



International
Task Force on Teachers
for Education 2030



**International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 –
SEAMEO- UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education
High-Level Forum on Teacher Competencies in the Digital Revolution:
Reaching the Unreached (Virtual)**



**09:00-11:30 Bangkok Time (GMT+7)
30 July 2021**

International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 –
The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) –
UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE)
**High-Level Forum on Teacher Competencies in the Digital Revolution:
Reaching the Unreached (Virtual)**
30 July 2021

Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Acknowledgements	2
Message from the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 Secretariat	4
Message from UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE)	5
Overview and Mechanics of the High-Level Forum.....	6
Keynote Message.....	7
Thematic Group A: Teachers ICT Competencies during Emergency: Lessons from the Pandemic	8
Thematic Group B: ICT Support for Teachers and Learners in Disadvantaged Context	10
Thematic Group C: Remote Education and Learning Continuity Models.....	13
Initiatives and Innovations on ICT/ Distance Education for Teachers from SEAMEO Centers, Associate Member Countries and Affiliate Members.....	14
Closing Remarks	17
Action Agenda	18

Executive Summary

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), in collaboration with International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF) and UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) organized the first virtual **High-Level Forum on Teacher Competencies in the Digital Revolution: Reaching the Unreached** on 30 July 2021.

To address the enormous challenges of teachers and school heads during the COVID-19 pandemic, the collaborative High-Level Forum aims to examine the solutions to ensure learning continuity; discuss national and regional solutions to address the barriers to inclusive education and the digital divide; share innovations during the pandemic in promoting learning continuity in disadvantaged schools that can be replicated or scaled up; and, discuss policy reforms to enhance teacher competencies in the digital age.

The virtual forum was participated by almost 22,000 participants, consisting of High Officials, and teachers from Southeast Asian countries, and member countries of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.

The forum highlights sharing of experiences and best practices in three themes: 1) Teachers ICT Competencies during Emergency: Lessons from the Pandemic, 2) ICT Support for Teachers and Learners in Disadvantaged Context, and 3) Remote Education and Learning Continuity Models.

A total of twenty one invited speakers who are policy makers and experts from SEAMEO Member Countries, SEAMEO Associate Member Countries, Affiliate Members, SEAMEO Regional Centers, and TTF Member Countries including Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, the Kingdom of Morocco, Bhutan, China, France, Japan, Norway, and Russia, have shared their thoughts, ideas, and best experiences at the High-Level Forum.

The key output of this event is the Action Agenda that calls for cooperation among the TTF Member Countries, SEAMEO Member Countries, and partner organizations in the following key areas with the aims to prepare the teachers and learners amidst uncertainties and challenges:

1. *Investing in teacher's capacity building and professional development in areas of distance learning and digital technologies in education;*
2. *Supporting the teacher workforce especially those assigned to the most difficult and remote areas by promoting relevant support, training and incentives, for them to fulfil their duties and functions;*
3. *Creating a policy environment for teacher well-being, motivation, and support, especially in the most disadvantaged contexts and during this time of pandemic; and*
4. *Providing access to hybrid and distance learning programmes to enhance teacher competencies in the digital era.*

The forum has also provided participants with a collection of good teaching practices of new normal pedagogies, innovation for reaching the disadvantaged, as well as a collection of Open Educational Resources on Teaching Tools for the marginalized learners.

Acknowledgments

The virtual **High-Level Forum on Teacher Competencies in the Digital Revolution: Reaching the Unreached**, was made possible through the support of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF), and UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE), in collaboration with the High Officials of the SEAMEO Member Countries, Associate Member Countries, Affiliate Members and SEAMEO centers, including:

- I. The Secretariat of International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF), France
 1. **Dr Carlos Vargas Tamez**, Chief of UNESCO Section of Teacher Development, and Head of the Secretariat of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF)
 2. **Ms Leila Loupis**, Senior Project Officer
 3. **Ms Emilia Soto Echeverri**, Consultant
- II. UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE), Russia
 1. **Mr Tao Zhan**, Director
 2. **Ms Natalia Amelina**, Senior National Project Officer in Education, Chief of Unit
- III. High Officials of the SEAMEO Member Countries, Associate Member Countries, Affiliate Members and SEAMEO Regional Centers
 1. **Mr Sng Chern Wei**, Deputy Director General of Education (Curriculum), Ministry of Education, Singapore
 2. **Dr Dy Khamboly**, Deputy Director-General of Policy and Planning, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia
 3. **Mr Shahrizal bin Hj Emran**, Head of Educational Technology Centre, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam
 4. **Dr Nuanpan Pulsrisawat**, Deputy Director, Bureau of Technology for Teaching and Learning, Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Thailand
 5. **Dr Muhammad Hasbi**, Director of Early Childhood Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, Indonesia
 6. **Associate Professor Vongdeuan Osay**, Deputy Director-General, Department of Teacher Education, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR
 7. **Madam Maznah binti Abu Bakar**, Director, Educational Resources and Technology Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia
 8. **Mr Nar Bahadur Raika**, Specialist, Department of Adult & Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Bhutan
 9. **Dr Feng Siyuan**, Senior Specialist of International Institute of Online Education (IIOE) Management Centre, International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO-ICHEI), China

