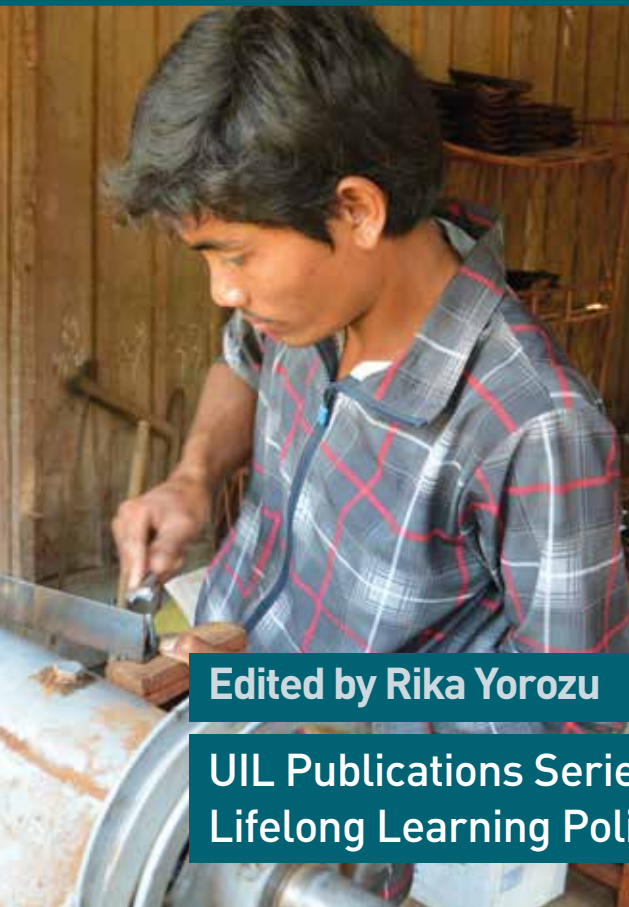




Lifelong learning in transformation: Promising practices in Southeast Asia



Edited by Rika Yorozu

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LIFELONG LEARNING IN TRANSFORMATION: PROMISING PRACTICES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic,
Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam

EDITED BY RIKA YOROZU

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
FOREWORDS	7
INTRODUCTION	8
1. About the project	8
2. Scope and objectives of the project	8
3. Methodology and structure of this report	8
CHAPTER 1: Understanding lifelong learning in Southeast Asia	10
1. The conceptual framework of lifelong learning	10
2. Meeting the challenges: Towards lifelong learning for all	12
3. Visions of a learning society	14
CHAPTER 2: Good practices in lifelong learning	16
1. The evolution of Singapore's education system towards inclusion and quality	16
2. Advocacy for lifelong learning: The case of Viet Nam	20
3. Seeking a national system embraced by the people of Lao PDR	23
4. Gender mainstreaming in education: Indonesia	24
5. The birth of alternative education in Myanmar	26
6. The National Equivalency Education Programme in Timor-Leste	30
7. Lifelong learning for teachers: The case of Brunei Darussalam	32
8. Teacher Development Programme through e-Learning in the Philippines	34
9. Community learning centres in Thailand	36
10. Research on assessment of community learning centres in Cambodia	39
11. The Open High School Programme in the Philippines	41
12. The open university system in Viet Nam	43
13. Globalized online learning in Malaysia	46
14. Industrial skills qualifications in Brunei Darussalam	48
15. The Singapore SkillsFuture movement	49
CHAPTER 3: Concluding remarks and guiding questions	53
1. Vision: Defining the purposes of education and lifelong learning	53
2. Policy: Coherent governing commitments to lifelong learning	54
3. Quality: Providing inclusive and equitable quality learning opportunities for all	54
4. Recognition of learning outcomes from all forms of learning	55
5. Evaluation: Setting targets and indicators to monitor and evaluate lifelong learning	56
6. Questions for further reflection	56
References and further reading	58
APPENDIX: Recommendations and strategic actions for implementation	62

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This report is a compendium of country reports on good practice in lifelong learning in Southeast Asian countries. The writing team was led by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (Rika Yorozu) and the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning (Khou Huu Phuoc), with input from consultants Chris Duke and Heribert Hinzen.

It is the outcome of a project on building a lifelong learning agenda in Southeast Asian countries, initiated by Arne Carlsen, former Director of UIL, and Le Huy Lam, Director of SEAMEO CELLL, in late 2015. The aim was to make lifelong learning a key principle of education in the region. A planning meeting for this project, held in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, in March 2016, concluded that national reflection on good practice in lifelong learning should be the organizing principle of the project. Good practice was presented by representatives from 11 countries at an expert meeting, also held in Ho Chi Minh City, in October 2016. The meeting discussed and agreed on the strategic direction and actions for implementation, which served as a framework to analyse the recommendations and future plans set out in the country reports.

This report has benefited from the contribution of experts from public institutions, in the region and beyond, who led the reflection on good practice in lifelong learning, prepared country reports and provided feedback on the draft compendium. The institutions were: Institute of Brunei Technical Education (Brunei Darussalam); Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (Cambodia); Center for Early Childhood and Community Education Development, West Java (Indonesia); Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education and Sport (Lao PDR); Policy Planning Division, Ministry of Higher Education (Malaysia); Department of Alternative Education, Ministry of Education (Myanmar); University of the Philippines Open University (the Philippines); Research and Innovation Division, Institute for Adult Learning Singapore (Singapore); Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education, Ministry of Education (Thailand); National Directorate for Recurrent Education, Ministry of Education (Timor-Leste); and Hanoi Open University (Viet Nam).

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Finally, appreciation is extended to the SEAMEO family and UNESCO field offices in the region for their undertaking to use this report in their work with national governments to ensure a multi-stakeholder policy dialogue on improving the quality of education through the lens of lifelong learning.

FOREWORDS

Learning throughout life is the driving force for transforming our world to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Many countries and communities regard lifelong learning for all as essential to their education goals and development frameworks. The 11 countries in Southeast Asia featured in this report – Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam – are no exception. UNESCO has strong regional partners in this region, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), which enables cooperation and learning among the countries of the region.

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) supports ministries of education in the region to develop public policies and strategies on lifelong learning through policy reviews and policy sharing, including a series of workshops. Following the Seminar on National Policy for Lifelong Learning for seven ASEAN countries in Hanoi, Viet Nam, in 2013, recommendations were put forward to develop and strengthen regional collaboration in promoting lifelong learning for all. To facilitate progress, the Institute has partnered with the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning (SEAMEO CELLL) since 2016 to develop and implement holistic and comprehensive lifelong learning approaches that link different sectors and forms of learning.

