



SEAMEO Journal 2020:

Special Issue on *Maximising Learning: Education Responses during COVID-19 Crisis and Beyond*

CONCEPT NOTE

As of 31 August 2020

A. Background

COVID-19 has changed the educational landscape globally. At present, 1.7 Billion learners all over the world have been impacted by school closures¹, and remote learning has been a lifeline for learning. With lockdowns, enhanced quarantine measures, and school closures, everyone is affected, and concerns are mounting up on the unintended effects of school closures to learning in every level. To uphold the access and quality of education in this unprecedented time, education stakeholders ranging from the Ministers of Education to school teachers have put forward many innovative policies and alternative ways for teaching and learning, including new education platforms. In Southeast Asia alone, about 247 Million learners are hunkering down and attending online/flexible learning options in varying degrees from their own homes, in compliance with strict social distancing protocols and instructions from the various government to stay home.

As the pandemic is still on-going and has created such a “New Normal” ways of life, all the education stakeholders must evolve and support each other to adapt to the situation. In correspondence to Priority Area No. 2 “Addressing Barriers to Inclusion” and Priority Area No.3 “Disaster Risk Management” of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), it is essential for SEAMEO to take action and publish the best practice responses and innovation to enhance access to education and mitigate the impacts of the pandemic in education toward students and teachers from Member Countries.

One of the responses that SEAMEO has initiated during the pandemic is SEAMEO Ministerial Policy e-Forum on COVID-19 Response on 18 June 2020 to broadcast the policies and responses of Ministries of Education in Southeast Asia to the pandemic to ensure that no learners in the region are left behind. During the e-forum, the Ministers have put forward the commitment through the Joint Statement, and one of the commitments are to be united in the fight of pandemic and appreciate the efforts of stakeholders in education sectors to innovate and evolve in the unprecedented time². The Ministers of Education further recommended the SEAMEO Secretariat and the SEAMEO Centres and Network to sustain the achievements gained in the fight against COVID-19 disruption to improve learning outcome.³ One of the responses is the provision of learning resources, which includes

¹ *Education: From disruption to recovery*. (2020, June 15). UNESCO Retrieved August 15, 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

² SEAMEO Secretariat. (2020, June 18). *SEAMEO Ministerial Policy e-Forum on COVID-19 Response* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6V_GNN1UQ4&feature=youtu.be

³ Joint Statement of Ministers of Education SEAMEO Ministerial Policy e-Forum on COVID-19 Response. Page 2 Paragraph 4.

documentation of schools' best practices for teaching/learning policies and innovations in each Member Country.

The recommendation for documentation of best practices was also stated in the High Officials Meeting Recommendations on Advancing School Safety and Resilience in the Southeast Asian region ⁴ (Bohol Statement), which was developed during the 8th Annual Forum for High Officials of Basic Education of SEAMEO Member Countries and Associate Member Countries 20-23 August 2019 as follows;

1. Development of SEAMEO guideline on safe learning facilities and environment
2. Documentation of good practices in SEAMEO Member Countries

To gain insights of the learning situation and youth well-being in the region at the initial stage, the survey was conducted by SEAMEO Secretariat to portray the impacts of the pandemic on Southeast Asian youth (15-25 years). Majority of the respondents at 36.96% reported that they were facing challenges and difficulties on education and career. Apart from the fear of health and life, 56.95% of the respondents reported a lack of resources (e.g. Wi-Fi, digital equipment). Moreover, a high number of respondents at 65% expressed their needs of support for Access to education/ classes via online learning platforms and others, which is only second to the need for health care supplies and safety equipment. ⁵ It could be concluded from the survey that Southeast Asian youths have experienced learning difficulties and expressed the needs of learning support.

Building on the initial information from the survey, the further question to be addressed is how education stakeholders have addressed the disruption and fulfil the educational needs of students and what are best practices that have already been implemented in the region. As a result, to assist the operations and collaborations of schools and education stakeholders to a smooth transition to "New Normal" education, SEAMEO deems it is necessary to develop the documentation to capture best practices the Southeast Asian, which could be used as a reference for others.

B. Objectives

The SEAMEO Journal 2020 aims to consolidate the papers on best practices from SEAMEO Member Countries in response to COVID-19. The publication will:

1. Provide a platform to showcase the Best Practices of education responses to the pandemic and school closures in the region
2. Identify opportunities and challenges faced by schools in SEA during the pandemic period
3. Consolidate the policy changes and ways forward for "New Normal" in education
4. Identify ways to address the needs of disadvantaged students learning through remote education

C. Scope of the Paper

SEAMEO Secretariat cordially invites all its Member Countries to provide and submit a Paper of 7-8 pages in the topic of COVID-19 response School Safety disruption in the aspects of teaching

⁴ Report on the 8th Annual Forum for High Officials of Basic Education of SEAMEO Member Countries and Associate Member Countries 20-23 August 2019, SEAMEO Secretariat, 2019.

⁵ Report on Southeast Asian Youth during COVID-19 Pandemic: Embracing the "New Normal" and the Future of Work, SEAMEO Secretariat, 2020.

materials, teaching policy, learning innovations, and related issues. Guideline and format of the writing are provided in the [Appendix](#). The suggested scopes of the Paper are as follow:

1. Best Practices of alternative teaching methods/modules in educational institutions, both Basic Education and Higher Education.
2. The scalability of national response and existing solutions at the regional level that may help contribute to the post-COVID-19 plans of actions and agenda.
3. Concrete action plans and recommendations on post-COVID-19 habilitation initiatives to reach the unreached children in a remote area.
4. The policies, tools, and strategies that could be suggested to policymakers to improve youth situation in the New Normal way of life.
5. The contribution of education stakeholders in shaping the future of cultural learning and practices in Southeast Asia post-COVID-19.

D. Timeline

Activity	Timeline
Call for the Paper [Open to Public]	31 August 2020
Submission of the Paper [Deadline]	19 October 2020
Paper Acceptance Notification	15 November 2020

E. Expected Output

The documentation of the best practices on COVID-19 responses in the educational sector would be published as the SEAMEO Journal 2020 Special Issue.

F. Focal Persons

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