10. **Dr Jeaniene Spink**, Research Director, Education and Development, The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Australia
11. **Dr Diosdado San Antonio**, Undersecretary for Curriculum and Instruction, Department of Education, Philippines
12. **Dr Masami Isoda**, Director of Center for Research on International Cooperation in Education Development (CRIED)
13. **Dr Nakao Nomura**, Regional Director for Southeast Asia at Bureau of Global Initiatives, University of Tsukuba, Japan
14. **Dr Ho Vinh Thang**, Senior Official of Secondary Education Department, Ministry of Education and Training, Viet Nam
15. **Dr Hanani binti Harun Rasit**, Centre Director, SEAMEO SEN, Malaysia
16. **Dr Juan Robertino Macalde**, Senior Specialist/Head, Learning Management and Implementation Unit, SEAMEO INNOTECH, Philippines
17. **Ms Cahya Kusuma Ratih**, Acting Deputy Director for Programme, SEAMEO SEAMOLEC, Indonesia
18. **Mr Bouchaib Ez-zahri**, Third Secretary, Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Bangkok, Thailand
19. **Ms Torunn Gjelsvik**, Secretary-General, International Council for Distance Education (ICDE), Norway
20. **Dr Wayne Mackintosh**, UNESCO/ICDE Chair in Open Educational Resources Managing Director, OER Foundation and OERu facilitator
21. **Undersecretary Alain del Pascua**, Department of Education, Philippines

as well as the kind and valuable contribution as moderators of members of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030:

1. **Dr Wang Libing**, Chief of Section for Educational Innovations and Skills Development, UNESCO Bangkok, Thailand
2. **Dr Margarita Consolacion C Ballesteros**, Director IV, International Cooperation Office, Department of Education, Philippines
3. **Dr Samsideth Dy**, Deputy Director General of Education, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia
4. **Dr Kritsachai Somsaman**, Deputy Director for Administration and Communication, SEAMEO Secretariat, Thailand.

Message from the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 Secretariat



Dr Carlos Vargas Tamez

Chief of UNESCO Section of Teacher Development, and Head of the Secretariat of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, France

The International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 Secretariat would like to share some insights on how the COVID-19 pandemic has unveiled the main challenges and gaps on ICT in education, implementation, and the frontline of distance education.

The pandemic forces teachers to implement distance learning modalities, often without sufficient guidance, training, or resources. Worldwide, teachers do not have enough training and support to shift to online education and to use technology pedagogically. Some of the challenges raised are also on equity. The pandemic evidences the gap in necessary decides for connectivity between the better off and the most underserved area. According to the fact sheet that we shared on the World's Teacher Day in 2020, over two-third of primary schools globally (73%) had access to electricity, which is critical support for ICT and this ranges from 31% in Sub-Sahara in Africa to 55% in Southeast Asia and 100% in Central Asia. Additionally, access to school computers is not universal in most middle- and low-income regions, varying from 96% in Central Asia to 20% in Southeast Asia. In addition to access to devices and connectivity, teachers need training and support in digital skills. Many teachers were forced to switch to online education without having training on the required unique skills.

Improvement in teachers' ICT competency is key to the teaching profession and to address some of the challenges raised. Teachers need to be accompanied in the development of quality distance education as well as in their own professional development.

In this regard, the UNESCO ICT competency framework for teachers which we developed in 2018 emphasises the importance of training teachers on ICT competency in pre-service, in-service, and on-going professional development. According to the framework, six aspects need to be addressed on teacher's training on ICT: Understanding ICT in Education policy, Curriculum assessment, Pedagogy, Application of distance skills, Organization and administration, and Teacher's professional learning. These are measured at three levels: Knowledge acquisition, Knowledge deepening, and Knowledge creation. Training teachers on ICT is a complex and demanding area that should be addressed comprehensively.