This compendium is a first attempt to document and share promising practices in promoting lifelong learning in 11 Southeast Asian countries. It is published as part of UIL's series on Lifelong Learning Policies and Strategies, and highlights the global relevance, knowledge and experience this region offers. The report was made possible through national discussion of good practice in lifelong learning in participating countries, and the sharing of findings at national and regional level for mutual learning and collaboration.

I hope this compendium can enrich policy dialogue in Southeast Asian countries and beyond, and trigger positive transformations for stronger inter-ministerial cooperation and public-private partnerships in expanding quality lifelong learning opportunities and reducing disparities among people in education and development.

David Atchoarena
Director a.i., UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

In response to the socio-economic challenges of the modern world, nations across the continents have turned to lifelong learning as the key to both a skilled and adaptive workforce and a more equitable and cohesive society; those in Southeast Asia are no exception. The region has indeed solidified its commitment to lifelong learning via the ASEAN Charter 2007, the 15th ASEAN Summit in 2009 and, most recently, the seven SEAMEO Priority Areas, proposed through the SEAMEO Strategic Dialogue of Education Ministers in Lao PDR in 2014 and endorsed by SEAMEO Council Conference in 2015, particularly Priority 2: *Addressing barriers to inclusion and access to basic learning opportunities through innovation in educational deliveries*. In practice, however, lifelong learning in Southeast Asia leaves much to be desired as there exist great gaps in the conceptualization and implementation of lifelong learning among its 11 countries. This situation necessitates an effective means of knowledge, policy and practice sharing that will unite and assist Southeast Asian countries in promoting lifelong learning.

The challenge of developing such a means was taken up by SEAMEO CELLL in its flagship project, *Towards a Lifelong Learning Agenda in Southeast Asian Countries*, with support from UIL. The project compiled good practice case studies from each Southeast Asian country with the intention that these practices would provide a firm evidence base for policy recommendations and regional dialogue on lifelong learning.

This document is a compendium of 15 promising lifelong learning practices in 11 Southeast Asian countries. The practices were extracted from qualitative national reports on lifelong learning conditions, prepared by a network of experts appointed by SEAMEO CELLL's Governing Board, and further substantiated with information from secondary sources. It is hoped that the presented practices, though deeply rooted in national contexts, will provide insights or principles that are useful, if not directly applicable, to all Southeast Asian countries and beyond.

I am very happy that the compendium has been published in time for the current SEAMEC 49, held in Jakarta, Indonesia, and, on behalf of the SEAMEO Secretariat, I would like to express SEAMEO's deep gratitude to UIL and other partners for their continuing support and appreciation to SEAMEO CELLL for its commitment and hard work over the past year.

Dr Gatot Hari Priowirjanto
Director, SEAMEO Secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. ABOUT THE PROJECT

Southeast Asian countries have made great progress in improving access to basic education in the region. However, while student participation has generally increased, and drop-out rates have fallen, challenges remain in ensuring 'inclusive and equitable quality education and promot[ing] lifelong learning opportunities for all' (Sustainable Development Goal 4, one of the internationally agreed 2030 Sustainable Development Goals). To address these challenges, Southeast Asian countries need to learn from one another's policies and practices, reinforce implementation strategies and move to put their vision of lifelong learning fully into practice.

To strengthen Southeast Asian countries' efforts to make lifelong learning more inclusive and gender-responsive, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning (SEAMEO CELLL) and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) initiated a regional project in 2016 on research and advocacy for lifelong learning. The project, *Towards a Lifelong Learning Agenda in Southeast Asian Countries*, promotes the sharing of good practice in implementing holistic and integrated lifelong learning approaches that link different sectors and forms of learning across the region.

2. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The project is working with 11 Southeast Asian countries in close collaboration with the SEAMEO CELLL governing board members and UNESCO field offices: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

It is a start-up project, for which UIL has provided an initial investment and technical support to SEAMEO CELLL, which will run until mid-2018. It aims to strengthen mutual collaboration and learning at regional level through: documentation and dissemination of holistic and comprehensive approaches to lifelong learning; an online knowledge-sharing platform on policies and practices in lifelong learning; and recommendations on policy and programmes promoting lifelong learning.

At the level of individual countries, the primary expected result is to prepare national strategic actions to build lifelong learning agendas through:

- Multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral dialogue on lifelong learning, initiated and strengthened within and among national ministries responsible for lifelong learning (i.e. basic education, vocational education and higher education) and in association with other public and private stakeholder organizations involved in the development and implementation of lifelong learning policies and strategies.
- Identifying, analysing and summarizing successful policies and practices in lifelong learning in national reports.
- Identifying government responses that improve equity and quality of lifelong learning.
- Learning from the experiences of other Southeast Asian countries.

The objectives of this report are to share promising policies and practices promoting lifelong learning in Southeast Asian countries and to stimulate public policy dialogue on lifelong learning at national and regional levels.

3. METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

An early draft of this report was presented for consultation at an expert meeting in Ho Chi Minh City in October 2016. This stage of the project was devoted to receiving and analysing reports from 'national focal points' – individual country experts and coordinators (SEAMEO CELL and UIL, 2016). The draft compendium report was further developed in light of discussion at this meeting, and subsequently rewritten as full country studies were received.

The report draws on the work of 10 countries which submitted national reports for this project and on a wealth of literature, including official government documents from all SEAMEO countries and relevant documents from bilateral and international development agencies.¹ A later draft report, including descriptions of good practice, was reviewed by national focal points to ensure accuracy of information and interpretation.

¹ For Myanmar, the description of good practice in this report is based on a presentation made at the expert meeting, the country's National Education Sector Plan (2016–20) and email exchanges with national experts.



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SEAMEO CELLL Governing Board Members and experts participating in the project meeting on lifelong learning (Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, October 2016)

Reflections within and across countries focused on critical factors that support the promotion of lifelong learning for all by paying special attention to four building blocks of lifelong learning:

- Inclusive and gender-responsive teaching and learning practices in education that place learners in the centre and deal effectively with multiple transitions during learning, working and living, throughout the life course.
- Systems that recognize learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning to create synergies between different forms of learning.
- Practices that link different social and economic development sectors and facilitate the involvement of all stakeholders in lifelong learning.
- Coherent government policies and strategies that enable these practices.

The compendium report has three chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the concept of lifelong learning and how it is reflected in international and national documents. Chapter 2 presents a selection of good and promising practices drawn from the national reports to give readers a sense of new policy developments and innovative practice undertaken in order to enhance inclusion and improve quality through continuing professional development of teachers and facilitators of learning. Chapter 3 offers a set of proposals for future action based on the 2016 expert meeting and recommendations in national reports.

