Committee: Junior UNICEF

State: Japan

Agenda: Impact of Covid-19 on children

Pandemics are events that we have faced for a long time and we know that it has a huge impact. As you know, we have been facing Covid-19 since 2019. Coronavirus disease puts everyone, especially children, at risk such as stress and uncertainty as well as emotional deprivation and unsociability.

All children have had those feelings in different ways. With the closing of schools and cancellation of events they were separated from their friends. In this process, children needed support more than ever they had had before.

The global study reveals the hidden impacts of pandemic which are affecting children’s health, nutrition, education, learning, protection, wellbeing, family finances and poverty. For deprived children, those impacts have been life-altering and devastating.

Globally, more than 8 to10 children felt that they were learning little or nothing at all, and two thirds of parents reported their child had received no contact from teachers since their schools closed. Three-quarters of households lost income as a result of COVID-19, and the vast majority of households (96%) were reported having trouble in paying for an essential item or service. Four in five struggled to pay for food and two in five households found it difficult to provide their families with a nutritious diet. Most parents and (89%) reported that their access to healthcare, medicine or medical supplies had been affected.

 The results also show a significant impact on the psycho-social wellbeing of children. More than 8 in 10 children reported an increase in negative feelings. One third of households had a child reporting violence in the home. Children reported that violence was higher when schools were closed, compared to when they were attending in person.

The poorest households, households with disabilities, female headed-households and girls, are the hardest hit. The recommendations guided by views & voices of children provide guidance on the next steps needed to build back better for a post COVID-19 future which respects, protects and fulfils the rights of all children, in all contexts.

As Japan, we have donated an additional $10 million to UNICEF to support COVID-19 vaccination in Latin America and the Caribbean. The support of the Government of Japan has made a significant contribution to UNICEF's work which has played a key role in ensuring vaccination efforts in the region.

Also, The Japan National Centre for Child Health and Development conducted a survey on how children are affected by COVID-19. About 40% of primary, secondary and high school students answered “Yes” when asked if they wanted to go to school. When asked more about their mental state, the most common response was that they “feel bad when they think about COVID-19,” with around 40%.

During the pandemic, more classes were held online across Japan. When children were asked how they would feel if their lessons were online, the most popular response, 32%, said they would be "a little bit happy". Other common responses are “somewhat unhappy” (24%), “very happy” (21%), “very dissatisfied” (15%), indicating a mostly positive attitude towards online courses.

We have already established the *Covid-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan* for developing countries to help revitalise economic activities. We could make a similar project based on creating children’s protection of health and their continuous education in those areas with the coalition of UN countries.