Finally, the pandemic has addressed the key roles laid by teachers. Teachers have been innovative, shown great leadership and autonomy to address many of these issues. However, to face the gap in digital skills, teachers cannot act alone. They need to be empowered with training materials and support. These roles laid by teachers and the great autonomy they have shown evidence of the importance of hearing teachers' voices and innovation. Many initiatives like the event today give us the opportunity to raise teacher participation at the heart of responses, and to call on social dialogue for teacher empowerment. This webinar is unique to share knowledge and practices which have been proven to be powerful approaches as part of the COVID-19 response. By sharing the experience, teachers can create a community of practice, support one another, and share common solutions to similar challenges. I wish you all the most fruitful conversation to continue advancing in this regard.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carlos Vargas". The script is cursive and elegant.

Dr Carlos Vargas Tamez

Teacher Task Force, Head of Secretariat
UNESCO Headquarter, France

Message from UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE)



Mr Tao Zhan

*Director, UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE),
Russia*

UNESCO IITE is very delighted to collaborate with SEAMEO for the organization of this **High-level Forum on Teacher Competencies in the Digital Revolution: Reaching the Unreached**.

The COVID-19 pandemic has once again proven the unique role of information technology in education emergency response and education transformation. Digital technology is connecting teachers and learners, which makes it apparent that education will go digital. This is the most important lesson learned from the pandemic. Meanwhile, it is clear that teachers are at the ever-challenging position in this digital transformation, therefore, demand systematic support. Furthermore, how to ensure inclusion, how to reach the unreached is the most challenging issue that we are facing, and we must take collective action to find innovative solutions. Otherwise, the Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Quality Education cannot be reached.

UNESCO IITE and SEAMEO are the 2 coordinators of the TTF working group on ICT and distance education. We have been working together on this challenging issue with great support from TTF secretariat and UNESCO Bangkok Office. This High-level Forum aims at exchanging and examining innovative experiences at both policy and practical levels and developing an Action Agenda on improving teacher's competency in the digital revolution.

The Southeast Asian region has demonstrated its collective strength in education emergency response and the shared determination for future education transformation. UNESCO IITE is very proud of being part of this collective approach. I wish a very productive forum and look forward to furthering collaboration with colleagues from Southeast Asia.



Mr Tao Zhan

Director

UNESCO IITE, Russia

Overview and Mechanics of the High-Level Forum



Dr Ethel Agnes Pascua Valenzuela
Director, SEAMEO Secretariat, Thailand

SEAMEO has been reaching the unreached with SEAMEO Priority Area #2 *Addressing Barriers to Inclusion*. We are also an organization that is keen on improving the teaching workforce through Priority Area #5 *Revitalizing Teacher Education*.

SEAMEO is honored to host this **High-Level Forum on Teacher Competencies in Digital Revolution: Reaching the Unreached** as a member of International Teacher Task Force and a Co-Chair of ICT and Distance Education for Teacher Development together with UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE), based in Moscow.

The forum starts with the welcoming messages by Head of Teacher Task Force Secretariat and UNESCO IITE's Director, which is followed by the Keynote message from the representative of SEAMEO Council President, **Mr Sng Chern Wei**, Deputy Director General of Education (Curriculum), Ministry of Education, Singapore.

The highlights of the forum are the presentation of esteem speakers from ministries of education and ITTF members on the following themes moderated by TTF members:

- A) *Teachers ICT Competencies during Emergency: Lessons from the Pandemic*
- B) *ICT Support for Teachers and Learners in Disadvantaged Context*
- C) *Remote Education and Learning Continuity Models*

Also invited to share *Initiatives and Innovations on ICT/ Distance education for Teachers* are representatives from SEAMEO centers, SEAMEO Associate Member Countries and Affiliate Members.

At the end of the Forum, we will have an **Action Agenda** that will be presented to the SEAMEO Executive Committee for endorsement, then to SEAMEO High Officials and eventually to our highest governing body, the SEAMEO Council.

The forum ends with the closing remarks of SEAMEO Council Vice Chair represented by **Undersecretary Alain del Pascua**, Department of Education, Philippines

We hope that the presentation and sharing of the speakers can help us to take optimism a notch higher to hear actions are being taken to improve ICT competencies during emergencies, provide ICT support and ensure continuity of learning in disadvantaged contexts.

Let us all support our education front liners, the teachers!



Dr Ethel Agnes Pascua Valenzuela
Director
SEAMEO Secretariat, Thailand

Keynote Message



Mr Sng Chern Wei, Deputy Director General of Education (Curriculum), Ministry of Education, Singapore, shared Singapore's journey in preparing students for a Digital Future by identifying forces driving Digital Revolution in education including Transformative technologies, Increasing complexity, Changing demographics and Texture of society. Education system can be geared to ride these driving forces through lifelong learning for both students and teachers, refreshing curriculum to better develop joy of learning and intrinsic motivation, and sustaining education as an uplifting force.