The full text of country reports and key reference documents in the field of lifelong learning are available from the Southeast Asian Lifelong Learning Portal (<https://www.sea-llportal.org>), which was produced as part of this project.

Chapter 1: Understanding lifelong learning in Southeast Asia

The regional integration taking place in Southeast Asia has two contradictory features. On the one hand, it is fostering fruitful collaboration and exchange among the 11 countries that are jointly developing into a united and increasingly important emerging region. On the other, it is causing concern among the citizens of each country about the effect the free flow of goods, services and people is having on their distinctive cultures and identities.

Educational indicators in all 11 countries show impressive achievements in school enrolment and progression since 2000. However, few national education systems in the region have dealt adequately with the challenges of inclusion, equity and quality. As the growing income gap suggests, economic development in the region has not benefitted the poor (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015). The region has a rich culture and history but is also prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons that disrupt all aspects of daily life, including schooling. In this context, lifelong learning is a popular concept in the region's education and business sectors. This chapter discusses key global and regional documents on lifelong learning and the diverse ways in which lifelong learning is dealt with in national education policies and strategy documents.

1. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Learning throughout life is as old as human history. The concept can be found in many cultures, ancient civilizations and religions in Asia (Medel-Añonuevo, 2001, p. 1). Even so, grasping the full meaning of 'lifelong learning for all' is difficult and unsettling, and mobilizing human and financial resources to implement a vision of lifelong learning is demanding. Until informal learning, and formal and non-formal education and training are all seen as full and vital parts of a country's total learning system, and equity and quality are placed in the centre of education and learning, the comprehensive integrated development visualized in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda will elude us.

As a modern policy concept, lifelong learning was shaped in the second half of the 20th century and it is now being adapted, reinterpreted and applied in different countries and

regions. In Southeast Asia it engages with different traditions and ways of learning supported by specific policies and strategies. There are many definitions of lifelong learning, though they tend to resemble each other. The first coherent presentation came from a UNESCO commission chaired by Edgar Faure and its 1972 report, *Learning to Be*. This broad and visionary document addressed the totality of human life, introducing the concepts of the 'learning society' and 'lifelong education', locating schooling (formal education) in the wider social context of learning throughout life.

UNESCO was not the only international agency to adopt the idea of lifelong learning and promote it. It was taken up by the Council of Europe and by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which published *Recurrent Education: Towards a strategy for lifelong learning* in 1974. With the emergence of globalization and the knowledge economy over the last 20 years, the term 'lifelong learning' has come to be used much more narrowly. Although the terminology used by the European Union, the OECD, the World Bank and other international agencies is often similar, invoking the social and civic as well as economic dimensions of lifelong learning, the focus of these institutions is now almost exclusively on the economic benefits of learning. Increasing the supply of vocational education and training courses is seen as being the critical thing, essential for strengthening national economies and competitiveness, while the wider benefits are by comparison neglected. Although UNESCO has never denied the economic benefits of learning, it has always focused on a holistic vision of lifelong learning and on the social and personal benefits it endows: respect for life and human dignity, equal rights, social justice, cultural diversity, international solidarity and shared responsibility for a sustainable future (UNESCO, 2015).

Quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all are key global education goals in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Lifelong learning is described in the *Education 2030 Framework for Action* as:

[R]ooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults and the elderly, girls and boys, women and men) in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community,

workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Education systems which promote lifelong learning adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach involving all sub-sectors and levels to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for all individuals. (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 30)

Lifelong learning is an organizing principle of education covering all phases of life and all forms of learning – formal and non-formal education and informal learning – as illustrated in *Figure 1.1*. A qualification framework validating learning outcomes from non-formal education and informal

learning helps learners get access to and benefit from the possibilities of formal education.

The concept of the learning society is also used in this report to refer to any country in which there is generous provision of education and training, vocational and skills training or wider provision, for all citizens, to meet diverse needs. It also has a richer meaning: a society in which learning is shared and owned not just by individuals but by organizations and institutions as well, meaning these, too, can learn from their own experience and come to act more effectively. In times of very rapid change, globally and for Southeast Asia, awareness of the richer meaning is beginning to grow.

Figure 1.1. Lifelong learning opportunities for all

		Primary education (ISCED 1)	Lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	Upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)	Short-cycle tertiary education (ISCED 5)	Bachelor's or equivalent (ISCED 6)	Master's or equivalent (ISCED 7)	Doctoral or equivalent (ISCED 8)	
FORMAL: leads to a recognized award, diploma or certificate	Early childhood education (ISCED 0)	Special needs education, vocational, technical and professional education								
		Second chance education		Apprenticeships, practical applied learning, residential practices						
	Qualifications Framework (QF)* Level 1			QF Level 2	QF Level 3	QF Level 4	QF Level 5	QF Level 6	QF Level 7	QF Level 8
NON-FORMAL: leads to a non-formal certificate or none at all	Early childhood care	Youth and adult literacy programmes		Work skills training, professional development, internships						
		Out-of-school programmes		Life-skills training, health and hygiene, family planning, environmental conservation, computer training						
		Social or cultural development, organized sport, arts, handicrafts								
INFORMAL: no award	Family-based child care	Self-directed, family-directed, socially directed learning: workplace, family, local community, daily life								
		Incidental learning: reading newspapers, listening to radio, visiting museums								

Source: UNESCO, 2016b, p. 8

* QF: validate non-formal and informal learning

Important international agreements which have shaped Southeast Asian regional and national policies on education and lifelong learning include (in chronological order):

- Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
- Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976).
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) – Part III, Article 10.
- ILO Recommendation 195 on human resources development: education, training and lifelong learning (2004).
- Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (2015).¹
- UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (revised in 2015).

These agreements all stress the right to education for all and offer support to the development and evaluation of national education policies and strategies. The Southeast Asian Lifelong Learning Portal includes these agreements and other key literature, with brief descriptions.

In Southeast Asia, improving education and lifelong learning is recognized as key for sustainable development by different sectors (labour, youth, rural development) as well as by individuals (<http://data.myworld2015.org/>; Anon, 2017; ILO, 2016). Current major regional education strategies agreed by regional bodies in Southeast Asia are the *ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025*² and the *SEAMEO Southeast Asian Education Agenda 7 Priority Action Areas (2015–2035)*.³ The former focuses on school and higher education and pays much less attention to non-formal education or adult learning and education. The latter subsumes lifelong learning under technical and vocational education and training, although the action areas aim to provide quality lifelong learning for all. The *Hanoi Advocacy Brief on Promoting Lifelong Learning for All*, which was shared in the SEAMEO Council in 2013, has clear recommendations on policy, legislation and financing, the provision of learning opportunities and enhancement of quality, awareness-raising and regional collaboration (UIL et al., 2013).

