

NEQMAP 2021 Thematic Reviews

Flexible strategies for ensuring quality learning outcomes

Concept Note

Background and Rationale

The Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP)¹ produces series of ‘thematic reviews’ to provide the opportunity for the network and its members to strengthen the knowledge base through research and analysis in specific thematic areas related to learning assessments and quality learning outcomes. The first series was introduced in 2019 focusing on **Inclusion and Equity**, while the 2020 reviews focused on **“Learning Assessments in Emergencies and Crises”**. NEQMAP will continue looking at the lasting impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on education systems, and will explore how flexible and blended learning strategies can ensure quality learning outcomes that contribute to more resilient and sustainable education.

Flexible, remote learning strategies and delivery modes (including online, TV, radio, etc.) are not entirely new to education systems. These have however become more widely adapted as a response to the restricted physical attendance of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular many countries in Asia-Pacific opted to conduct online learning assessments² to measure learning progress despite the impact of school closures. However, concerns have been raised regarding access, equity and inclusiveness. This includes learners who are disadvantaged in terms of access to remote education, as well as the capacity and readiness of school systems and teachers to select and provide delivery methods and tools that are adaptive to the local circumstances concerning the respective Covid-19 situation and restrictions, as well as the technology/equipment of school systems and students in the home. Challenges for assessment systems in particular relate to the adjustment of delivery modes and criteria such as move to online delivery, reduced numbers of exams, the knowledge, skills and competencies assessed, and ensure reliability, validity and transparency.

Call for 2021 NEQMAP Thematic Reviews

NEQMAP would like to publish one or two (1-2) NEQMAP Thematic Reviews on **“Flexible strategies for ensuring quality learning outcomes”** to explore how countries in Asia-Pacific have incorporated, utilized or leveraged flexible strategies to address learning loss and to capture learning outcomes and progress.

¹ NEQMAP is a network of education stakeholders in Asia-Pacific and a programme under UNESCO’s Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education mandated to monitor the quality of education and ensure alignment of education systems with the SDG 4-Education 2030.

² See more list of countries who conducted online assessments during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

(<https://neqmap.bangkok.unesco.org/resource/covid-19-a-glance-of-national-coping-strategies-on-high-stakes-examinations-and-assessments/>)

Scope: the reviews should have a regional focus and include information from as many different countries in the region as possible. The reviews should draw on previous literature, case studies and analysis of secondary data. Primary data collection is not necessary. The scope should consider and explore the following:

- How have countries in Asia-Pacific introduced or integrated flexible strategies in their education systems to ensure quality learning outcomes? What are the policy implications or mechanisms that have been introduced at the system and school level?
- What tools, delivery modes and criteria are used to adapt existing strategies for measuring learning progress and outcomes? What are the challenges?
- How do flexible strategies address issues of inclusion, equity, as well as transparency, reliability and validity?
- How are schools and teachers prepared and supported (i.e. through the provision of online pedagogy systems/ tools and resources, and professional support networks, etc.)?

We welcome proposals for this overarching theme, that will also examine or include elements of NEQMAP's programme areas: competency-based learning, education system alignment (curriculum, pedagogy and assessment), monitoring quality learning outcomes, and learning assessments (summative/formative; school-based/large-scale, etc.).

Thematic review length: 7,000 words (maximum)

The thematic reviews will be published on [NEQMAP's Knowledge Portal](#).

Time line:

- Submit 1st draft thematic review – **30 August 2021** (to be reviewed by NEQMAP Secretariat)
- Submit final thematic review – **30 October 2021** (to be reviewed and edited by NEQMAP Secretariat)
- Publish thematic reviews – **by end of Q4 2021** (to be shared at the NEQMAP's 2021 Annual Meeting)

Submit your Expression of Interest

We are looking for individuals and/or institutes to undertake the thematic review(s). We welcome collaboration across individuals or institutes. This call is open to all NEQMAP members (and non-NEQMAP members) who wish to contribute. The NEQMAP Secretariat at UNESCO Bangkok will select the authors for each topic of the thematic reviews following the review of the expression of interest and additional documents.

Please submit your expression of interest to neqmap@unesco.org, with the documents listed below

- Short expression of interest/proposed topic and research outline (max 2 page)
- CV
- written work/sample of writing

Deadline for submissions – Wednesday, 30 June 2021

Disclaimer: NEQMAP thematic reviews are 'voluntary contributions' – no remuneration is provided.