He reported that Curriculum in Singapore has been refreshed with the objective of nurturing self-directed and intrinsically motivated learners, who are equipped with the values and skills to navigate and thrive in a digital and increasingly complex world. This has been conducted via three approaches comprising National Digital Literacy Programme, Re-imagining classroom, and Harnessing Artificial Intelligence in education.

He also emphasized the importance of improving teacher's competencies via enhanced Professional Development Roadmap from pre-service to in-service in six prioritized areas of practice: Assessment Literacy, Inquiry-based learning, Differentiated Instruction, Support for students with Special educational needs, e-Pedagogy, Character and Citizenship education.

He concluded his message by encouraging support for teachers and students to cement the gains in the lens of positivity. COVID-19 disruptions have severely tested the resilience and adaptability of schools and teachers. However, as a result, schools and teachers have emerged stronger by pivoting to extended home-based learning, acquiring digital skills to deliver effective remote learning, being mindful and creative with addressing student wellbeing.

Thematic Group A: Teachers ICT Competencies during Emergency: Lessons from the Pandemic



Dr Dy Khamboly, Deputy Director-General of Policy and Planning, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), Cambodia, presented the strategies on ICT in Education of MoEYS, Cambodia including five key areas: Infrastructure, Connectivity and Equipment, ICT support for teaching and learning, Human Resource Development in ICT, ICT Governance and Management, Finance for ICT in education.

He provided details of Cambodia's technology-enhanced teaching and learning innovations during the pandemic. Cambodian students can have access to learning materials through MoEYS' website, Facebook and other digital platforms. Education Digital Contents for all levels ranging from primary to upper secondary schools are developed and available on various digital platforms, with the contribution of private institutes, national and international partners. These materials are also made available for disadvantaged groups including the disabled, ethnic minorities and those in remote areas with less access to the internet. Teachers have been trained on the use of e-learning platforms, mostly G-suite (Google online tools) which are available free of charge.

He reaffirmed the MoEYS's commitment to ensure teacher competency in the digital revolution by continuing to provide a policy environment for teacher's professional development in ICT, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of learning in teacher training institutions, schools, and other educational by using ICT tools. He emphasized the importance of teacher's skilling, re-skilling and up-skilling by having all teacher training institutions equipped with e-learning platforms and ICT equipment.



Mr Shahrizal bin Hj Emran, Head of Educational Technology Centre, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam shared approaches in response to COVID-19 via Online learning and Education TV Channel for students.

Mr Shahrizal bin Hj Emran noted that teacher support webinars focusing on the introduction of common ICT tools are organized on a weekly basis to assist teachers in conducting online learning and reinforcing their confidence in using ICT tools. Digital learning training was developed based on Teacher's Standard Framework that links to Teacher's Performance Appraisal in four competencies: How teachers plan for progress in learning, How teachers structure and use time in lessons, How teachers organize and group students, How teachers use textbooks and other resources.



Dr Nuanpan Pulsrisawat, Deputy Director, Bureau of Technology for Teaching and Learning, Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Thailand, shared five models for Educational Provision during the pandemic including 1) On-site: Teaching and learning in schools, 2) On Air: Distance learning via TV broadcasting where students self-study as broadcasting schedules, 3) Online: Interactive Distance learning via internet, 4) On Demand: Self-studying via electronic media including websites and applications designed by Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) and other contributors, 5) On Hand: Educational provision by delivering learning materials to students' homes with teacher guidance and guardian's support.

Dr Nuanpan also detailed the roles and missions of schools and Educational Service Area Offices in preparation for school re-opening phase with three key steps for action and collaboration.

Dr Nuanpan presented online activities organized by OBEC for teachers, students, and guardians, comprising online training on digital skills & online teaching techniques for teachers, digital learning resources and TV educational programmes for students as well as digital material resources.



Dr Muhammad Hasbi, Director of Early Childhood Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, Indonesia, explained the systematic approach taken by the Indonesian government since March 2020 in facilitating the provision of education services during the pandemic in terms of framework, guidance, and curriculum.

Dr Hasbi highlighted that the curriculum allows flexibility with three options for schools: 1) Continue using National Curriculum, 2) Employ the emergency curriculum, and 3) Alter/simplify curriculum independently. Financial support is given in the form of flexibility in the use of school operational assistance and tuition assistance offered for disadvantaged students. He also reported that the government has prepared for transition by issuing a limited face to face learning guide, particularly for schools in remote areas where the risk of COVID-19 is deemed low.

For places with a limited internet connection, he presented several alternatives including a teacher-visit program, distribution of print-out learning materials, scheduled learning programmes via TV stations and radio channels. He added that teachers are also provided with capacity building to boost their adaptability.