2. MEETING THE CHALLENGES: TOWARDS LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL

Children in Southeast Asia tend now to go to school and stay longer in formal education than in previous generations. Unsurprisingly, literacy rates of young people (age 15–24) are high in the region, with the usual gender gap reversed: youth illiteracy is more common among males than among females in the region. To realize quality lifelong learning for all in Southeast Asia, the main task is to transform national education systems to prioritize inclusion and equity by reaching out to marginalized people. Such an approach can have a positive effect on learners in general as it helps to lower barriers to participation in education.

Strategies to improve inclusion target people who remain outside the school system: young pre-school children, out-of-school children and adolescents, as well as youth and adults with low educational qualifications. Around 18.6 million out-of-school children, adolescents and youth of primary and secondary school age urgently need innovative strategies to attract or encourage them to start learning in schools. At the same time, in some countries, provision of early childhood education needs to be rapidly expanded to prepare young children for school life.

Provision of literacy and skills learning for adults, in particular for women and marginalized people, requires further upgrading. The adult literacy rate in Southeast Asia improved by 10 percentage points, to 94.5 per cent, between 1990 and 2015, with countries such as Timor-Leste and Lao PDR making remarkable progress in adult literacy since 2000, improving their literacy rate by 70 per cent and 16 per cent respectively (UNESCO, 2017, p. 30). More than 25.7 million adults, however, remain illiterate, with very little recent improvement in reducing the proportion of illiterates who are women. With mean years of schooling of adults aged above 25 in the region varying from four to 12 years, and with wide disparities within countries, there is growing recognition of the need for education and training for adults to meet the demands of millions for lifelong learning.

Improving schemes of transition between different learning modalities and the recognition of learning outcomes

1 Previous frameworks for action for education adopted in the Education for All movement from Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000 were also influential.

2 http://asean.org/?static_post=asean-socio-cultural-community-blueprint-2025

3 <http://www.seameo.org/7PriorityAreas>



Vocational skills training in Ho Chi Minh City



© Institute for Adult Learning, Singapore

Re-skilling and up-skilling training offered by the continuing education and training system in Singapore

from non-formal education and informal learning could improve the prospects of these people enrolling in schools and continuing further learning. A 2009 study of lifelong learning in Southeast Asian countries identified four key obstacles to improving learning pathways and opportunities: a lack of quality assurance guidelines; insufficient community engagement by students and communities; insufficient budget; and insufficient information on other countries' experiences (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2014). These obstacles remain.

The growing capacities of people, governments and economies are major forces driving development in the region. Countries such as Indonesia, which has a high proportion of educated young people, have the potential to become hubs of social enterprise and innovation and to offer practical solutions and products for sustainable development (UNFPA, 2015). A statement by the Minister of Education in Myanmar on providing 'all students, youth and adult learners ... with educational opportunities that will enable them to fulfil their career and lifelong learning aspirations' (Ministry of Education, Myanmar, 2017, p. 6) echoes the aspirations of education leaders in the region.

To realise such aspirations, Southeast Asian countries must take the opportunity to increase investment in lifelong learning. The majority of Southeast Asian countries devote a high proportion of public expenditure to education – above 10 per cent, ranging from 4 per cent to 32 per cent – while some countries face the challenge of convincing their finance ministry and international development partners to increase investment to reduce inequality in education. If increases in government revenue in some countries continue to be reflected in public educational spending, and if efficiency

in spending is improved, there is scope to implement a full range of programmes and services for lifelong learning.

3. VISIONS OF A LEARNING SOCIETY

Current national education policy and strategy documents in Southeast Asia share a holistic vision of lifelong learning for all. Some have political support at the highest level; some have been drafted in response to a comprehensive review and public consultations with many stakeholders and international development partners. In countries with low adult literacy rates, lifelong learning tends to be strongly associated with the education and quality-of-life improvements of people with low literacy skills. In countries with high per-capita GDP, lifelong learning is closely linked with further education and skills training for employability. A humanistic approach to lifelong learning emphasizes inclusion of the disadvantaged, disabled, and those in rural remote areas, aiming to reduce the development gap. *Box 1.1* lists a selection of national policy documents, with brief summaries of the ways in which lifelong learning is characterized.

Understanding of lifelong learning in the region has evolved mainly out of a history of adult non-formal education for basic literacy, basic skills and continuing education. To this has been added the demands of different economic sectors for more vocational education and training. Second-chance education and training for youth and adults has narrowed the focus to this one very important aspect, thus turning attention away from the implications for formal school and post-school curricula, and how they prepare people to be lifelong, self-directed learners.

In recent national policies the language of lifelong learning policy has often been inspiring, ambitiously broad and optimistic. It may refer to quality of life, healthy living, strong local communities and sustainability. But with resources scarce in practice, especially for post-school and out-of-school education and training, the meaning of lifelong learning tends to be narrower. Policy-makers should keep wider needs and learning arrangements in sight, even when literacy and technical skills demand attention for reasons of equity and social participation.

Reaching agreement on national policy for lifelong learning is not enough; students, teachers and the community at large need to be engaged in understanding and implementing goals and processes. Professionals working in institutions devoted to delivery, such as community learning centres and online learning platforms, also need continuing professional development. The learning society needs to be celebrated and nurtured in Southeast Asia, just as diversity in the delivery of lifelong learning responding to local contexts needs to be recognized, as described in the next chapter.

Box 1.1: National policy and strategies for lifelong learning

- *A National Education System for the 21st Century 2009–2017* (Brunei Darussalam) from the Ministry of Education: devising programmes that promote lifelong learning and wider access to higher education is one of several policy directions.
- *Education Strategic Plan 2014–2018* (Cambodia) from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports: literacy and lifelong learning is one of several priority programmes.
- *National Strategic Plan 2015–2019* (Indonesia) from the Ministry of Education and Culture: defines education as a lifelong process. Education should be conducted through an open system that allows flexibility of programmes and time of completion across educational units and pathways.
- *Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2016–2020* (Lao PDR) from the Ministry of Education and Sport: 'Improve the education system in order to develop human resources with knowledge, skills, have moral and right values ... love lifelong learning, love their own customs and traditions, love progress and science ...' is one of several key objectives to 2025.
- *Blueprint on Enculturation of Lifelong Learning for Malaysia 2011–2020* from the Ministry of Higher Education: lifelong learning identified as the third pillar of a human capital development system.
- *National Education Sector Plan 2016–21* (Myanmar) from the Ministry of Education: alternative education introduced into the education pathways map for work and lifelong learning (see *Figure 2.1*).
- *Philippine Development Plan 2017–2022* from the National Economic and Development Authority: aims to provide lifelong learning for all to accelerate human capital development.
- *Thinking Schools, Learning Nation* announced by the Prime Minister of Singapore in 1997: envisions a national culture and social environment that promotes lifelong learning among Singaporeans.
- *The Amended National Education Act 2017–2036* (Thailand) from the Ministry of Education: defines the education policy framework as creating educational opportunities for all people throughout their lives.
- *National Education Strategic Plan 2011–2030* (Timor-Leste) from the Ministry of Education: one of the key principles of teacher education and training is to understand the value of lifelong learning in improving teaching quality.
- *Framework on Building a Learning Society in the Period 2012–2020* (Viet Nam) from the Prime Minister focuses on creating a learning society in which the inter-relation and transfer between formal and non-formal education support equal access to lifelong learning for all.

