of additional methods to support student learning - each have their own advantages and disadvantages as outlined in the table below. Be sure to carefully consider which method of learning is most appropriate for your students and your situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching and Learning Method</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Socially Distant Teaching at School (Rotating Schedule) | • More face-to-face time with students  
• Checking students temperatures and health regularly  
• Students get to be with more of their friends | • Only a limited number of students per day  
• Often teachers prepare both in-class and additional homework for students which takes time |
| Home-Based Learning                                  | • Fairly good contact time with students  
• High parent engagement                                              | • Challenges for teachers to enter some communities  
• Weather impacts accessibility (raining, too hot, lots of mosquitoes)  
• Stressful for teachers  
• Some students are absent or difficult to locate                     |
| Online Teaching                                      | • No risk of COVID-19 transmission  
• Not restricted by weather or health policies                       | • Not suitable for younger children  
• Lack of devices and connectivity  
• Challenging to engage students                                       |
| Paper Homework Distribution                          | • Example materials have been created in the previous year  
• Supplements other teaching/learning methods                          | • Time consuming and expensive to prepare materials  
• Most parents are unable to help children with their homework          |

Some MLCs also implement a mix of different models at the same time to have the biggest impact - for example, a rotating schedule of distance learning at school could be supported with some online classes in the evenings; or Home-Based Learning could be supplemented with printed worksheets for homework.
Monitoring the progress of home-based learning can improve the delivery and the process, find avenues for cooperation, and help to overcome the challenges associated with home-based learning.

Here are some of the things that should be monitored:

**Student attendance:** make sure to monitor student attendance at home-based learning, and to follow up on any regular or prolonged absences, bearing in mind the possibilities of child protection issues some children may be facing at home.

**Student learning:** although these situations are more challenging for teaching and learning, try to monitor the learning levels of the students to ensure that alternative education methods are having an impact. Assigning homework and marking this on a weekly basis is a good way to continually monitor the student’s understanding of the topics being taught. Quizzes and informal tests in class can also be used. More traditional methods of research could also be employed, such as interviews, Q&A sessions, and group discussions. Parents can also be asked to participate in evaluating student development. At the end of the year, give the students an exam that is based on the topics that have been taught throughout the year, if the whole curriculum could not be covered.

**Mental health of teachers:** there should be regular check-ins with the schools and the staff delivering home-based learning. In the case of Tak, we had monthly meetings with our MLCs’ headmasters, to receive an update from each school about their progress and challenges. During times of lockdown when alternatives to home-based learning had to be used, we had these meetings on a weekly basis.

**Local situation and changing regulations:** during emergency situations, rules and regulations can change quickly. This can include restrictions on movement or activities. In the case of education delivery, these regulations and the wider situation need to be monitored, and schools need to be updated of any changes that occur.
Something that helped MLCs, CBOs and NGOs and organisations to make Home-Based Learning a success in Tak Province in the 2020-21 academic year was the ongoing collaboration between MLCs and education partners throughout the year. Education organisations and the mother organisations of MLCs met on a monthly basis, to review successes and challenges from the previous month and to find ways to work together on overcoming those challenges.

Working together and supporting each other in emergency situations helped us to ensure that all students continued to have the opportunity to learn. We shared data, information and ideas, organised training workshops together, and made suggestions to improve the Home-Based Learning process. In doing so, we shared our responsibilities and successes.

In times of crisis it is important not to try to do everything alone, but to reach out to friends and partners who can help. Through cooperation, a daunting task such as Home-Based Learning can become more manageable and more successful.