

EDUCATION

Updates

31 July 2018

ASIA & PACIFIC

Russia, July 30. PIRLS 2016: Russian Reading Success. [Teacher magazine] The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) has measured trends in Year 4 students' reading literacy achievement every five years since 2001. When the last study cycle was conducted in 2016, students in the Russian Federation outperformed their peers in all 50 participating countries and 11 benchmarking regions. The Russian Federation's PIRLS results have been improving over time: It has recorded average scores of 528 in 2001, 565 (2006), 568, (2011) and 581 (2016). Participation [in PIRLS] has had a significant impact, not only on teaching reading but also on the assessment of reading literacy. PIRLS 2016 students learned literary reading according to the Federal State Education Standards (FSES) of primary education issued in 2009 and entered into practice in 2011. The program of literary reading taught in all primary schools includes the techniques of reading and understanding texts, such as reading of literary and scientific texts silently and aloud, understanding the content and main idea of texts, answering questions regarding the content of texts, and making a simple outline from which to retell texts. The FSES also specifies the requirements for metacognitive skills, which should reflect the acquisition of skills to read for meaning in texts of different styles and genres in accordance with goals and objectives; to build verbal expression consciously in accordance with the objectives of the communication; and to prepare texts in oral and written forms. [LINK](#)

Philippines, July 30. PH Students Have To Be Trained Better To Catch Up With Technology. [Manila Times] The plan of the Department of Education (DepEd) to review the K to 12 program barely two years after it was fully implemented is a welcome move. The K to 12 curriculum was designed to enable graduates to join the workforce right after high school, as well as prepare those who want to go on to higher education. The K to 12 program, introduced in 2011, required all students to have one year of kindergarten, six years of elementary schooling, four years of junior high school and two years of senior high school (grades 11 to 12). The K to 12 program revolutionized Philippine education by adding two years of secondary education and institutionalizing kindergarten. It consequently led to drastic changes in the curriculum from pre-school to collegiate levels. Hence, it was seen as critical in giving Filipino students a higher-quality education. [LINK](#)

Malaysia, July 28. Education Fair For Malaysian, Singaporean Institutions. [Borneo Post] The largest education fair for Malaysian and Singaporean institutions is happening on Aug 7, from 1pm to 5pm at Pullman Hotel here. The event organiser, EduQuest Education Services is calling on 2017 SPM, STPM, A-Levels and Diploma graduates and their parents to attend the fair and speak directly to the staff of universities and colleges in Malaysia and Singapore. Comparatively, studying in Malaysia and Singapore now seemed more affordable than other countries, in addition to scholarships, bursaries and financial aid provided by the government and respective institutions. [LINK](#)

Australia, July 27. Here's how to support quality teaching, with the evidence to back it. [PHYS] Increasing the quality of teaching in Australia is a political hot issue. Popular solutions include restricting entry to teaching courses to the "best and brightest" and reforming teacher education. Research shows that a low-cost approach that relies on

teachers learning together, at school, shows significant, quantifiable improvements in the quality of teaching. Some A\$16.4 million funding, announced today, will mean more teachers will benefit from this evidence-based professional development. Quality Teaching Rounds involves four or more teachers working in a professional learning community, in which they observe and analyse lessons in each teacher's classroom. This approach is distinct from professional development that asks teachers to focus on improving the teaching of a particular topic or a particular set of skills. Instead it focuses on enhancing teaching in general. Teachers are guided by a model of teaching (known as Quality Teaching) that focuses on the intellectual demands of the lesson, the quality of the learning environment and the extent to which learning is made meaningful for students. The model is already familiar to teachers in NSW and ACT government schools, and in a number of Catholic and independent schools across Australia. [LINK](#)

Thailand, July 27. Transforming Education in Thailand Through The Use of Technology. [Open Government Asia] The Thai Government has been looking to transform the Thai educational system to improve its quality and make it more accessible specifically on children in the rural areas of Thailand. Experts have suggested that instead Thailand should disrupt it by creating an education innovation ecosystem pushed by technology created by Edtech start-ups. In line with the Thai Government's goal to establish Thailand as a Smart Nation by 2020, they have decided to invest more in Thai Edtech start-up so as to revolutionise the Thai education system. Implementing more Edtech initiatives in the educational landscape also allows for a more effective and efficient way of reaching out to Thai students and getting them more engaged. [LINK](#)

Singapore, July 25. Singapore's Education System At Crossroads, Trade-offs Necessary To Prepare Young For The Future: Ong. [Today Online] The Republic's education system is at crossroads, and in order to prepare young people for the future, several trade-offs have to be made, said Education Minister Ong Ye Kung on Wednesday. Mr Ong noted that teachers could perhaps better communicate why the answers given by students were not the answers they wanted, instead of telling them that they were wrong. This could appear rigid as teachers want the child to learn and apply a particular concept to solve the question. To overcome this, the current curriculum should be less rigorous. The school system could be part of the issue, he said, and the authorities may need to recalibrate the trade-offs he mentioned in his speech. [LINK](#)

Myanmar, July 25. An Education Policy Disaster, 30 Years. [Frontier Myanmar] A decision to change the language of instruction for some high school subjects has had major ramifications and been a factor in the precipitous decline of education standards in Myanmar. The National Education Policy Commission reached a similar conclusion. It said there were many reasons why Myanmar's education system had declined, and changing the language of instruction for mathematics and science subjects to English was one of them. There are not enough teachers well versed in English to implement the policy. However, according to a recent survey conducted by British Council, most senior assistant teachers (SAT) have just beginner or elementary level English. It means that most of the SATs are not qualified to teach those subjects in English language. [LINK](#)