Dr Hasbi reported that that 60% of teachers in Indonesia are still limited in their mastery of ICT. In response, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology is holding the Information and Communication Technology-based learning program based on the UNESCO Teacher ICT Competency improvement framework for all teachers in Indonesia. The program is designed with 4 levels: ICT Literacy, ICT implementation, ICT Creation, Sharing and collaborating to produce learning materials. After completing the program, teachers will be appointed as ICT ambassadors to train other teachers, especially those in remote areas, so that they can operate virtual classrooms on their own.

Thematic Group B: ICT Support for Teachers and Learners in Disadvantaged Context



Associate Professor Vongdeuan Osay, Deputy Director-General, Department of Teacher Education, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR, addressed some challenges in ICT support comprising the demand for a specific ICT policy or master development plan in Education, teachers' lack of awareness and competency in ICT-pedagogy integration, the absence of a systematic in-service ICT training program, unequal access to infrastructure, ICT tools and Internet connectivity.

In response to such challenges, Assoc Prof Vongdeuan reported that the Ministry of Education and Sports has been implementing several measures to provide ICT support for teachers and students, especially those in disadvantaged contexts, as follows:

- ICT-related policies are identified in the Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2021-2025 at all levels. The Government will encourage the use of ICT in public and private sectors and support the development of ICT integrated curriculum with the vision of integrating ICT into teaching and learning activities, particularly for remote and rural areas;
- Trainings on ICT Capacity Building for Principals, Teachers and Students, especially on the use of ICT in developing teaching and learning materials, including creating video of teaching (YouTube); organizing online workshop utilizing google classroom and Zoom for teachers;
- ICT Facilities Support including ICT tools, learning platform: Distributing free and affordable electronic devices (computers, tablets) to schools; creating a learning platform known as 'Lao Learn' in which teachers can share developed teaching and learning materials and the best teaching experience; providing technical support by monitoring and maintaining.



Madam Maznah binti Abu Bakar, Director, Educational Resources and Technology Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, provided insights of different initiatives and approaches by the Malaysian Government and the Ministry of Education to reduce the ICT Gap.

From the government, there is substantial support comprising a comprehensive digital infrastructure plan for better connectivity, Subsidizing Data Plan to assist in subscriptions of broadband internet plans and purchases of mobile smartphone devices, Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint. She highlighted the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) pilot initiative by government-linked companies (GLCs) and government-linked investment companies to provide devices to children from low-income families and enable online home-based learning.

Madam Maznah stressed the focus of the Ministry of Education (MoE) on the Digital Education Initiative with the aim to produce digitally fluent and resilient current and future generations of Malaysia. A key component of the initiative is a comprehensive learning platform for teachers and students which facilitates remote classrooms and offers free educational services and applications to all schools, teachers and students nationwide. She added that the MoE collaborated with broadcasting agencies to broadcast educational TV programmes via selected channels to reach out to as many children as possible to minimize learning losses as a result of the closure of schools during the pandemic.

Madam Maznah also introduced the Textbook Loan Scheme as a solution to students without any devices. She then emphasized the extraordinary and applaudable effort of teachers in affected and remote areas, where they set up mobile units to deliver printed learning materials to designated locations via various modes of transportation, including motorboats. She pointed out that resources for Students with Special Needs are also available in the form of video recordings.



Dr Nar Bahadur Raika, Specialist, Department of Adult & Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Bhutan, presented the scenario and solutions for students with Special educational needs in Bhutan amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr Raika reported that there are 23 institutes offering programmes of special needs in Bhutan. He highlighted various initiatives from the Royal Education Council: Use of Application Programming Interface (APIs) video on YouTube and other online video platforms, use of functional curriculum for learners with disabilities, use of customized curriculum for learners with severe disabilities, encouragement of customized assessment approaches, and suggestion for use of Applications like Scratch, and Codemonkey.

Apart from common issues in unequal access to ICT infrastructure and facilities, he stressed the unique challenges in the teacher-student ratio, teacher capabilities to handle ICT for disadvantaged learners.

He concluded his presentation with some recommendations on strong national plans and policies, encouragement of digital library, adoption of international best practices to a local context, and prioritizing professional development of teachers, principals, district education officers, and national leaders.



Dr Feng Siyuan, Senior Specialist of International Institute of Online Education (IIOE) Management Centre, International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO ICHEI), China, introduced the International Institute of Online Education (IIOE) as an open multilanguage online and mobile education platform for the digital transformation for higher education workforce in disadvantaged contexts. The platform is an extension of UNESCO ICHEI's Smart Classroom project. He emphasized the target beneficiaries of IIOE being High Education Institutions in developing countries. He reported that 300 free and certified online courses offered by leading ICT enterprises on IIOE platform have served more than 8,000 educators from 135 countries, of which more than 5,000 educators from 107 countries participated in four innovative training programmes in AI and Big Data.

