

2022 UNESCO-KEDI Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Seminar

“Learning recovery: Saving a generation of learners”

29 September 2022 / Zoom Webinar

Summary Notes

On Thursday, 29 September, the 2022 edition of the annual UNESCO-KEDI Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Seminar was held. The seminar aimed to discuss contextually appropriate policies, strategies and measures to address the challenge of recovering education post-COVID-19 pandemic. It was also intended to share experiences, promising practices, and effective programmes for ensuring a safe return to school, improving children's psycho-social health and well-being, and continuing support for learning recovery.

Setting the scene

Setting the scene began with a presentation by Ms. Margarete Sachs-Israel, Chief of the Section for Inclusive Quality Education, UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok). She gave an overview of roadmaps for learning recovery at regional and international levels. She highlighted the need to accelerate education recovery to address learning losses during COVID-19-related school closures and learning gaps prior to the pandemic. Ms. Sachs-Israel's presentation explained the [R.A.P.I.D Framework](#) jointly developed by UNICEF, UNESCO, and the World Bank. She also detailed policy options from the [Bangkok Statement 2022](#) and called for action for equity and inclusion in education.

Session 1

The Moderator for this panel discussion was Ms. Margarete Sachs-Israel, Chief of the Section for Inclusive Quality Education, UNESCO Bangkok. She invited the panelists to discuss national policies and strategies for recovering learning losses.

The first discussion came from Dr. Benjalug Namfa, Senior Specialist in Academic Affairs and Learning Development, and Consultant to the Secretary General of the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), Ministry of Education, Thailand. She described the five main types of learning

losses encountered by learners in Thailand and the Ministry's plans to mitigate them. Dr. Namfa highlighted the Ministry's flagship initiative called "Bring the Kids Back to School", launched in January 2022 and championed by the Education Minister Treenuch Thienthong. The initiative aims to re-engage children who are out of school in education by first identifying those students and orienting them to the most appropriate form of education that meets their needs. ([link to presentation](#)).

The following panelist was Dr. Heehyun Lee, Research Fellow, KEDI, Republic of Korea. She illustrated the Comprehensive Plan for Recovery of Education developed by the Korean Ministry of Education to provide timely and comprehensive support for educational recuperation for all students. Dr. Lee elaborated that the Plan, which focuses on supporting the psychological and emotional recovery of students, particularly vulnerable groups, had been implemented in conjunction with Municipal and Provincial Offices of Education.

The final panelist was Mr. Nurlan K. Omurov, Former Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Kyrgyz Republic. Mr. Omurov underlined the importance of supporting reforms in pre-service and in-service teacher training not only to recover from COVID-19 learning losses but also to accelerate learning. He also reiterated that reimagining the existing system and digital transformation of education are key to ensuring that all students get an inclusive and equitable education.

Session 2

The Moderator for Session 2 was Dr. Eun Young Kim, Director of the Office of International Cooperation, KEDI. She invited the speakers to give a 10-minute presentation respectively.

The first presentation was given by Ms. Ulzhan Ospanova, Director of the Information Analytic Center, Ministry of Education, Kazakhstan. Ms. Ospanova explained the various efforts of the government and international organizations to measure and quantify learning losses during the pandemic. Her presentation centered on actions taken to improve student retention rates and support vulnerable groups after schools reopened.

The next presenter was Ms. Jaehee Kim, Supervisor of the Gyeonggido Office of Education, Republic of Korea. Ms. Kim described effective approaches and good practices that helped students recover lost learning and promoted their psycho-social health and well-being. These practices included instruction targeted to students' learning levels, tutoring, catch-up programmes and counseling services ([link to presentation](#)).

The following presentation came from Ms. Reena Thapa, Chief Counselor, Career Education and Counseling Division, Department of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, Bhutan. Ms. Thapa detailed several programmes and training for developing the mental health and psycho-social well-being of both learners and teachers in Bhutan. Her presentation focused on the primacy of parenting, counseling and educational settings to ensure that schools are safe and inclusive ([link to presentation](#)).

Session 3

Session 3 was moderated by Ms. Soumaya Maghnouj, Consultant (on secondment from OECD), Section for Inclusive Quality Education, UNESCO Bangkok. She invited the speakers and gave each of them the floor for a 10-minute presentation.

The first presentation was from Ms. Le Thu Huong, Programme Specialist, Section of Education Policy, Education Sector, UNESCO headquarters. Ms. Huong's presentation framed major challenges in education during and after the pandemic and policy measures and strategies adopted by different countries to mitigate the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 crisis on student learning. She also detailed examples of evidence-based and contextually suitable programmes to recover and accelerate learning drawn from global surveys and studies ([link to presentation](#)).

The proceeding presenters were Ms. Gurveen Kaur, Manager, Program Management, and Ms. Divya Arora, Manager, International Collaborations, Pratham, India. They made presentations focusing on an accelerated learning approach for children in primary grades called Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) and its implementation in India and Nepal. After an adaptive formative assessment (ASER) is used to determine students' learning needs, students are grouped by learning levels rather than by grade. They stressed that TaRL helped children catch up on foundational literacy and numeracy skills in a brief time ([link to presentation](#)).

The next presentation was given by Dr. Anindito Aditomo, Head of the Educational Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, Indonesia. Dr. Aditomo presented Indonesia's "emancipated learning" approach, which aims to build more agency among schools, teachers and learners to actively shape teaching and learning policies and practices and improve learning. A census-based national assessment was put in place to monitor students' learning outcomes and feed information back to the schools through the school's education scorecard, which is voluntary ([link to presentation](#)).

The final presenter was Dr. Pumsaran Tongliemnak, Director of the Equitable Education Research Institute, Equitable Education Fund (EEF), Thailand. Dr. Tongliemnak's presentation centered on the impact of the four-month school closures in 2020 on young children's physical health and nutrition and their learning outcomes. He described how the EEF had approached learning recovery through physical/muscle development in 74 schools in southern Thailand.

Seminar outcomes

Overall, the webinar was fruitful as it was helpful for educators and experts around the world. 253 participants from different time zones participated throughout the webinar. The best practices and experiences regarding policy responses for learning recovery were shared with their contexts, as well as the effective programmes for ensuring safe returns of all learners to school and approaches and strategies for learning recovery. The discussions and questions arose, seeking more elaborations on the policies, strategies, and measures that the panelists and presenters addressed.

For further information on the 2022 UNESCO-KEDI Policy Seminar:

<https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/2022-unesco-kedi-asia-pacific-regional-policy-seminar-learning-recovery-saving-generation>