AMERICA

Cuba, July 22. Half of Cuba's 2017 Budget Spent On Welfare, Education: Gov't. Cuban government spent 51 percent of its national budget on education, health and social welfare last year, Cuban Finance Minister Lina Pedraza said on Saturday. Cuba has devoted a large amount of resources to health, social assistance and education in 2017. More than 19.7 billion U.S dollars were invested in public healthcare and social assistance programs, and 8.1 billion U.S dollars in education. In 2017, Cuba's fiscal accounts showed revenues surpassed expenses by 3 percent. [LINK](#)

AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST

Jordan, July 30. Ministry of Higher Education Officially Endorses The Name Talal Abu-Ghazaleh University College for Innovation. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has approved the new name of "Talal Abu-Ghazaleh University College for Innovation" (TAGUCI) to become the official name of the newly established university college which will start its first semester 2018/2019 next October. The approved name originally was: "Talal Abu-Ghazaleh University College for Applied Business and Information Technology." TAGUCI is considered the first educational institution of its kind in the world that requires graduates to create a digital invention as a condition for graduation. Abu-Ghazaleh Intellectual Property (AGIP) has submitted an application to protect the rights of this new educational method at a global level to be the sole property of Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization. Branches for TAGUCI will be established in Iraq, the United Arab Emirates with the aim of promoting the vision of the University in making a shift in higher education in Jordan, the Arab world and globally. [LINK](#)

Jordan, July 25. Strict Procedures When Certifying Diplomas. Kuwait's Cultural Office in Jordan confirmed Wednesday it would implement strict procedures for approving Kuwaiti students' diplomas and screen them before official approval. Office Attaché Bader Al-Edhaila stressed that the Office's strict procedures in dealing with certificates and student documents stand in the way of possible fraud, denying simultaneously that the Office has witnessed cases of fake certificates at different stages of study. Last year, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Jordan took legal actions after a Kuwaiti citizen was subject to a swindle from a Jordanian citizen through his social media to provide certificates from Jordanian universities and TOEFL certificates, after a complaint by the person concerned was filed. [LINK](#)

Tunisia, July 27. Ministry Unveils Plan To Attract Sub-Saharan Students. The ministry of higher education in Tunisia has launched several new initiatives aimed at increasing the number of foreign students, especially from Sub-Saharan Africa, to its universities. They include the establishment of a Franco-Tunisian University of Africa and the Mediterranean, and the creation of a national agency to receive and guide foreign students and facilitate the admission of Sub-Saharan students to public universities. The higher education initiatives taken by the Tunisian ministry of higher education are a step in the right direction, as they aim at greater attractiveness of the country for young people from other African countries. The new institution, the Franco-Tunisian University of Africa and the Mediterranean, is the second to be set up in Africa after the announcement of a plan in 2014 to establish the Arab-French University in the Egyptian capital Cairo. [LINK](#)

Kenya, July 26. Education Ministry Launches Disaster Management Policy. The Ministry of Education has launched the Education Sector Policy on Disaster Management. Speaking during the launch, Cabinet Secretary Amina Mohamed stated that its main objective is to

establish an inclusive institutional framework for disaster management in educational institutions in Kenya. She pointed out that the launch comes at a time when the education sector is confronted by the effects of heavy rains as well as the spate of fires that have destroyed school infrastructure in various parts of the country. The development of this policy was the culmination of a consultative process between the Ministry of Education, development partners and other stakeholders. [LINK](#)

EUROPE

United Kingdom, July 31. Children Starting School 'Cannot Communicate in Full Sentences'. More than a quarter of children starting primary school are unable to communicate in full sentences as concerns grow about the amount of time they are spending in front of screens. An education summit this autumn is to encourage parents' concerns about screen time in first major speech on social mobility and to get involved in their children's language development from an early age. The summit will bring together businesses, charities, tech companies and media groups to encourage more parents to read and learn new words with their children. The shadow education secretary, Angela Rayner, said: "The measure of our education system should be the support that it offers to the most vulnerable children, and the steps we take to level the playing field between them and their more affluent peers." [LINK](#)

UNESCO

UNESCO. July 28. Workshop Surveys Gaps in Learning, Assessment. African countries including Tanzania have been challenged to come up with a framework to enable and facilitate good learning and teaching in order to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The Deputy Permanent Secretary in education portfolio, Dr Avemaria Semakafu said in Dar es Salaam yesterday when opening a regional capacity building workshop on alignment between curriculum, teacher training and learning assessments. Organized by UNESCO, the workshop aimed at addressing poor quality of education from a system alignment perspective, involving participants from 17 sub-Saharan African countries. The three day workshop gathered national teams, heads of curriculum, teacher training and learning assessments from Sub-Saharan countries, as well as development agencies active in Local Education Groups in the region. [LINK](#)

SEAMEO

Vietnam, July 25. Vietnam Treasures Ties With SEAMEO. Vietnam appreciates the support of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) centres that have annually provided short-term training courses for Vietnamese teachers. The Indonesian centres for quality improvement of teachers and education personnel (QITEP) in mathematics, science and languages are particularly important, said Minister of Education and Training Phung Xuan Nha on Monday at the meeting with President of SEAMEO Council Muhadjir Effendy in Hanoi. Nha said he hoped the two sides would continue increasing exchanges between teachers and students and sharing experiences in order to develop education co-operation activities. After hearing experiences of Vietnam in adopting the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Muhadjir Effendy suggested a deeper exchange between Vietnamese and Indonesian working groups about the model, aiming to improve the quality of education between the two sides. The two ministers agreed to boost SEAMEO co-operation in sharing experiences of verifying the quality of education, planning the university-education network and exchanging teachers, students and researchers, and recognizing the equivalence of certificates among SEAMEO countries. [LINK](#)