



کمنتريڻ فنڊيڊيقن  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
NEGARA BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

# RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY

A CASE STUDY OF SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL  
REFORM AT SCALE IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM



Education  
Development  
Trust

# THE LITERACY AND NUMERACY COACHING PROGRAMME

**Today, Brunei Darussalam enjoys one of the highest standards of living in Asia – its per capita income is one of the highest and its standards of education and health are among the topmost in the developing world. Nevertheless, continued development remains a top priority and the country's long-term development framework *Wawasan Brunei 2035* (Brunei Vision 2035) aims to garner international recognition for:**

- the accomplishment of its educated and highly skilled people as measured by the highest international standards;
- quality of life that is among the top ten nations in the world; and
- a dynamic and sustainable economy with income per capita within the top ten countries in the world.

Education is a key element for the realisation of this vision. Consequently, the Brunei Ministry of Education has made provision for several major educational changes to provide an education system that is more meaningful and ultimately, more effective in preparing students for learning in this complex, globalised, digital society.

**The Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Programme (LNCP) is the ministry's flagship programme for raising student achievement in literacy and numeracy.**

The long-term goal of our programme is that by 2035 all students are highly numerate and literate in the English language. To achieve the goal, there needs to be high quality teaching in all schools and sustained levels of support to these teachers. Consequently, there are three interrelated end-of-programme outcomes to be achieved by 2035:

- all students highly numerate and literate in English;
- high quality English and mathematics teaching;
- a system empowered to deliver sustained improvements in literacy and numeracy.

In response to this, Brunei's Ministry of Education contracted Education Development Trust through its subsidiary company, CfBT Education Services (B) Sdn Bhd, to design, test and refine an approach for LNCP and demonstrate that it is feasible through implementation. To date, we have deployed:

- **60 international coaches** to work in schools alongside local coaches and teachers to act as role models and provide day-to-day ongoing coaching and support
- **8 international mentors** to provide one-on-one support to participants in the leadership programme
- **20 technical experts** to provide ad hoc specialist support on identified technical matters as part of the capacity building programme



## THE PROGRAMME PRINCIPLES

### AT SCALE

Since LNCP's inception it has worked in all Bruneian government schools. Through the programme's four professional development programmes, all primary and secondary students are included in LNCP – a total of 20,456 students who are directly impacted by our work.

### TARGETED CAPACITY BUILDING

To ensure that the work is always relevant, we regularly assess participants' needs and identify the most appropriate next steps or additional learning required. For example, we develop new training materials, provide individualised reinforcement coaching or add new seminars to the agenda.

### LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Our programme was co-developed and is embedded within the Ministry of Education and therefore, works in and is guided by, existing structures and people in the system. This automatically builds institutional and individual capacity to go back into the educational system. Local experts take over increasing responsibility for continued capacity building throughout the programme: for example, senior ministry colleagues will oversee LNCP governance and Brunei Darussalam Teacher Academy colleagues will take over the local coach training.

### AN INTEGRATED PROGRAMME

Our professional development programmes have been carefully developed to meet the specific needs of each stakeholder group while the overall programme design ensures that all targeted groups interact with each other and conduct structured peer reviews.

### QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION

We recruit, deploy and retain professional staff – for example international coaches and mentors as well as programme management staff – with appropriate values and attitudes with a strong commitment. Team cohesiveness is achieved through regular training, mentoring and interaction, as well as through long-term investment in staff wellbeing. International expertise has been complemented by an LNCP unit headed by the Deputy Permanent Secretary (Core Education) within the Ministry of Education.

# OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

**The ultimate beneficiaries of the LNCP are intended to be all students in basic compulsory education in Brunei. The goal is that they will benefit from an improved quality of teaching in the classroom and achieve higher learning outcomes. However, there is clear and consistent evidence that teacher quality is a key determinant of student learning.**

Specific factors such as the years of teacher training (initial and in-service), the teacher's verbal fluency, subject matter knowledge, having appropriate books and materials and knowing how to use them, teacher expectation of pupil performance, time spent on practice and classroom preparation, and frequent monitoring of student progress are all key factors identified in many key research studies that have a positive bearing on the quality of teachers' performance and, consequently, student achievement. Therefore, although the main goal of our work through the LNCP is to improve student learning outcomes, this will be achieved through working directly with teachers and reforming pedagogical practice in the classroom.

