Call for contributions

Policy brief series on equity and equality in learning in Asia-Pacific: what do results from large-scale assessments tell us?

Context

The **Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP)** and UNESCO Bangkok are calling for contributions to policy brief series on the topic of **"Equity and Equality in learning in Asia-Pacific: what do results from large-scale assessments tell us?"** The policy brief series focus on thematic topics such as socio-economic background, gender, ethno-linguistic minorities, and rural and urban differences in learning outcomes. The policy brief series will be undertaken through the **Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP)**, a regional platform coordinated by UNESCO Bangkok. It aims to:

- Inform thinking, research and methods on evidence-based policymaking and practice in education; and
- Support knowledge-sharing among education stakeholders involved in assessments of student learning.

This year NEQMAP is calling for contributions to the two first policy briefs in the series which will focus on the **(1) learning outcomes in Asia-Pacific by socio-economic background and (2) gender.** Despite notable improvements in access to education across Asia-Pacific in the past two decades, gaps in learning outcomes between different groups of learners remain a major issue[1]. There continues to be a high correlation between a learner's socio-economic background and their learning achievements, with a lower share of low socio-economics learners reaching minimum proficiency in literacy and numeracy than their peers from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Learning outcomes also tend to differ by gender,

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[1] 5-Year Progress Review of SGD 4 –Education 2030 in Asia-Pacific, https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/5-year-progress-review-sdg-4-education-2030-asia-pacific

with girls and women outperforming boys and men in literacy in most countries and boys and men outperforming girls and women in mathematics in some contexts[2].

The policy briefs aim to identify gaps in **learning outcomes and factors** that may underpin these gaps. The series will emphasize promising policy solutions and strategies from across Asia-Pacific that help reduce inequity and ensure better learning for all. The review will rely on the rich **large-scale assessment (LSA) datasets in the region, including international, regional and national assessments,** as its primary source on learning outcomes.

Policy brief: Socio-economic background and learning

This policy brief will review the learning outcomes of students along the socio-economic distribution. School level analysis (e.g., schools' socio-economic background, school resources, etc.) will also be conducted to understand the extent of school disaggregation by socio-economic background (including between private and public schools) and its impact on learning outcomes. The chapter will also analyze the concept of resilience as defined by PISA.

Policy brief: Gender and learning

This policy brief will analyze the learning outcomes of boys and girls across various competency domains to identify gaps. Learning gaps of boys and girls will be analyzed across various factors including socio-economic background, learners' perception of schools and their schooling experience. The brief will also look at the developmental, cultural factors as well as the school policies and practices that may explain some of these gaps.

Scope

The briefs should look at the learning gaps in Asia-Pacific for countries where comparable data from large-scale assessments are available. The review should focus mostly on learning of school-aged students (primary to end of secondary) in formal education but will also highlight results of school-age learners not in formal education where data permits it. The data sources will include such international assessments as **PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS, SEA-PLM, PILNA** etc. Primary data collection is not necessary. The scope should explore either **socio-economic background and learning or gender and learning** and clearly explore the following questions:

- **What does the data tell us?**
- **What factors explain the results?**
- **Promising policies and practices in Asia-Pacific countries**
- **Policy pointers and recommendations**

Expected Format

- Written policy brief (~10 to 15 pages in a WORD document)

Tentative timeline

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[2] Equity and inclusion in education in Asia Pacific: Building back better and more equal, 2nd Asia-Pacific Regional Education Minister's Conference (APREMC-II),
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381974/PDF/381974eng.pdf.multi

- Application deadline: July 20th, 2023
- Notification of selection: July 30th, 2023
- Submission of the detailed outline from selected contributors: mid-August 2023
- Feedback from editorial team: end of August 2023
- 1st draft from authors: September 2023
- 1st round of reviews and feedback: October 2023
- Revision of drafts: November 2023
- Publication production and Launch: December 2023

Application process

Applicants wishing to contribute to this policy brief series should fill in the form (see Annex 1) and send it to the NEQMAP Secretariat (neqmap@unesco.org) by **20th July 2023 00:00 Bangkok time (GMT+7).**

Disclaimer: Policy brief series are "voluntary contributions" as part of the research and knowledge sharing mandate of the NEQMAP network - no remuneration is provided. The policy brief series will be published by UNESCO on **NEQMAP's Knowledge Portal** with all authors recognized.

Contact information

For further information or query, please contact:

- Soumaya Maghnouj, NEQMAP Secretariat (neqmap@unesco.org)
- Victoria Klimova, UNESCO Bangkok Consultant (v.klimova@unesco.org)

Glossary of key terminology

Equality in learning outcomes

Equality in learning outcomes refers to the principle that all learners fulfil their full learning potential regardless of their background and other individual characteristics (e.g., socio-economic background, gender, etc.). Equality in learning outcomes is an essential part of the principle of the right to education. In assessment, equality in learning outcomes is monitored by looking at the learning performance of different population subgroups. For example, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) defines inequality as the "differences among sub-populations in the distribution of their educational outcomes" (OECD, 2018).

Equity in learning

Equity in learning is defined as a fair access to the teaching and learning resources, processes and infrastructures for all learners (UNESCO, 2017). While the concept of equality looks at the outcomes, equity is seen through the prism of provision and uptake of education and learning processes that are responsive and relevant to the capacities and needs of diverse learners. Learning assessments can promote better equity by monitoring differences in access to quality teaching and learning resources, processes and infrastructures between different population sub-groups (OECD, 2018).

References

ANNEX 1: Application form

Applicant name(s): **Role(s):** **Institution affiliation(s):** **Country:** **Contact email(s):**

Which of the following themes would you like to draft?
    1) socio-economic background and learning
    2) gender and learning

Why are you interested in this topic? (250 words max)
Please describe your methodological approach (250 words)
What concepts would you like to highlight as a part of the policy brief? (250 words)
Your CV
Written work/Sample of writing