Dr Feng informed that the IIOE platform has provided support to Higher Education Institutions amid the COVID-19 pandemic by offering 10 COVID-19 response training sessions in English and French, and providing online education support for the online transformation of teaching, education, and evaluation to 2,108 university teachers and experts, 307 institutions from 46 countries.



Dr Jeaniene Spink, Research Director, Education and Development, The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Australia, highlighted the work of ASPIRE (Australian Strategic Partnerships in Remote Education) in supporting continuity of learning during COVID-19 by connecting Australian expertise in remote education with partners in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly for disadvantaged students.

Dr Spink noted that the lesson of good practice in effective remote education incorporates five key principles: Supports for teachers, Parental involvement, Student engagement, Community partnerships, and Inclusion & equity. According to the research-based evidence, opportunities for effective remote education focus on teaching practice. She stressed the importance of enhancing teachers' competency by addressing that technology can supplement but does not replace teaching.

Dr Spink added that ASPIRE has been supporting the Australian National University to deliver series of workshops for teachers and lecturers in digital content development and remote learning pedagogy across the Asia-Pacific region.

Dr Spink concluded her presentation by sharing some considerations for the future. The modality of teaching does not predict learner's achievement, positively or negatively; rather it is about equipping teachers with a repertoire of skills to teach a range of learners and contexts. It is important to have strategies and a framework for a transition from emergency remote education to a more sustainable education model. She called for building resilience in the education system across the region.

Thematic Group C: Remote Education and Learning Continuity Models



Dr Diosdado San Antonio, Undersecretary for Curriculum and Instruction, Department of Education, Philippines, presented different approaches taken to ensuring Education Learning Continuity for the Filipino Children including print and digital modular, online distance learning for schools where both teachers and learners have access to digital devices and internet connectivity, educational TV, radio-based instruction, home-based learning facilitated by parents, guardians or relevantly trained tutors, and blended learning with a mix of all the mentioned learning modalities.

After addressing inevitable challenges, he noted the overall supporting initiatives from all levels ranging from policy and guidelines from central offices, continuous consultation with various stakeholders, to promote the culture of research and innovation by supporting emerging teacher-led innovative learning environment. He stressed the essential role of empowerment given to Regional/ Division offices to implement other appropriate measures for their respective contexts in order to cater to students' learning, social and emotional needs.

Usec San Antonio continued to share best practices at the school level, mainly in the close collaboration among parents, teachers, and students for continuous learning either online or offline. He concluded that the use of mobile phones and tapping the most popular social media in the country has been proven very helpful in making modular learning effective in all grade levels.



Dr Masami Isoda, Director of Center for Research on International Cooperation in Education Development (CRIED), University of Tsukuba, Japan, presented the Online International Sharable Courses with SEAMEO Countries and APEC Economies under New Normal in the case of pilot course on mathematics education. He also mentioned that the suggestions from participants have been well-noted for improvement and amendment in upcoming courses. He then introduced the unique PhD program in Mathematics Education in collaboration with Khon Khaen University in Thailand and expressed his interest in collaborating with the next generation beyond the border to share learning content and terminology in the era of New Normal.



Dr Nakao Nomura, Regional Director for Southeast Asia at Bureau of Global Initiatives, University of Tsukuba, Japan, introduced the Japan Virtual Campus initiative with the confirmed participation of 15 universities. The unique feature of the Virtual Campus is that each participating university will prepare one module or certain parts of the curriculum, which will then be combined to create a new course on demand, especially from other countries. This program has a free-based option for learners and a fee-based scheme for organizations and enterprises that request specific content or topics. He called for cross-country collaboration for the creation of an Innovative Education System for the New Normal.



Dr Ho Vinh Thang, Senior Official of Secondary Education Department, Ministry of Education and Training, Viet Nam, reported that students of 53,000 educational and training institutions had to stop going to school due to the increasing complexity of the 4th wave of COVID-19 in Vietnam. In response, the Ministry of Education and Training has issued the policy” Suspending Classes Without Stopping Learning”. Measures are taken by having institutions to develop a Teaching and Learning plan with the involvement of officers, school leaders, teachers, students, parents, ICT companies, and other organizations. He also pointed out the implementation of online learning via an online platform like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and the usage of learning management systems of ICT companies. He added that local television agencies cooperate with Vietnam Television (VTV channels) to deliver lessons and monthly learning plans to students. Teacher and students’ modes of communication are mobile phones and postal service.