We have worked with school leaders, the Department of Inspectorate, the Brunei Darussalam Teacher Academy and heads of clusters to identify and train local coaches to ensure a sustainable coaching programme is in place by June 2019. Additionally, international coaches and more recently, local coaches have been training teachers (known as 'learning partners') to be active advocates for LNCP teacher change in their schools.

**Attaining the programme goals requires some transformational change for the five different actor groups (teachers, local coaches, lead trainers, heads of clusters and system leaders) and the development of new knowledge, skills, abilities, ways of thinking and working to be able to change. Therefore, the underlying programme design is based on an actor-centred capacity building model designed to change and improve practice across the system.**

Given Brunei's very unique context and given the need to immediately scale the intervention to all schools in the country, it is imperative that the programme is implemented in close partnership with the ministry. Indeed, the CfBT LNCP management team is embedded within the Office of the Permanent Secretary: this arrangement reinforces the partnership approach to implementation and has facilitated aligning all ministry education policy development with the LNCP.

LNCP is designed in three distinct phases (see diagram right).

## THE THREE DISTINCT PHASES OF LNCP

SEPT 2016 – DEC 2016

**INCEPTION PHASE**  
Develop and design an approach for LNCP implementation using international best practice

JAN 2017 – JUNE 2019

**IMPLEMENT & REFINE PHASE**  
Implement and refine the approach to ensure maximum impact and build sufficient local capacity to lead it beyond 2019

