



Increasing Access to Basic Education for Out-of-School Children in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam through Flexible Learning Programmes

A Virtual Project Kick-off Meeting

17 November 2020

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The [ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth](#) (“Declaration”) was adopted by the Heads of State and Governments of ASEAN at the 28th ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR on September 7, 2016. The Declaration marks the first time a regional grouping, drawn from some of the region’s most marginalized people, has made a unified commitment to addressing the needs of out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY) who face barriers to education. Reasons for these barriers include gender and racial discrimination, geographical distance, inadequate support for children with disabilities, costs related to schooling, language barriers, and humanitarian crises caused by conflicts, natural disasters, statelessness and migration.

The Declaration takes a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of these vulnerable groups, based on its seven key principles: inclusivity, equity, accessibility, continuity, quality, flexibility and sustainability. ASEAN Member States (AMS) also agreed under the Declaration to guide domestic legislation and policies to address the challenges faced by OOSCY in each unique country context.

The “Increasing Access to Basic Education for Out-of-school Children through Flexible Learning Programmes” project, with generous support from the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) through the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund, was initiated and developed to address the needs of OOSCY in ASEAN by assisting Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV) within the frameworks of the Declaration and the [Initiative for ASEAN Integration \(IAI\) Work Plan III](#). The goal is to support CLMV in increasing access to basic education for OOSCY and disadvantaged learners through flexible learning solutions.

The introduction of the project is more timely than ever, as the current COVID-19 situation and its ongoing impacts have placed unique challenges on CLMV’s education systems, leaving disadvantaged children even further behind. With this in mind, the project will focus on the following three components:

Component	Goal
1. evidence-gathering	To identify promising blended learning cases in both formal and non-formal education settings and utilize these for pilot project design improvement
2. policy improvement	To assess the relevance and effectiveness of current policies and develop policy recommendations for the target equivalency program
3. Service delivery	To transfer the existing face-to-face equivalency model to digital format and pilot a blended equivalency program in two provinces of each country

The project will be implemented by the Ministries of Education of CLMV for the period of July 2020 to December 2021 with support from the Project Team (Good Neighbors International and UNESCO Bangkok).

Progress to Date

The project was officially approved by the Government of the ROK in July 2020. From July to the present, at least one preparation meeting was held by UNESCO Bangkok and GNI, along with each of the CLMV governments, to introduce the project, review and discuss its overall direction and components, and identify and agree upon activities and a timeline for implementation. Because the current COVID-19 situation has made reopening schools and learning centers more difficult in some countries than others, the pace of preparation has varied, especially for **Component 3: service delivery**. A summary of each country's progress is available below:

Component 1 (evidence-gathering)

- Terms of Reference (TOR) for a national consultant is being prepared and a national consultant has been identified to carry out the assignment.
- A team of international and national consultants will identify promising blended learning cases, which will be reflected in pilot project design improvement in both formal and non-formal education settings.

Component 2 (policy improvement)

- TOR for a national consultant is being prepared and a national consultant has been identified to carry out the assignment.
- A team of international and national consultants will support:
 - *Cambodia* and *Lao PDR* by improving their understanding of policy gaps which hinder OOSCY from learning
 - *Myanmar* and *Viet Nam* in preparing an equity- and inclusion-focused national education strategic plan

Component 3: service delivery

- A blended learning model will be piloted and a learning management system will be developed.
- A learning management system will be developed to share educational content and allow learners to interact with teachers/facilitators and peers synchronously.
- CLMV agreed to target lower-secondary-aged dropouts and OOSCY. Viet Nam will also focus on disadvantaged children at the primary- and lower-secondary levels.

Kick-off Meeting

GNI and UNESCO Bangkok will convene the online Project Kick-off Meeting with key stakeholders on November 17th, 2020 to officially launch the project. The objectives of the meeting are two-fold:

1. Information- and knowledge-sharing
 - a. Introduce CLMV governments and participants to the project
 - b. Exchange information and learn from each other about recent experiences related to COVID-19 and the implementation of programmes and policies for OOSCY and disadvantaged learners

2. Review and plan for implementations and communications
 - a. Inform designated country focal points of their expected roles and responsibilities
 - b. Discuss and agree on the guiding framework for the country-level implementations
 - c. Discuss and agree on regional- and national-level advocacy plans

Date and Venue

The meeting will be held virtually from 9:30am-12pm (GMT+7) on Tuesday, November 17th, 2020 via <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89720270018>.

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PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

9:30am-12pm (Thailand Standard Time / GMT+7)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89720270018>

Time	Item	Facilitator
9:30-10:15	<p><i>Opening Ceremony</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Sunghnam Lim, Republic of Korea Ambassador to ASEAN (5 min) • Welcome Address by H.E. Kung Phoak, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (5 min) • Welcome Address by Mr Il Ha Yi, Chair Person, Good Neighbors International (5 min) • Welcome Address by Mr Shigeru Aoyagi, Regional Director, UNESCO Bangkok (5 min) • Meeting Objectives • Introduction of CLMV Participants and Project Team 	Good Neighbors International (GNI)
10:15-10:35	<p><i>Introduction: Increasing Access to Basic Education for OOSC in CLMV</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the project by Ms Sungwon Moon, Senior Project Manager, GNI (10 min) • Introduction: Components 1 and 2 by Dr Hwanbo Park, International Consultant (10 min) 	GNI
10:35-11:15	<p><i>Country Presentation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambodia by Mr Kuoch Koulom-A, Director, Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (10 min) • Lao PDR by Ms Philany Phissamay, Deputy Director-General, Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education and Sports (10 min) • Myanmar by Dr Win Pe, Director, Department of Alternative Education, Ministry of Education (10 min) • Viet Nam by Dr Ta Ngoc Tri, Deputy Director General, Primary Education Department, Ministry of Education and Training; Dr Lê Anh Vinh, Director, National Center for Sustainable Development of General Education Quality, Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences (10 min) 	UNESCO Bangkok
11:15-11:30	<i>Q&A</i>	
11:30-11:55	<p><i>Next Steps</i> <i>Advocacy strategy at country level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakout-room discussion by country (20 min) • Reporting (5 min per country) 	UNESCO Bangkok
11:55	<p><i>Closing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Sun Kim, Senior Director, GNI • Mr Ichiro Miyazawa, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Bangkok 	GNI