Chapter 2: Good practices in lifelong learning

Our collective challenge is how to promote implementation and appropriate coordination mechanisms that embrace variety while never losing sight of diversity. (Kim and Teter, 2015, p. 1)

These words from the Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Asia-Pacific fit well with this drawing together of examples of good practice in the diverse and dynamic context of a Southeast Asian lifelong learning mission, strategy and action agenda. Some are work-in-progress snapshots lifted from the rolling movies of different countries striving towards a common ideal state: all citizens as active learners throughout life, supported in a learning society by robust structures and systems that enable local diversity within a common purpose. The countries of Southeast Asia vary greatly in size and wealth, as well as in terms of how long lifelong learning has been a significant policy issue. Different priorities go with different stages of 'development'. Each country team in this project was free to choose where to focus, and what to pick out for special attention.

While national visions and goals for lifelong learning are in tune with the global goal of promoting lifelong learning for all, the choices countries are making in planning, financing and implementing education programmes and services for lifelong learning differ.

This chapter comprises a set of good practices presented in short summary form. The practices were identified by the countries themselves and documented in the country reports to SEAMEO CELLL and UIL. Some of these practices are obviously new developments at an early stage of implementation, or are still being trialled after several years prior to scaling up nationally. Some are local in focus even if adopted as national strategy; others show the way a whole system and structure has been planned and has evolved into a mature, if still developing, state. Some reports show the way that countries new to adopting lifelong learning as a vision and strategy are seeking to proceed, while others focus on particular projects or priorities, such as gender mainstreaming and priority target-specific interventions. However, each case presented in this chapter has utility for other countries working to the same general goals from different bases: work in progress rather than completed good practice evaluated in detail.

The selection of cases shows how countries with different histories, economies, political systems and traditions go about the same task in working towards a learning society. The sketches provided here are short summaries of work more fully described in individual country reports, which supply the full context. Here, we move from cases of national system planning to diverse provision of lifelong learning through local communities and online.

Before we look at the examples, it is worth reflecting on how they might be used. Given how different Southeast Asian countries are, it would be wrong simply to try to copy the practices unchanged from one context to another. There is also much diversity within countries. Even the wealthiest and most economically advanced countries are still home to citizens, and whole communities, who are greatly disadvantaged: the 'most advanced' may learn from work in the 'least developed', while providing, in return, lessons about the difficulties better funding and longer experience may bring.

Each practice includes a description of how it is implemented, what are its noteworthy achievements, and what government policy or institutional framework supported such practices. Readers of this report who wish to take further an interest in a particular country can go to the full country reports and presentations in the Southeast Asian Lifelong Learning Portal and study other examples of promising practices.

1. THE EVOLUTION OF SINGAPORE'S EDUCATION SYSTEM TOWARDS INCLUSION AND QUALITY

Overview

Developing its people through education, training and opportunities for lifelong learning has been key in driving Singapore's knowledge-based economy. The Singapore government has invested heavily in education to equip citizens with the necessary competitive knowledge and skills. The transformation of Singapore's education system can be thought of in four phases: survival-driven (1959–1978), efficiency-driven (1978–1997), ability-based, aspiration-



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Students in Singapore learn with digital technologies

driven (1997–2011), and student-centric, values-driven (2012–present). Reflecting Singapore's economic development and the evolving needs of its citizens, the education system's focus has shifted from widening participation and increasing early-years enrolment to unlocking the full potential of every individual through quality pre-employment training (PET) and continuous education and training (CET).

Implementation

When Singapore attained self-governance in 1959, there was no comprehensive national school system. There were not enough schools and most of the population was unskilled and illiterate. Singapore also urgently needed to industrialize in order to provide jobs for its people. Hence, during the *survival-driven* phase from 1959 to 1978, the first step was to ensure that more children could have a chance at being educated. Special campaigns were conducted to attract every child to study in school, and new schools were built to make education more accessible. Teacher recruitment and development training were also strengthened to ensure high-quality teaching. As a consequence, the number of primary and secondary school students increased from 315,000 in 1959 to over 520,000 in 1968. By the end of this phase, Singapore had reached close to universal primary education.

There was a push to strengthen training in vocational and technical fields during this phase. The government set up the Technical Education Department in the Ministry of Education (MoE) to improve the quality of technical education in secondary schools as well as in industry training. There were also efforts to train the mostly unskilled and illiterate adult workforce of that time. The government set up the Adult Education Board in 1960 to plan, implement and monitor adult education initiatives ranging from basic education to job-related training. In 1968, the Economic Development Board also set up an Engineering Industries Development Agency to provide training for unskilled workers. Singapore Polytechnic, first established in 1954 by a group of businessmen, was also important in providing technical education relevant to the needs of the Singapore economy.

Between 1978 and 1997, the education system entered its *efficiency-driven* phase. Despite achieving almost universal primary education, there were still challenges related to school drop-out in secondary school (approximately 30 per cent of students did not continue secondary education) and low proficiency in English language. As the Singapore economy industrialized, its citizens needed appropriate education and training to work in increasingly skills- and capital-intensive industries, such as engineering and high-value manufacturing.



© Institute for Adult Learning, Singapore

Community learning in Singapore promotes community togetherness

In this context, the *efficiency-driven* phase introduced key structural changes. In 1980, the Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore was established to redesign and standardize academic curriculum as well as teaching and learning materials. To be more responsive to learners' needs and to address the considerable drop-out rate, schools started practising streaming by grouping students based on their overall academic performance. This enabled students to learn and progress at a pace comfortable to them, thus helping them to stay longer in the school system. To help schools assess their effectiveness and identify problem areas, school appraisals were implemented in areas such as school organization, study programmes and extracurricular activities. Additionally, recruitment and retention policies for teachers were revamped. Teachers were paid on a highly competitive basis, and the Institute of Education, later the National Institute of Education, offered rigorous professional training and development for both graduate and non-graduate teachers and school leaders.