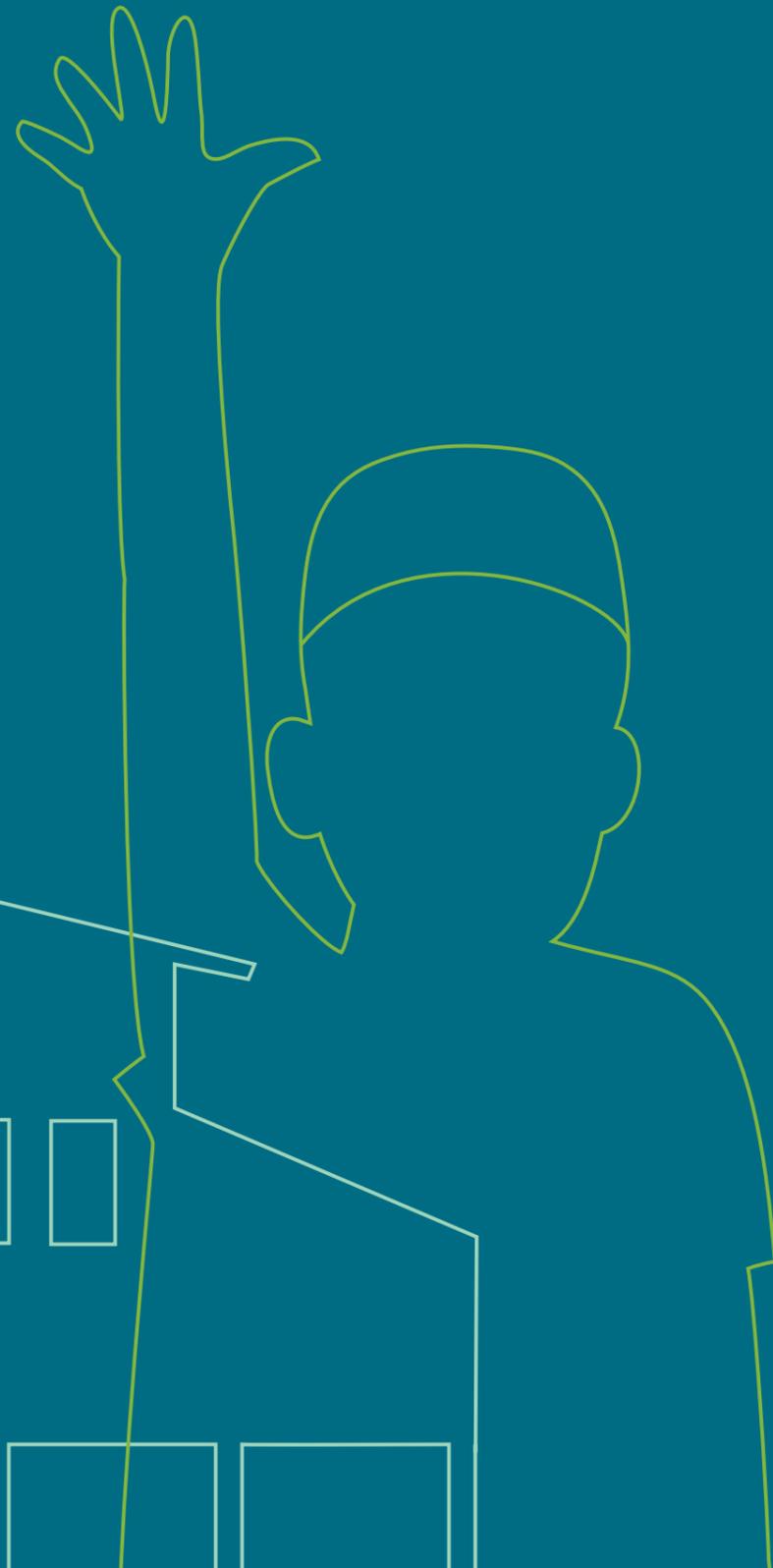
JULY 2019 – 2035

**SUSTAINABILITY PHASE**  
The ministry will continue to build on the proven LNCP approach with all English and mathematics teachers with the intention of broadening the scope to other subject areas

# THE IMPACT HEADLINES



Reviewing the story of LNCP between 2016 and 2018 shows a great deal has been accomplished in a short amount of time with professional development programmes developed, training implemented and transformational change emerging at all levels of the system. The progress described is based on a review of all routine monitoring data (detailed descriptions of which can be found in the LNCP Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan) and focus group discussions conducted in August and September 2018.



# 20,456

STUDENTS DIRECTLY IMPACTED BY LNCP

# 8

INTERNATIONAL MENTORS

FOR LEADERS

# 20

TECHNICAL EXPERTS

PROVIDING DEMAND DRIVEN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

# 60

INTERNATIONAL COACHES

WORKING ALONGSIDE LOCAL COACHES AND TEACHERS

# FOUR

SPECIALIST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

TARGETING TEACHERS, LOCAL COACHES, LEAD TRAINERS, HEADS OF CLUSTERS AND SYSTEM LEADERS

SYSTEM-WIDE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY BEYOND JUNE 2019

**SYSTEM-WIDE IMPACT**

We are working with a total number of 700 direct beneficiaries including teachers, Brunei Darussalam Teacher Academy officials, heads of clusters and other ministry officials. The programme is currently working with more local coaches, teachers and system leaders than were originally envisaged. This is part of the programme’s succession planning and is bolstering the programme’s sustainability.

**IMPACT ON STUDENTS**

There are early indications that progress towards the programme’s ultimate goal is being made. Although only SAT data from 2018 is comparable at this stage, it is clear that student results are increasing. Taking Year 2 for example, when compared with SATs data from February 2018, the most recent SATs in July 2018 showed a 15% increase in the number of students achieving 50% scores or higher in mathematics, and a 7% increase in students achieving 50% scores or higher in English.

This is a substantial achievement and although it cannot directly be attributed to LNCP, this is a clear step towards the LNCP’s overall objective. There is also some undisputed evidence on the positive change on the attitudes and confidence of students towards their literacy and numeracy studies. Many teachers noted a positive effect not only on their own attitudes but also on students’ enjoyment and engagement in class.

**IMPACT ON TEACHERS**

We have developed many innovative and context-appropriate professional development programmes and materials. These are acknowledged to be of high quality and are favourably regarded by beneficiaries. The materials are proving to be effective as all professional development programmes are beginning to result in demonstrated change and improvement. Both local coaches and teachers are showing improved classroom practice, indicating a universality of the training.