To conclude his presentation, he suggested the next steps for learning in New Normal including the implementation of Digital Literacy in the National Curriculum, development of online learning resources and framework, as well as encouraging educators to apply ICT in education.

Initiatives and Innovations on ICT/Distance Education for Teachers from SEAMEO Centers, Associate Member Countries and Affiliate Members



Dr Hanani binti Harun Rasit, Centre Director, SEAMEO SEN, Malaysia, highlighted that one of the main tasks of SEAMEO SEN is capacity building for teachers in special education. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all training courses have been shifted from face-to-face learning to an online platform for the fiscal year 2020 – 2021. She introduced all training courses initiated by SEAMEO SEN including 5 regular courses, 9 customized courses, 1 in-country course, and 4 webinars in alignment with the 7 priority areas.

Dr Hanani presented the case study conducted by SEAMEO SEN to get feedback from online training participants by interviewing participants from all member countries. The overall result shows that teachers and learners in special education in Southeast Asia, rather than being passive through the pandemic, have portrayed strong determination and positive attitude toward self-development, as well as recognized the benefit from training sessions provided by SEAMEO SEN.

Dr Hanani noted that SEAMEO SEN addresses the challenges raised by the pandemic by developing SEAMEO SEN virtual library and publication hub which are made accessible for the public to provide relevant content and materials on special education, inclusive education for the disability in regional and international contexts. SEAMEO SEN also provides learning materials and videos of all online courses in the hope that all educators can benefit from SEAMEO SEN’s initiatives as a resource hub.



Dr Juan Robertino Macalde, Senior Specialist/Head, Learning Management and Implementation Unit, SEAMEO INNOTECH, Philippines, presented SEAMEO INNOTECH’s Teacher Development Journey starting from 2009 with competency framework for teachers in the 21st century to the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) to all teachers in South East Asia since 2017.

Dr Macalde then highlighted the SEA-TCF Course 1, an online course based on the Southeast Asian Teacher Competency Framework (SEA-TCF) newly developed in 2021, with the aim to develop the core essential competencies of high-performing teachers in the region: Know and understand what I teach, Help my students learn, Engage the community, and Become a better teacher every day. He reported that the course had 48,000 enrollees for the Pilot Offering in June 2021. He also introduced MT4T - a teacher resource kit that promotes the use of mobile technology in Southeast Asia for teaching and learning in the classroom

Dr Macalde noted the tentative launch of SEA-TCF Course 2 which can pave the way for participants to achieve an equivalence to a graduate diploma, with the possibility of pursuing a joint master's degree program.



Ms Cahya Kusuma Ratih, Acting Deputy Director for Programme, SEAMEO SEAMOLEC, Indonesia, introduced 2 main programs of SEAMOLEC for teachers: Digital Platform and Resources Development, Trainings and Webinars for Open and Distance Learning Quality Improvement.

Ms Cahya also explained about SIERRA (SEAMOLEC Innovative Educational Resources for Remote Area) which is a mobile digital resource platform researched and developed by SEAMOLEC's IT specialist.

Ms Cahya shared the availability of SEAMOLEC Digital Resources both in printed and digital modules such as videos on YouTube. She informed that the training modes for teachers have been conducted in a blended mode of face-to-face learning and online learning in SEAMOLEC's Mini Lecture Series (SMILEs) and SEAMOLEC regular training. Teachers' engagement has been maintained via learning management systems and messaging applications with the following design principles: Bit size learning, Engaging, Collaborative, Flexible, Assessment for Learning, Digital Comic for Engaging Online Learning, and Async Mode.

Finally, she presented the five-week course designed by SEAMOLEC in collaboration with partners to facilitate teachers in having basic knowledge and practical experiences in designing online learning activities through a digital comic.



Mr Bouchaib Ez-zahri, Third Secretary, Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Bangkok, Thailand, presented the Kingdom of Morocco's Evolution of the ICT in education strategy with the focus on the roadmap of GENIE (Generalization of Information and Communication Technologies in Education) programme from 2009 to 2021. He highlighted the position of GENIE at the heart of education system reform with an emphasis on the improvement of learning professional development for teachers and the appropriation of technologies for students. He pointed out one of the most impressive achievements over different phases of GENIE is that 85% of schools are connected to the internet with filtering and 87% of schools have a basic multimedia environment, which has benefited the country significantly to tackle the challenges caused by the pandemic in education.

Mr Ez-zahri reported that when all classes were suspended in March 2020, the Ministry of Education quickly involved all stakeholders from the public to private sector to suggest solutions for continuity in education and maintaining the connection with students via a virtual classroom. He stated that challenges raised by the COVID-19 have motivated the Kingdom of Morocco to create a new system that prepares schools for new normality and a new future of education.



