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| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A group of people sitting in front of a building  Description automatically generated | | *Online school during the Covid pandemic* | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | We start with some prayer points from one of the NGO’s that our church, All Saints Beirut, supports.  They work with one of the poorest communities in Beirut providing education, medical services and employment opportunities.  Their prayer requests in fact capture many of the issues facing nearly everyone in Lebanon, to one degree or another.   * Please pray for our education staff who are daily online with the children through WhatsApp.  These 4 hours per day have allowed for learning to happen as well as it helping to keep in contact with the families and 82% of the children.  However, our children are struggling with poor connection, no electricity, 1 phone per family or no phone at all.  Our staff are great providing art, music, craft and theatre as well as Arabic, English, maths and sciences online. * For the leadership team for wisdom as we try to ensure full salaries to all our over 70 staff. * Pray for good communication with donors and stakeholders. * For our already vulnerable community. They are struggling more and more [and] some families are going hungry. We have been giving to over 400 families’ cash assistance or food vouchers while some are threatened to be evicted as they cannot pay rent.   Meanwhile, after many false promises, those who are better off financially are beginning to realize how their standard of living will decline as the country comes to terms with decades of economic mismanagement. | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A group of people standing in a room  Description automatically generated | | *Briefing for SKILD staff by our CEO – with social distancing!* |  |  | | --- | | A person sitting on a chair in a room  Description automatically generated | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Amongst the uncertainty, the one clear message from the LSESD leadership is much the same - that things will have to change. Although Colin has continued almost full time throughout the current and recent crises, my colleagues and I at SKILD have spent much of the period working only part time as schools have been disrupted or closed.  The key word is flexibility as the lockdown directives change from week to week.  At one-point, schools were to open at the beginning of June but now exams are cancelled and schools will remain closed until September. I have to say I am sad, as I miss contact with my students but I totally understand the rationale behind it.  We wonder what will happen then.  Seventy percent of schools here are private and now many parents cannot afford to pay the fees.  Will they opt for state schools, and will there be enough places?    Currently, at SKILD we are producing a library of short videos for parents to use with children who have disabilities.  These will be available free online.  I have been helping write some of the scripts but – thankfully! – do not have to appear in the videos.  We have also been producing some training materials for teachers on a Child’s Rights Based Approach to teaching. | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A person standing in front of a television screen  Description automatically generated | | SKILD also recently celebrated the 8th awareness raising ‘National Day’ for inclusive education.  Rather than actual events across the country this year, SKILD, together with a number of partners including the British Council, held an online conference “Inclusion in times of distance learning”.  Participants included the Minister of Education and Higher Education and the UK Ambassador to Lebanon, Chris Rampling MBE (bottom left).  Over 900 participants, from various countries, joined via Zoom. Incredibly, there were no problems with internet or electricity – a rarity in Lebanon.  We pray it will help promote inclusive education across the region. | | | |