



Mission Report

Country Visit Malaysia Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 7-8 March 2016 Putrajaya, Malaysia

A. SEAMEO Official on Mission

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B. Background

The SEA-PLM programme aims to achieve the breadth and rigour of a large-scale international survey, while at the same time addressing the unique needs and context of countries in the Southeast Asia region. The ultimate vision is to contribute towards improving learning outcomes across SEAMEO Member Countries by providing a regional culturally appropriate assessment that will secure equitable and meaningful education for all children across the region. The metrics will assess primary school grade 5 and cover key domains of reading, writing, mathematics and global citizenship. The findings from SEA-PLM will contribute to informing policy makers of the progress of educational development under their responsibility. Participating in SEA-PLM will also enhance in-country capacity, including the competences of national examination and assessment staff and strengthen ASEAN and SEAMEO technical collaboration on learning assessment and standards across education systems. The training programme offered under SEA-PLM provides opportunities for national experts who are responsible for implementing learning assessment reforms to benefit from an intense training and capacity development through their participation in SEA-PLM.

The SEA-PLM has been continuously supported and endorsed by the Ministers of Education and High Officials of the region and the first proposal about the initiative was presented on the occasion of the 35th SEAMEO High Officials Meeting in November 2012. At the 36th SEAMEO High Officials Meeting in February 2014, the SEA-PLM Concept Note and Phase Two implementation plans were fully endorsed and Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand agreed to further engage in the implementation of SEA-PLM Phase Two activities.

The interest of the countries of the region for the SEA-PLM was further confirmed during the 48th SEAMEO Council Conference 2015 which took note on the progress of the implementation of the SEA-PLM, including the organization of the official Launching Ceremony of the SEA-PLM involving the SEAMEO Member Countries in October 2014, with a MOE Malaysia High Official sitting in the first SEA-PLM Regional Steering Committee Meeting.

In addition to this, along with all the other SEAMEO Member Countries, Malaysia has been involved in the development of the framework and items of the assessment and questionnaires during the Domain Technical Review Panels (DTRP) Meeting and Item Development Workshop that took place in February 2015 and June 2015 respectively.

C. Objectives of the Meeting

- 1) To meet the High Officials of relevant departments within the Ministry of Education and members of the SEA-PLM National Steering Committee to discuss on issues affecting learning outcomes, how these are being addressed and the potential role of SEA-PLM in supporting national priorities and informing education policy; and
- 2) To meet the Technical Team members and discuss on the next steps of the preparation of the field trial of the SEA-PLM to Malaysia. The focus of the visit would include an overview of the purpose of SEA-PLM, progress to date and lessons learned; discussion of the relevance of SEA-PLM to education improvement and global citizenship; plus a discussion on translation, sampling, coordination with the schools, logistics and tentative work plan.

D. Participants

1) Steering Committee Members:

- Director General of Education
- Deputy Director General of Policy and Development
- Rector of Teacher Education
- Director of Educational Planning and Research Division
- Director Examinations Syndicate
- Director of Curriculum Development Division
- Director of Teacher Education
- Under Secretary International Policy Relations Division

2) Technical Team Members from:

- Educational Planning and Research Division
- Examinations Syndicate
- Curriculum Development Division
- Teacher Training Division
- Special Education Division
- School Management Division
- Technical and Vocational Education Division
- Teacher Education Institute Malaysia
- SEAMEO RECSAM
- SEAMEO SEN
- Universiti Putra Malaysia
- Universiti Sains Malaysia
- UNICEF Malaysia

3) UNICEF EAPRO

E. Organizer

Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education (MOE), Malaysia was the organizer of this meeting.

F. Next Steps

- 1) Appointment of Technical Team (the National Steering Committee being already appointed): The Secretariat (MOE Malaysia) will send a nomination form to all relevant divisions within the MOE and invite them to be part of the Technical Team.

- 2) Issue of language to be clarified and agreed on: The National Steering Committee requested to consider the medium of instruction in all different types of primary schools in Malaysia and concluded that the booklets would need to be translated in the appropriate languages (3). All the translation work will be done by the UPM with whom the MOE has already collaborated with but will need to be carefully planned for as this will represent a substantial amount of work. Discussions also need to take place concerning the best way to approach this in terms of logistics (multi-lingual booklet).
- 3) Inclusion of Special Education Needs (SEN) Students: There is a willingness to include as many SEN students as possible and this will be explored further and need to involve relevant department within the Ministry.
- 4) Sampling Procedure: As SEA-PLM is curriculum referenced, the schools using the national curriculum will be considered in the sampling. However, the Technical Team will also explore to which extent the other types of schools can also participate (e.g. international schools) and eventually use the findings internally for comparison purposes. The Technical Team would like all Grade 5 students in Malaysia to be represented, including SEN students and students from remote areas. They will aim for 40 schools to ensure attendance.
- 5) Reporting of the assessment: As mentioned by the Director General, the assessment needs to draw upon the Education Blueprint and National goals. As a result, the Technical Team will have to come up with a SEA-PLM report that aligns with the country's priorities. The importance of developing a communication plan for SEA-PLM was emphasized by the Steering Committee so that the community engages in the process. The experience of the country with PISA and TIMSS can help this process.
- 6) Immediate next step for Malaysia: A Paper on SEA-PLM for a professional meeting will be submitted next week and it will include all concerns raised during the meeting. It was recommended to adapt the timelines for each of the different task to the country's schedule. Once there is an agreement concerning the next steps, the Technical Team will be conveyed to a meeting and will start communicating with ACER.

G. Role of SEAMEO Secretariat

SEAMEO Secretariat provided during the meeting with the High Officials on the overview on the SEA-PLM and how SEA-PLM will support regional and national efforts to improve quality education through assessment. The endorsement process, how SEA-PLM fits in the world picture, its unique features, the importance of the utilization of data and the expected outcomes, including capacity development, were also outlined.

SEAMEO Secretariat also presented to the Technical Team a brief overview of the progress and the latest developments related to the SEA-PLM, including the organizational structure, unique features, utilization of data, expected outcomes including capacity building, endorsement process and new countries to join.

SEAMEO Secretariat then provided an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Technical Team for the implementation of the field trial in the country. Emphasis was made on the role of establishing clear communication lines and the role of a communication strategy.

In addition, SEAMEO Secretariat provided a presentation of key learning and areas of improvements based on the experience of SEA-PLM in Brunei Darussalam, noting that the report will be shared with the Regional SEA-PLM Steering Committee. A brief overview on the different tasks and proposed timelines for the preparation to SEA-PLM was provided.

The SEA-PLM and SEAMEO 7 Priority Areas brochures were circulated to the meeting participants. *The SEA-PLM powerpoint presentations and SEA-PLM brochure as attached.*

H. Pictures



The High Officials and Members of the Meeting