



# NEWS FLASH

## ARNEC crafts response strategy to COVID-19; amplifies ECD learning, advocacy for young children, families during pandemic



After issuing a statement on the pandemic and how it affects young children and their families (see next page), ARNEC immediately developed a response strategy containing priority measures raising the role of ECD and targeting the needs of young children and their families and caregivers in the Asia-Pacific region.

This ARNEC document was triggered by the adverse impacts of the pandemic on young children, as a result of governments' mitigation

**The ARNEC Response Strategy is available in the ARNEC website:**  
[https://arnek.net/static/uploads/Web\\_ARNEC%20COVID-19%20Response%20Strategy\\_final%20version\\_1May2020.pdf](https://arnek.net/static/uploads/Web_ARNEC%20COVID-19%20Response%20Strategy_final%20version_1May2020.pdf)

measures to contain the geographic spread of the COVID-19 virus, particularly closure of pre-schools, ECD centres, and schools, and imposing the stay-at-home policy. The same document prioritises urgent learning and advocacy measures to promote the social-emotional well-being of young children and their families.

Among the ARNEC strategies include holding regular webinars for the ECD community and initiating a survey generating the perspectives of the ECD community in the region on the state of young children and status of ECD in their respective countries. Both are nearing completion, findings of which will be shared in the ARNEC website soon.

The ARNEC COVID-19 response strategies have given emphasis to the priority needs of young children living with poor families and migrant workers, as well as those who might be excluded on the basis of gender, ethnicity, location, language, and/or faith, among others.

**“The COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented and its impact is far-reaching and long-term.”**

**-ARNEC RESPONSE STRATEGY**

The infographic is divided into two main sections. The left section, titled 'COVID-19 Response Strategy', lists four key actions in numbered dark green boxes: 1. Raise awareness, 2. Improve advocacy, 3. Facilitate learning, and 4. Share learning resources. The right section, titled 'COVID-19 is a real emergency', states that lives of young children are disrupted. It features a large red '1.5B' representing 1.5 billion children out of school or 87% according to UNESCO. Below this, it states '180 COUNTRIES with SCHOOL CLOSURES for weeks or months'. A photo of a child's face is shown with the text 'Disparity, exclusion and inequity to increase'. At the bottom, it states 'COVID-19 will have long-term and far-reaching impact on vulnerable, disadvantage families and children.' The ARNEC logo is at the bottom left, and the photo source is cited as UNICEF, n.d.

## ARNEC on pandemic: protection, well-being of young children first

**ARNEC has issued a statement in March 2020 calling on multi-sectoral effort amplifying critical role of ECD in responding to COVID-19; excerpts below**

ARNEC stands for the protection and wellbeing of young children and their families and communities, as governments work with all sectors of society to contain the spread of COVID-19 in countries in the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world.

ARNEC strongly supports multi-sectoral and whole-of-society measures to halt the geographical spread of the COVID-19 virus and to address unintentional impacts on young children, such as school closures, pressures on national and local health systems, squeeze on public and private investments, and financial and economic downtrend.

ARNEC is concerned on the overall burden placed on the family, especially the poor, as a result of prolonged days of non-work, the concomitant effects on household incomes, plus the adjustment measures it has to make in the face of a looming global slowdown.

ARNEC is in solidarity with partners to cushion adverse impacts, especially on young children. Full statement can be downloaded from <https://mailchi.mp/arnececdandcovid-19>.

## ARNEC webinars rated highest in importance, usefulness, learning

ARNEC has completed seven webinars since it launched its first on young children amidst COVID-19 on 13 April 2020. Two more webinars are being programmed before ARNEC wraps up the webinar series.

The seven webinars were conducted weekly featuring a key speaker, in addition to 2-3 practitioners sharing country-level ECD practices and showcasing diverse context-specific responses to the pandemic.

The webinar topics covered (1) practical ECD strategies for vulnerable young children and families; (2) caring for parents and caregivers; (3) young children coping with stress, anxiety and fear; (4) distance learning approaches; (5) security and safety of young children during and



**ARNEC**  
Asia-Pacific Regional Network  
for Early Childhood

### In case you missed it

Listen to presenters or download the presentations from the ARNEC website.