There is also concrete improvement in the support structures and quality assurance mechanisms, such as heads of clusters and the school leaders who play a critical role in supporting teachers to improve. The local coaches are beginning to feel confident in their role and feel accepted and valued by teachers and heads of clusters. The relevance of the programme and materials is evidenced by the scale-up to other teachers and subjects, as they have independently adopted some of the materials (especially the Teaching for Mastery Framework) and adapted it to their schools and classrooms. This is an early indication of the programme’s success.



In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, we have designed and published a Teaching for Mastery (TfM) Framework as a guideline to enhance the quality of teaching and learning English literacy and mathematics in classrooms. It is a practical guide designed for use by all in the Bruneian education system.





### IMPACT ON SYSTEM LEADERS, HEADS OF CLUSTERS AND LEAD TRAINERS

LNCP is fully embedded in the Ministry of Education, with ministry staff engaging in programme governance and decision making. The programme is well on the way to fully achieving the end-of-phase (2019) goal that: LNCP is working and being led by the Government.

Beyond the professional development materials and training programmes, our programme has been successful in providing the necessary resources to help make transformational change. The deployment of the international coaches, in particular, has added substantial value to schools by introducing knowledge, skills and resources.

In working with beneficiary groups vertically and horizontally across the system and as a result of the integrated nature of the professional development programmes, we have increased collaboration within the education ecosystem.

We have also generated a high level of commitment for reform. Stakeholders in different beneficiary groups have all commented on the importance of not only what LNCP is trying to achieve, but also the manner in which it is being done – some stakeholders even reporting that they would continue it independently if it was stopped.



## WHAT TEACHERS & LEADERS SAY ABOUT LNCP

"LNCP is the first time that we are not implementing it in exactly the same way in every context but we are allowing the international coaches, heads of school and local coaches to shape and change the intervention based on the context."

**SYSTEM LEADER, SEPT 2018**

"There is actually evidence that teachers who are not in the programme are still working with good international coaches and changing practice in the classroom. It's not as if all teachers in the system were not good before. Those that were good are changing the way they work and ensuring they are even better."

**HEAD OF CLUSTER, SEPT 2018**

"There is a clear cultural shift at school level in the classrooms as well from being pensive and dependent to being outspoken. If you saw us 10 or 20 years ago you would see a very quiet classroom and that is what we wanted to be, quiet classrooms. But that has shifted now; if you go into a quiet classroom now you know that something is wrong – unless of course if it's exams."

**SYSTEM LEADER, SEPT 2018**

"The greatest impact that I could see was since last year our O-Level credit has increased by 15% - from 50% to over 64%; and then last June, from 64%, we jumped to 75% credit for O level. [LNCP] is the only thing that is different that we have been doing so taking that into account, I think it does give a big impact on our school performance as a whole."

**TEACHER, SEPT 2018**

"dialogic teaching is the BEST thing that I get from LNCP so far. I really liked it because - naturally - I love students talking. I don't want to dominate the class because I am teaching language. Why do I stop them from using the language? They must use the language. So, with dialogic teaching it provides more opportunity for the students to speak in a structured manner."

**LEARNING PARTNER, SEPT 2018**

"I was not a leader before this. I was just a primary English teacher teaching preschool and my subject was early reading... the programme started, and I built my confidence. [My mentor] has helped me build up my leadership skills and help me for example in my application task that I must go and see the people not wait until the people come to me and show me my mistakes."

**SYSTEM LEADER, SEPT 2018**

# THE WIDER IMPACT

## THE CENTRALISED ASSESSMENT UNIT (CAU) AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF HIGH AND LOW PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LITERACY

Our programme has had a substantial impact on the assessment landscape in Brunei. Early in the programme it was realised that Brunei lacked a consistent and systematic assessment process, inhibiting the ministry and the programme to accurately track student progress. LNCP has been instrumental in the establishment of the Centralised Assessment Unit; it was created in October 2017 and is led by the Director, Department of Examinations and is supervised by the Ministry of Education's Deputy Permanent Secretary (Core Education).