In 1979, the merger of the Adult Education Board with the Industrial Training Board led to the formation of the Vocational and Industrial Training Board (VITB). In the same year, the Skills Development Fund was established to address the basic learning and professional development needs of workers by providing them with training to bring them from low-skilled and low-wage jobs to high-skilled and high-wage jobs. Several initiatives were launched under the fund, such as Basic Education for Skills Training, Modular Skills Training, Modular Worker Improvement through Secondary Education, Core Skills for Effectiveness and Change, and Critical Enabling Skills Training. The VITB was restructured in 1992 into the Institute of Technical Education, which took in technically inclined students at the post-secondary level.

Thinking Schools, Learning Nation was a vision proposed in 1997 by then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, marking the beginning of a new *ability-based, aspiration-driven* phase. It

was clear that in a knowledge-based economy, there was a need to better cultivate inquiry, creativity, innovation and other higher-order competencies across all education levels (primary, secondary, tertiary and continuing education and training). Starting from 2008, the streaming of students at primary level was replaced by subject-based banding. Students could pursue certain subjects at a higher-level, while continuing to study other subjects at a level more appropriate for them. With the shift towards higher-order competencies, the MoE in 2010 introduced a new framework of 21st Century Competencies and Student Outcomes, designed to produce confident people, self-directed learners who were also active citizens. This framework was designed so that the skills attained at each level could be reflected in each learners' continuing education.

During this phase, the government also continued to make headway in enhancing CET. The government established the Lifelong Learning Endowment Fund in 2001 to reflect its commitment to promoting lifelong learning. From 2002, the government began enhancing CET efforts made through the Ministry of Manpower, and worked to develop a comprehensive CET system. National CET bodies, such as the Institute of Adult Learning and the Employment and Employability Institute, were set up to encourage continuing education and training among individuals and employers. The Singapore Workforce Development Agency was set up in 2003 as the champion of workforce development with the aim of building a resilient, skilled and adaptable workforce. It helped accelerate a shift from an employer-centric adult skills training system to one that placed greater focus on the individual. One key initiative was the national Workforce Skills Qualifications system. This scheme accredited courses based on industry-recognized competencies that would provide workers with certifications of transferrable skills. In 2008, the government prepared a 10-year CET Masterplan to set an agenda to prepare the Singapore labour force for future challenges.

From this position of strength, the education system has, since 2012, entered a *student-centric, values-driven* phase, reflecting the restructuring of the economy towards one that is innovation-driven. There is also recognition of a need to inculcate strong values among students and provide them

with a holistic, well-rounded education to prepare them as citizens in an increasingly uncertain world. While continuing their pursuit of quality academic education, students are encouraged to broaden their learning experiences and to pursue interests and passions beyond the classroom. Schools were able to offer applied learning programmes to allow students to apply what they had learned in the world outside school. An outdoor education master plan was introduced in 2017 to encourage students to learn important social skills and values in outdoor team activities, such as camping. The new phase of the education system also indicates a changing set of demands placed on teachers. To support teachers in adapting to the new demands, the Academy of Singapore Teachers was enhanced as a platform for teachers to strengthen their professional development as well as exchange their ideas and teaching methods. Recognizing the key roles that parents play, the MoE also enhanced education and career guidance for parents, and provided parent support groups in schools with seed funding for activities such as parent-child camps. SkillsFuture was launched in late 2014 as a national movement to give Singaporeans the opportunity to maximize their fullest potential, regardless of their starting points.

Impact

Singapore students have consistently performed well in international reading, mathematics and science tests, at both primary and secondary grade levels. Results of the most recent Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2015 and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015 show that, besides having strong content mastery, Singapore's Grade 4, Grade 8 and 15-year-old students also possess strong analytic and reasoning skills that allow them to apply their knowledge and conceptual understanding in problem-solving. This is consistent with the Singapore curriculum that focuses not only on helping students build a strong core set of foundational knowledge and skills, but also emphasizes higher-order, critical thinking skills and the application of knowledge and skills to new situations.

Singapore has also seen a substantial improvement in the educational profile of adults aged 25 years and over, with the proportion attaining post-secondary qualifications increasing from 13 per cent in 1990 to 52 per cent in 2015.

Supporting government policy and institutional framework

The government has actively encouraged citizens to pursue lifelong learning, not only through formal education, but also, through CET, to continuously equip themselves to thrive in the fast-paced global economy. It has enacted numerous national policies and initiatives to support citizens in learning through various stages of life. The MoE provides a strong educational foundation through primary, secondary and post-secondary level education as part of PET. This continues even as citizens begin work, with CET coordinated by SkillsFuture Singapore, a statutory board of the MoE, covering both formal and non-formal learning designed to upgrade a range of skills and competencies.

There is strong government support for both PET and CET to ensure the quality and sustainability of both systems, alongside significant subsidies for citizens. Policies include the Edusave scheme, the Skills Development Fund and the Lifelong Learning Endowment Fund. The Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications system develops, assesses and recognizes key workforce competencies of individuals.

Further directions

Singapore endeavours to continue improving its education system with an emphasis on creating flexible learning pathways, while the government encourages and supports all segments of the population to participate in lifelong learning. Educational institutions will continue to apply digital technologies in their curricula, and thus diversify their delivery modes with online and blended learning. Further design and promotion of the recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes will be carried out.

The advancement of the education system should be based on solid scientific evidence. Therefore, there is a need to conduct research on workforce development from an educational perspective as well as on adult learning pedagogies; the research findings should be used for the design and implementation of educational policies and practices.

2. ADVOCACY FOR LIFELONG LEARNING: THE CASE OF VIET NAM

Overview

Viet Nam has an innovative mechanism to promote lifelong learning throughout the country: the Vietnam Association for Learning Promotion (VALP). VALP is a non-governmental organization (NGO) with a network from central to grassroots level (four levels: central, provincial, district and commune), whose mission is to promote and facilitate learning for all, with the ultimate goal of building a learning society. When it comes to the development of learning models at grassroots levels in Viet Nam, the role of VALP is obvious and significant. It acts as initiator and advocate for the development of learning families, clans and communities in Viet Nam.

Implementation

VALP was established in Hanoi in October 1996 as a response to the declining performance of the education sector (high drop-out rates, increasing illiteracy). It was given three crucial tasks which remain relevant to this day:

- Creating favourable learning conditions for Vietnamese citizens, regardless of social status.
- Supporting teachers and teacher educators and preventing attrition.
- Providing consultancy services to the government on education-related issues.