ARNEC Webinar No. 4. Series on young children amidst COVID-19  
**Distance learning approaches for young children**

 Vaniita Kaul  
Ambedkar University  
Delhi
  Baeela Raza Jamil  
Pakistan
  Alice Wong  
HK, China
  Psyche Vetta Olayvar  
Philippines
  Jyoti Dhingra  
Moderator



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ARNEC Webinar No. 6. Series on young children amidst COVID-19  
**Exploring the power of play in building the resilience of young children and their families at home**

 Jill Popp, The LEGO  
Foundation
  Caroline Essame  
Singapore
  Samyukta  
Subramanian  
India
  Marlene Floresca  
Philippines
  Phuong Thi  
Mai Nguyen  
Viet Nam
  Meenakshi Dogra  
Moderator

**Webinar 4 had the highest attendance with 437 participants in the region and beyond. Both webinars 4 and 6 received the highest ratings from attendees in terms of importance, usefulness, and learning.**

beyond the pandemic; (6) power of play in building the resilience of young children and their families; and (7) ECD workforce matters. All webinars had post-activity evaluation by participants and panelists. The seven webinars were rated highest on importance, usefulness, and learning. For copies of presentations or webinar recording, visit the ARNEC website.

## Shaeffer: Post-COVID world will never be the same?

The insights of Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer is featured in ARNEC Conversations available in <https://arnecc.net/highlight-details?id=57>

Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer, Chair of the ARNEC Board of Directors, mulls on the impacts of COVID-19 on a world that was once confident of its trajectory

to sustainable development and is now facing the prospect of a regression of development achievements back to a decade or more. What now after COVID 19?

ARNEC has featured Dr. Shaeffer's perspectives on the promises and challenges of development facing the world's young children and their families post-COVID-19, especially those who will bear the most adverse effects of the pandemic, on account of poverty, disability, gender, social circumstance, and/or ethnic and religious affiliation.

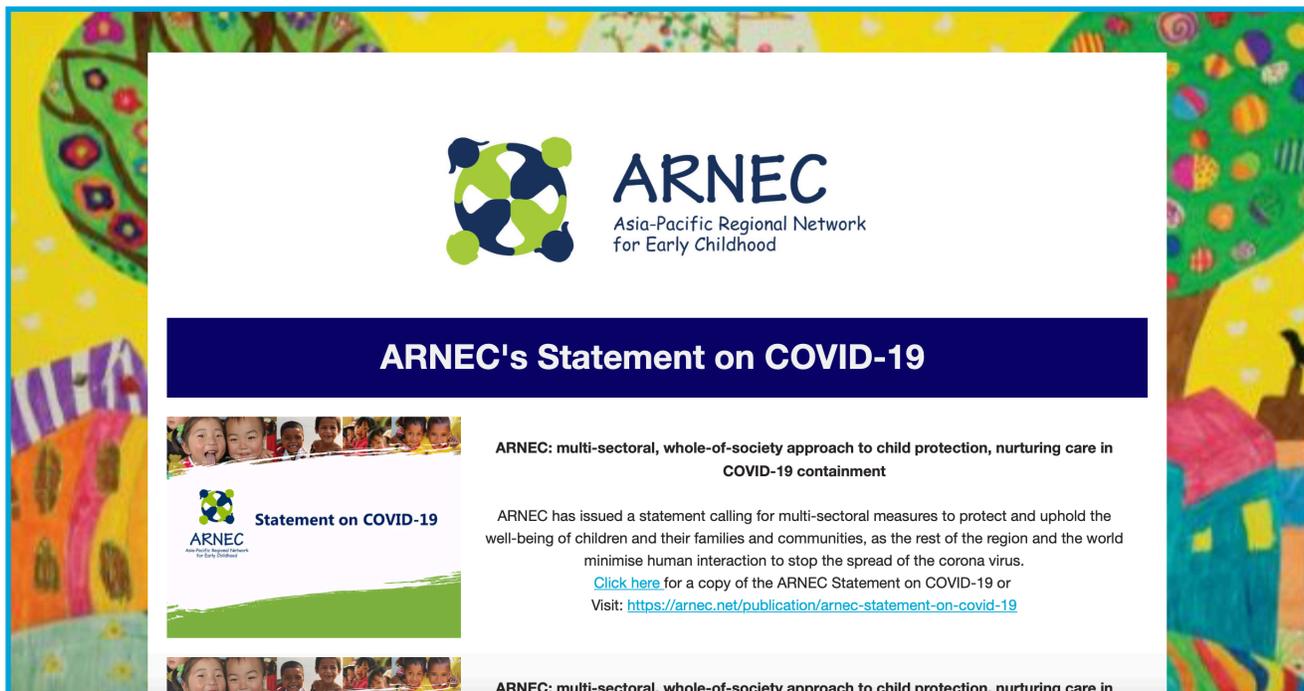
His article is part of ARNEC Conversations, an initiative to bring together the ECD community in a meaningful exchange of views on issues and concerns affecting early childhood development in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