Ms Torunn Gjelsvik, Secretary-General, International Council for Distance Education (ICDE), Norway, introduced ICDE as a leading global membership organization working to promote and advocate for open, flexible and distance learning. ICDE has 250 members and partners impacting 15 million students across 6 continents. She then referred to OERu as ICDE's key partner offering free online courses to students worldwide. The course presented at the forum is a part of the Learning in a Digital Age series of micro courses with the aim to developing digital skills and boost participants to become confident autonomous learners in the digital age.



Dr Wayne Mackintosh, UNESCO/ICDE Chair in Open Educational Resources Managing Director, OER Foundation and OERu facilitator, highlighted the objective of OERu being sharing knowledge freely through open education. He noted that OERu has pioneered transnational accreditation which paves ways for learners to achieve formal academic credits for free without buying expensive textbooks. He informed that learners have the freedom to share courses with others and can translate courses to their local language at their preference.

Dr Mackintosh then provided details of the Learning in a Digital Age course which is completely based on the internet for learners' ease of use without the need for any software or application. The course is designed for learners to progress at their own pace and their personal commitment.

Closing Remarks



Undersecretary Alain del Pascua, Department of Education, Philippines, believed that educators and officials in the education sector around the world must now be aware of the role that digital technology plays in reaching the unreached, especially amid the pandemic. He emphasized that the quality of the education system cannot rise above the quality of teachers and school principals, who should focus on continuous self-development to keep up with the needs of learners in the digital age. He explained that learners of this generation require deep mastery of challenging content, critical thinking, complex problem solving, effective communication and collaboration, and self-direction.

He recognized that the disruption created by the pandemic has forced education systems all over the world to deliver education with limited or, in many cases, without involving in-school face-to-face learning. Therefore, teachers, school leaders, and learners need to learn new skills to reinforce their knowledge and strengthen their capacity for distance learning modality. He recommended teachers and school heads should improve their ability to use and elaborate the power of ICT in the delivery of teaching and learning, which is required more than just being familiar, but effective use of a range of technology and learning management systems. Teachers should also rethink how learners can access education and how they engage in the learning process.

He admitted that the distance learning modality has raised its own challenges such as issues on learning loss, the validity of student learning, assessment methodology, mental health, and lack of connection. However, he encouraged us to take advantage of these opportunities to strengthen the competencies of teachers and school leaders who are considered the education front-liners.

He concluded that it is not the technology that will drive effective education delivery and instruction, but it is the well-prepared and well-executed design that will make the technology relevant.

Action Agenda

We, the delegates and participants to the **High Level Forum on Teacher Competencies in the Digital Revolution: Reaching the Unreached**, organized by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) in collaboration with the International Taskforce on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF) and UNESCO Institute for Technologies in Education (IITE), have together reviewed the regional initiatives from Southeast Asia and beyond, and recognized the need to develop collective recommendations for the next three years:

Appreciating the gains and progress in the region, and despite the challenges posed by unprecedented education disruptions brought by COVID-19 pandemic;

Embracing strategic partnerships and collaboration as key enablers in transforming education to ensure no teacher is unprepared to use technology to reach the learners, to ensure that no one is left behind;

Realizing that working harmoniously together and complementing our common aspirations will be the bedrock of success and will facilitate the achievement of the SDGs by 2030;

We **call to action** among the SEAMEO member countries, members of TTF and partner organizations;

To achieve this, cooperation among the TTF member countries and SEAMEO member states should be focused on the following key action areas:

1. *Investing in teacher's capacity building and professional development in areas of distance learning and digital technologies in education;*
2. *Supporting the teacher workforce especially those assigned to the most difficult and remote areas by promoting relevant support, training and incentives, for them to fulfil their duties and functions;*
3. *Creating a policy environment for teacher professional and personal well-being, motivation, and support, especially in the most disadvantaged contexts and during this time of pandemic; and*
4. *Providing access to hybrid and distance learning programmes and resources to enhance teacher competencies in the digital era.*

We, the Heads of the Delegations and participants in the High-Level Forum commit to continue collaborating with international and regional partners, such as TTF, UNESCO and other relevant stakeholders and partners to prepare the teachers and to support learners amidst uncertainties and challenges.

We, therefore, agreed to adopt this statement on 30 July 2021 and elevate it to the SEAMEO Council for innovative transformations in Southeast Asian education pursuant to the SEAMEO Strategic Plan 2021-2030 and towards SDG 2030.



© 2021

SEAMEO Secretariat

Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building
920 Sukhumvit Road, Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Tel: +66 (0) 2391-0144 | Fax: +66 (0) 2381-2587
E-mail: secretariat@seameo.org