These tasks presented a great challenge to VALP, especially in its early days when resources were scarce; the organization had to be very selective and modest in its activities. Fortunately, however, the attention that VALP received from the government and society enabled it to grow quickly; within nine years of operation the organization had established itself in all provinces and cities and, five years later, in every town and district. Accordingly, its portfolio has expanded to include research, publishing and even therapy for autistic children. VALP is now a major contributor to the National Framework for Building a Learning Society.

Like ministries, VALP has a hierarchical structure consisting of a central office and local offices at the province, town and district, and commune levels. Additionally, there are 70

specialist units and centres offering education services to VALP and the community, such as Hand in Hand, a therapy and special education centre for autistic children; ITGO, an online learning platform; and *Khuyến học | Dân trí* (*Learning Promotion and People's Intellect*), a newspaper.

VALP is headed by a steering committee whose members serve five-year terms, with the exception of the first term, which lasts only three years. Committee members are responsible for drafting the strategy for their term and for electing an executive committee and an evaluation committee. Once a term finishes, a summit meeting is called to evaluate VALP's performance and a new steering committee is elected. The

summit is attended by all committees, representatives of local VALP offices and guests.

Financing for VALP's operation comes from four sources: membership fees, state funding (for commissioned projects), income from services, and donations.

Achievements

Over the past 20 years VALP has achieved remarkable growth. Starting with 21 provincial offices in 1996, VALP is now present in all 63 provinces and in 637 districts/towns and 10,650 communes, wards and sub-towns. Its membership has grown from 100,000 to 14.5 million, accounting for 16



VALP member meeting in community learning centre

Table 2.1. Number of VALP offices and members (1996–2015)

Term starting	Provinces/Cities		Towns/Districts		Communes/Wards /Sub-towns		Members
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
1996	21	33%					100,000
2000	48	76%					500,000
2005	63	100%	629	99%	9,824	94%	3,500,000
2010	63	100%	637	100%	10,614	99%	7,500,000
2015	63	100%	637	100%	10,650	99%	14,500,000

per cent of the total population. The majority of members are former education administration officials and teachers. *Table 2.1* shows the number of offices and members at the beginning of each term.

VALP and the National Framework for Building a Learning Society

VALP's most significant activity to date has been its contribution to the National Framework for Building a Learning Society (henceforth BLS). VALP's website (<http://www.hoikhuyenhoc.vn/>) provides comprehensive information of its programmes and achievements, in Vietnamese.

Even before BLS, VALP had taken the initiative and conducted its own project to build learning societies at provincial level and below. When BLS was launched in 2005, VALP was commissioned by the Ministry of Science and Technology to carry out national-level research on appropriate models for a learning society in Viet Nam; the research concluded and was evaluated in 2009. It suggested that a model of a learning society, in which non-formal and continuing education would be developed together with formal education and adult education, could be established alongside child education. It also proposed the development of learning families, clans and learning communities at hamlet/village level (which is lower than commune, ward or sub-town level).

In 2012, VALP was commissioned by the Prime Minister to take charge of one of BLS's seven components – promoting lifelong learning in families, clans and in the community at hamlet and village level. VALP first developed a set of criteria to evaluate different models of learning families, clans and communities and then trialled these models in 380 districts and towns and 3,408 communes, wards and sub-towns

across all 63 provinces. In July 2015, a central conference was held to assess the effectiveness of the implemented models based on the aforementioned set of criteria, which was also being continuously perfected in consultation with experts in education. The final version of the criteria was approved by the Prime Minister in November 2015 and published in December so that from 2016 it could be used for self-evaluation by families, clans and communities. Every year, a people's committee in each commune, ward and sub-town assesses and recognizes learning families, clans and communities based on self-evaluation. In 2016, based on reports of 39 provinces, a total of 5.2 million families, 24,300 clans and 32,500 hamlets and villages were recognized as learning families, clans and communities (about 40 per cent of all families, 45 per cent of all clans and 49 per cent of all hamlets and villages in the whole country).

Further directions

In the coming period, VALP plans to expand the model of learning families, clans and communities in the whole country so that, by 2020, 70 per cent of all families, 60 per cent of all clans and 60 per cent of all hamlets and villages nationwide are recognized as learning families, clans and communities. VALP and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) will continue to implement projects and activities to strengthen and consolidate community learning centres to provide favourable lifelong learning opportunities for people in the communities.

VALP at all levels – in collaboration with MOET personnel – will continue the evaluation and ranking of learning communities at commune, ward and sub-town level according to a set of 15 criteria and 54 sub-criteria officially approved and issued by MOET.



© Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR

Meeting on the lifelong learning agenda in Lao PDR

3. TOWARDS A NATIONAL SYSTEM EMBRACED BY THE PEOPLE OF LAO PDR

Overview

Lao PDR promotes integrated formal, non-formal and informal education, with the aim of ensuring equal access to education for all citizens, creating a prosperous society and building globally competitive and sustainable education. Informal, mainly intergenerational-based learning has always taken place in the country, focusing on transferring vocational skills in farming or crafts. The concept of non-formal education was adopted in 1990s when the government launched a variety of education programmes to provide learning opportunities for out-of-school learners and upgrade the competencies of adults in order to produce a more skilled workforce. However, despite a wide range of literacy, equivalency and continuous professional learning programmes, the country lacked a comprehensive policy framework for lifelong learning. Therefore, the Ministry of Education's Department of Non-Formal Education began the development of lifelong learning policy for Lao PDR, making a multi-sectoral approach the central tenet of the design and implementation of the policy.

Implementation

In order to operationalize the concept of lifelong learning in the country, the Department of Non-Formal Education arranged a first meeting on the lifelong learning agenda for ministry staff and external stakeholders in March 2012. The purpose of the meeting was to raise awareness and understanding of the essential features of lifelong learning among Lao policy-makers and other relevant actors. A second meeting took place in December 2013 with the objective of engaging representatives of the ministry and provincial education sectors in an open-format discussion on how to structure the national lifelong learning policy.

Based on the suggestions provided by the participants of the second meeting, the Department of Non-Formal Education drafted a lifelong learning policy for Lao PDR and involved stakeholders in its revision.

The Department of Non-Formal Education initiated a project, supported by DVV International and UNESCO, on establishing a lifelong learning policy. A consultant was invited to develop Lao PDR's lifelong learning policy in two stages: preparatory activities for on-site engagement, and on-site activities in Lao PDR.