## COVID-19-specific ECD learning resources up

ARNEC has continued providing a knowledge platform for COVID-19-related learning resources developed by partners at the height of the pandemic. Curating ECD-specific resources and making these available through the ARNEC website and social media recognises the important contributions and expertise of partner organisations and maximises opportunities for sharing to



the ECD community and networks in the region. Among those in the ARNEC website are parenting tips, caregiving resources, play-based approaches, well-being and mental health, and child protection measures, among others.



The COVID-19 and ECD resources are available in the ARNEC website: <https://mailchi.mp/arnek/ecdandcovid-19>.

## Chencho Wangdi: NatRep up close and personal



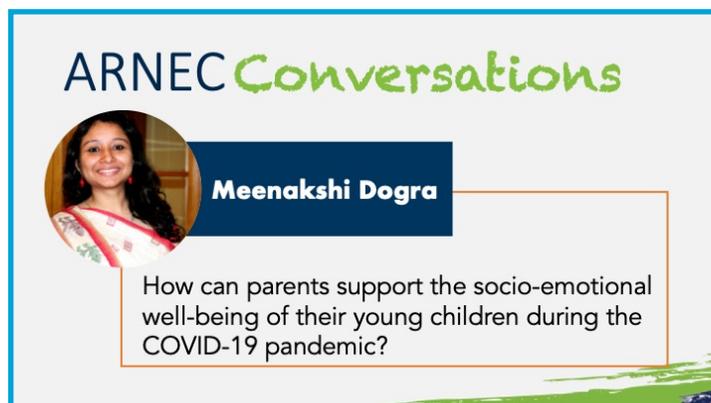
**Chencho Wangdi, Bhutan**

Mr. Chencho Wangdi is a programme manager at the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bhutan. He looks after the Early Childhood Care and Development programme in the country. Mr. Chencho took an active role in scaling up the ECCD programme for the children age 3 to 5 years old in all districts and municipalities in Bhutan.

Along with strengthening the access to the ECCD programme access, he is instrumental in putting in place an effective monitoring mechanism to maintain the quality of the programme. Prior to his current post, he was a Human Resource Officer for the Ministry of Education until 2012. He joined Government Service in 2001 after

completing his studies in the field of education. He is currently serving ARNEC as a National Representative of Bhutan.

## Dogra on ARNEC Conversations: how can parents support the social-emotional well-being of young children during the COVID-19 pandemic?



Meenakshi Dogra, one of the National Representatives for India, shares some practical strategies to help parents support the well-being of young children at the height of the pandemic and beyond.

ARNEC features Meenakshi's insights on how adults in the home, particularly parents and caregivers, may miss out on how young children are sensitive to the changes and disruptions in the surroundings, including in the home, as a result of the pandemic.

To protect the young children at home and ensure their physical, emotional, and social well-being, Meenakshi provides meaningful practices for parents and caregivers to engage with their children, Meenakshi Dogra is an Early Childhood Education professional, who has worked on ECD research within and outside India. Meenakshi's article can be downloaded here: <https://arnec.net/highlight-details?id=58>.



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