The Launch of Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 2019 Results

1-2 December 2020

Concept Note

Background

Primary school learning outcomes are critical to individual children's development and national social and economic goals. The foundational skills, particularly reading and mathematics, that are learned in the primary school years lay the foundations for later learning. Without solid and continuous high-quality learning outcomes in the primary school years, children's skills development, engagement and potential to contribute meaningfully to society is put at risk. Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and regional education frameworks, such as those of SEAMEO and ASEAN, call for countries to enhance learning in early years and basic education, with a focus on 21st century skills development.

Recognising the importance of monitoring primary learning outcomes to inform policy-making and ensure all children achieve meaningful learning, UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) have been jointly developing Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) since 2014. SEA-PLM assesses learning proficiencies of grade 5 children[1] in mathematics, reading and writing literacy. In addition, SEA-PLM monitors the value and engagement of children and teachers related to Global Citizenship education. To shed light on factors affecting learning performance and equity, key contextual data on children, parents, teachers and school principals is explored. SEA-PLM data offers new reliable regional proficiency scales to monitor and report on SDG target 4.1 on "relevant and effective learning outcomes" by the end of primary in Southeast Asia.

The key objective of SEA-PLM is to support participating countries to develop robust learning assessment systems, enabling them to monitor primary learning outcomes, thereby contributing to a more equitable and quality education for all. SEA-PLM promotes better learning and equity outcomes for all children and schools by providing meaningful evidence to support the development of policies, practices and research to improve basic education. To promote evidence-based policy development in Southeast Asia, SEA-PLM assessment results can be used to inform the Ministries of Education of SEA-PLM participating countries on the status of national basic education considering regional and international milestones. Understanding factors driving and hindering primary learning is crucial for further shaping related policies such as curriculum design, teaching pedagogy, and school practices.

Six Southeast Asian countries including Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Vietnam participated in the first round of SEA-PLM – SEA-PLM 2019 – addressed in reference to the year of implementing the main survey. SEA-PLM 2019 instruments have been developed with an emphasis on the regional context and curriculum of eleven SEAMEO Member Countries. All

[1] SEA-PLM 2019 assessment data was collected from a national representative sample of the children enrolled in grade 5 in each SEA-PLM participating country. Children in grade 5 are targeted as this level marks the completion of primary education in some ASEAN countries, providing a meaningful point of measurement across the region.

countries in the region and partners were regularly invited to share experiences and design the scope of SEA-PLM assessment. Developing have also taken into consideration of international learning assessment standards and practices with technical support by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and international experts. In addition to the report on learning proficiencies, SEA-PLM 2019 constitutes a baseline for further research on children's learning before the COVID-19 pandemic.

From methodological development, pilot-testing, main survey implementation and data analysis, the SEA-PLM programme is now reaching a significant milestone of officially reporting and disseminating the results of SEA-PLM 2019 on 1 and 2 December 2020. The official launch of SEA-PLM 2019 results serves as an entry point to inform policy makers and practitioners to further develop basic education policy for improving primary learning outcomes. This event marks the beginning of more research, results dissemination and capacity building in 2021 at the regional level and national level of SEA-PLM participating countries. Designed to deliver the comparative data of national systems level through cyclic rounds of surveys to estimate proficiency and equity progress in basic education, SEA-PLM 2019, the second round of SEA-PLM is underway and will be further introduced. More information about SEA-PLM is accessible from SEA-PLM website at www.seaplm.org.

Objectives

This two-half-day event aims to publicly launch the Regional Report on Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 2019 Results and discuss the implications of SEA-PLM 2019 results on policies, practices and research. Key stakeholders will be informed on SEA-PLM 2019 products and next round of SEA-PLM assessment. Experts will be invited to participate in a policy discussion on implications of SEA-PLM 2019 results and research collaboration.

Format

The launch event will be organised using a blended approach integrating online and in-person conference components. Participants who are based in Bangkok and representatives of SEA-PLM national teams will be invited to join the event in-person. Due to travel restrictions, international participants can participate the meeting using the video conferencing platform. A provisional programme at a glance of this event is provided below. A final programme and a meeting link will be sent to all registered participants in due course.

Participation

Expected participants at the meeting are the Ministers, High Officials, and national representatives from SEA-PLM 2019 Core Member Countries; High Officials and national representatives from Honorary Member Countries; SEA-PLM Technical Advisory Group; representatives of SEA-PLM National Teams; UNICEF Country Office representatives from SEA-PLM participating countries; Ambassador and/or representatives from the Embassy of SEA-PLM Core Member Countries in Bangkok; representatives from SEAMEO Centres; representatives from SEAMEO Associate Member Countries; representatives from SEAMEO Affiliate Members; partners; experts; and media.

Contact

For further information on the official launch of SEA-PLM 2019 results, kindly contact the SEA-PLM Secretariat at seaplm@seameo.org and/or Dr Salita Soongsawang at salita@seameo.org.

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Provisional Programme at a Glance

As of 1 November 2020

Day 1: Official Launch of SEA-PLM 2019 Results
Tuesday 1 December 2020 at 09.00-12.00hrs. (GMT+7: Bangkok Time)
Carlton Hotel Bangkok Sukhumvit, Thailand, and Zoom Platform

TIME	SESSION
08.30 – 09.00	Registration
OFFICIAL LAUNCH (Ballroom 2)	
09.00 – 09.15	Welcome remarks
09.15 – 09.20	SEA-PLM introduction: History, achievements and contributions
09.20 – 09.30	Official launch of the SEA-PLM 2019 report and photo session
09.30 – 10.00	Key regional trends and policy implications from SEA-PLM 2019 results
10.00 – 10.45	Ministerial messages on SEA-PLM 2019 national results and policy responses
10.45 – 11.00	Coffee Break
11.00 – 11.35	Expert and partner messages: Implications of SEA-PLM 2019 results for policies, practices and research
11.35 – 11.45	Next steps: Upcoming activities and next SEA-PLM round announcement
11.45 – 12.00	Closing remarks
PRESS CONFERENCE (VIP Room)	
12.00 – 12.30	Press conference and interviews
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch

Day 2: Policy Discussion on SEA-PLM 2019 Results
Wednesday 2 December 2020 at 09.00-12.00hrs. (GMT+7: Bangkok Time)
5th Floor Conference Room, SEAMEO Secretariat, Thailand, and Zoom Platform

TIME	SESSION
09.00 – 09.15	Welcome remarks and photo session
09.15 – 10.00	SEA-PLM 2019 results in focus: Quality learning and equity outcomes
10.00 – 10.30	Insights from SEA-PLM partners
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee Break
10.45 – 11.45	Turning results into actions: Round table comments and reflections
11.45 – 12.00	Closing remarks