

Building assessment capability in South East Asia

A new primary years assessment will help teachers, curriculum designers and policymakers to better measure the learning achievement of students in South East Asia.

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The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), with support from the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, is working with South East Asian countries through the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) to provide culturally relevant assessment tools to measure learning outcomes for students in the primary grades.

The South East Asia Primary Learning Metric (SEA-PLM) for Grade 5 students, a collaboration between SEAMEO, UNICEF and ACER, aims to develop a set of tools that partner governments can use to better

measure and understand the status of learning achievement. The initiative also aims to strengthen the capability and capacity of national examination and assessment staff, and support collaboration on the development of learning assessments and standards, across the education systems of member countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations.

The SEA-PLM collaboration focuses on numeracy, literacy and global citizenship skills. While the initial SEA-PLM will assess Grade 5 students, the design will also enable



the development of assessments for students in the early primary grades.

The SEA-PLM collaboration reflects a growing global interest in system-level educational monitoring in order to obtain high-quality data to inform policy making, but also to develop the technical and analytical capabilities of national examination and assessment systems.

The SEA-PLM program is designed in such a way as to enable benchmarking with other assessments, in a future phase of programming, to enable comparisons to existing in-country assessments and examinations, and

to students in other parts of the world by including items to link with other assessments.

Following a review in 2014 of existing frameworks, ACER staff with expertise in international surveys, psychometrics, and test development have developed a draft assessment framework. Following field trials, translation and further review and refinement, the collaborative partners will be conducting the SEA-PLM in 2016.

By building capability through collaboration, ACER's work on the SEA-PLM will help to strengthen learning assessment, standards and

policies, and support improvements in teaching and learning across South East Asia. ■

More Information

For more information on ACER's work on monitoring trends in educational growth, visit the Centre for Global Education Monitoring at www.acer.edu.au/gem

For more information on ACER's work on assessment reform, visit the Centre for Assessment Reform and Innovation at www.acer.edu.au/cari