The CAU is increasingly playing a pivotal role in the ministry's reform agenda. By ensuring rigorous, consistent and systematic assessments, the CAU is ensuring that student progress can be tracked for the first time on a national level. The evidence suggests that through LNCP, this consistent and understandable data has enabled them to continuously self-improve and ensure that those responsible for improved attainment levels are held to account for progress. Our other interventions, such as the System Leader Professional Development programme, have ensured that this data is not used for punitive measures but to target resourcing and collaborate for success. The CAU is one of the jewels in the crown of the Ministry of Education's reform agenda. LNCP has evidently helped to ensure its effectiveness.

## THE SCALE OUT/MULTIPLIER EFFECTS OF LNCP

The effect of LNCP is already extending beyond the immediate beneficiaries with many reflecting that other teachers had requested coaching support or advice about dialogic teaching. There is demonstrable evidence to suggest that LNCP has organically multiplied throughout Brunei's education system. The evidence demonstrates a common theme in the responses, that there

are already spill-over effects of LNCP. In some cases, this has been the involvement or interest of English and mathematics teachers who are not teachers in the programme. While in others, teachers from other departments, including science, Malay and Arabic have shown interest and sought advice from local and international coaches. The review suggests that many teachers were enquiring specifically about dialogic teaching and other pedagogy included in the Teaching for Mastery handbooks, with the intention of implementing these in their own classrooms.

## INTERNATIONAL COACHES INTRODUCING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND RESOURCES INTO SCHOOLS

International coaches have played an instrumental role in deploying the Teaching for Mastery and Local Coach Trainer Programme. From evidence gathered in the review, it is clear

"I must share, one of my international coaches in a rural area has been really great. He engaged not only with the teachers and students but with the parents as well. He engaged other private schools to come to this rural school. The Panaga School came into the rural schools in Sukang and Melilas near the Brunei border. So, the students can get a different experience and learn from each other. They have been sharing learning and knowledge because of the international coach. This is a success of the LNCP."

HEAD OF CLUSTER, SEPT 2018

"We are hearing a lot about the good work of the international coaches and a lot of the issues are coming up from the ground level. This is a success story as we are able to understand what is happening on the ground."

SYSTEM LEADER, SEPT 2018

that the international coaches have supported others in the education system. International coaches have supported school leaders – helping problem solve and make evidence-informed decisions; they have also supported the heads of clusters – helping workplan and strategise the implementation of policy. They have also supported teachers – by sharing resources, giving advice and encouraging good practice. It is clear that the advanced competencies required for appointment and high standards expected of international coaches in post have paid dividends in Brunei's schools and the wider education system. The role of the international coaches has been recognised in LNCP as central to the development of the local coaches and should therefore continue to be an integral part of the programme in the next few years until local coaches are high in quality and confidence.





## LEAVING A SUSTAINABLE LEGACY

Education Development Trust and CfBT Brunei are committed to effective and adaptive delivery as well as delivering improved learner outcomes and this monitoring report sought to review the available evidence of progress so far. There are clear emerging messages of progress in both the quantitative and qualitative data reviewed, suggesting that overall, in a short amount of time, LNCP has created some very strong foundations on which to build. We have developed high quality professional development programmes and introduced appropriate structures for long-term sustainable reform. The final year of this phase of the programme will focus on ensuring a sustainable operating model for LNCP after 2019, continue to target resources to those that are underperforming against average, and continue to ensure that the evident impact of our work is effectively captured in 2019.

To find out more about the programme, please visit: [www.lncp.moe.gov.bn](http://www.lncp.moe.gov.bn)

### ABOUT CfBT BRUNEI AND EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT TRUST

CfBT Brunei is a subsidiary of Education Development Trust, a not-for-profit organisation that transforms lives around the world by improving school systems at scale, and by delivering expert careers and employability services. We have been working with governments, donor agencies as well as with clusters of schools to effect and embed sustainable change for 50 years. Our specialist knowledge and our active programme of respected and authoritative research means we design and deliver effective, far-reaching solutions which are evidence-informed. We can be called upon for rapid strategic evaluation and insights through to designing and delivering longer term programmes which embed improved practices across a region or country – operating at scale with highly contextualised solutions.

We invest annually in our programme of education research which is available to download from our website; our research informs policymaking and supports practitioners around the world.

To find out more, contact: [enquiries@educationdevelopmenttrust.com](mailto:enquiries@educationdevelopmenttrust.com)