The preparatory activities included an extensive review and analysis of literature materials and policy documents related to lifelong learning in regional and international contexts. Thus, a study was carried out on Asian lifelong learning initiatives: in Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Documents on education for sustainable development, global citizenship education, the ASEAN economic community and other matters helped to build a detailed understanding of lifelong learning development from a global perspective.

The second stage was a period of interviews and dialogues with Lao policy-makers, education officers, volunteer workers in non-formal education and other stakeholders from international development partners such as DVV International, German Cooperation and World Renew. The potential of the education sector in Lao PDR as well as demographic data were considered and used in the preparation of the policy.

In accordance with the findings, a first draft was presented at a workshop at which officers from the Ministry of Education and Sports had a chance to give their input to the content of the draft policy. Subsequently, a technical validation

workshop was conducted to collect feedback from experts in policy design on the draft's outline, format and other technical features. The Department of Non-Formal Education revised the draft and presented it at a final meeting with representatives of provincial offices of the Ministry of Education and Sports and other stakeholders. Finalization of the draft included incorporation of some of the suggestions and comments from participants in the final meeting.

Achievements

The draft policy focuses on setting up mechanisms to improve outreach and motivate target groups to participate in lifelong learning initiatives. The new agenda stipulates the need to increase the capacity of education institutions engaged in delivering lifelong learning services. Capacity-building refers to teacher and infrastructure development, the introduction of flexible learning modes and the preparation of student textbooks and teaching guidelines specifically for non-formal courses. Furthermore, the policy emphasizes the need to adjust the curriculum to fit all levels and forms of learning and align it with regional and international socio-economic demands.

Active engagement of local stakeholders and development partners in lifelong learning implementation is another crucial component of the draft policy. It also aims to establish an efficient and durable management system for lifelong learning by setting up national, provincial and district committees responsible for lifelong learning progress. Moreover, the policy is expected to revamp the measurement and evaluation system, considering new strategies in learning and teaching, and overhaul the system of recognition, validation and accreditation of formal, non-formal and informal education.

Facilitating policies and the institutional framework

Based on the Education Law No. 133/2015, the government supports Lao citizens in acquiring knowledge and skills through formal and non-formal education. The 8th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2016–2020 highlights the need to realize education reforms focusing on the expansion of educational opportunities, in particular for marginalized people and rural inhabitants. The National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy presents a framework for developing and implementing initiatives to reduce the poverty rate and promote sustainable economic

growth through a variety of educational programmes, mainly related to vocational training. Such policies as the Technical and Vocational Education Training Law and the Decree on Higher Education also constitute a legal foundation for the draft policy on lifelong learning.

Further directions

Clear strategic actions were laid down to promote lifelong learning in Lao PDR, as follows:

- To disseminate the draft policy among central and provincial authority and stakeholders.
- To submit the final draft policy for endorsement to the government.
- To increase understanding of the national policy on lifelong learning at all levels.
- To arrange informational seminars and instructional workshops on the action plan and implementation of the lifelong learning policy in Lao PDR.

4. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN EDUCATION: INDONESIA

Overview

The Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia has more than 10 years of experience in gender mainstreaming in education through the development of policies and programmes that address the experiences, aspirations, needs and problems of men and women. In relation to women's empowerment, gender mainstreaming is improving the role and quality of life of girls and women within family, communities and state. A key success is gender parity in enrolment at all levels of education, and the operation of working groups for gender mainstreaming in education in over 72 per cent of education departments at provincial, district and city level. A more important lesson is that gender mainstreaming has helped to change the mind-sets of education stakeholders so that they now see education in a holistic and integrated manner, as a benefit to boys and girls, men and women.

Implementation

Gender mainstreaming activity was spearheaded in the non-formal education sub-sector. Starting in the early 2000s, as



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Movement on Education for Marginalized Women's Empowerment supports local handicraft training

a way to promote the Women Empowering Programme, the Women's Activity Centre was established and five education programmes targeting women were launched: women's illiteracy eradication, family education (with a gender equality perspective), women's leadership training, a women's empowerment course and soft skills courses.

In parallel, a National Working Group of Gender Mainstreaming was established. Its main functions included advocating gender mainstreaming among stakeholders in the Ministry of Education and Culture, analysing policies and preparing a sex-disaggregated database, and conducting a communication, information and education programme – a socialisation for gender equality via the mass media. The Working Group actively collaborated with the Centre for Women's Studies, women's organizations and NGOs in promoting gender equality nationally. Local gender mainstreaming working groups were also established at provincial, district and city levels in an effort to accelerate the institutionalisation of

gender mainstreaming by facilitating and monitoring their respective administrative unit, for which they had to draw up a clear action plan for gender mainstreaming.

The implementation of gender mainstreaming was enhanced in 2012 when the Ministry of Education and Culture published 10 handbooks on gender issues in education, each dealing with a distinctive topic¹ (e.g. writing gender-responsive teaching materials or developing gender-responsive schools), and further accelerated in 2015 when the ministry published a profile of gender mainstreaming in education for each province, which provided an overview of gender mainstreaming and a methodology for measuring its effectiveness locally. In 2013, a programme of Improving Access and Quality of Girls' Education through Community-Based Early Childhood Education and Early-Years Gender Mainstreaming was initiated.

In 2016 the government launched the Movement on Education for Marginalized Women's Empowerment, which

1 http://anggunpaud.kemdikbud.go.id/images/upload/images/rupa_rupa/

is essentially a reiteration and reinforcement of all existing gender mainstreaming activity. This programme aims to strengthen local governments' and stakeholders' commitment to improving quality of life for women, especially mothers and marginalized women, and to build women's capacity. The integrated programme implemented in 20 districts/cities offers life skills training, family education, equivalency education, vocational training in villages and community libraries development.

Achievements

Gender mainstreaming in lifelong learning made progress at national and local levels between 2002 and 2016. By 2014, gender mainstreaming working groups were operating in 33 provinces, and 72 per cent of districts and cities in Indonesia (358 out of 497) were implementing a gender mainstreaming action plan, surpassing the target set in the 2010–2014 strategic plan. More importantly, education indicators show gender parity in net enrolment rates from pre-school to university – except in vocational and special needs schools, where male students still dominate. Significant improvement has been observed in transition rates from lower secondary to upper secondary education for both boys and girls, leading to an increase in mean years of schooling and a higher literacy rate among youth (aged 15–24). Where teaching and leadership positions are concerned, females outnumber males: 61 per cent of principals and 62 per cent of teachers are female.

Facilitating policies and the institutional framework

Inclusivity and equity have always been features of Indonesian education. The constitution of 1945 and its amendments make clear that 'everyone has the right to develop themselves through fulfilment of their basic needs, to be involved in education and to benefit from science and technology, arts and culture, in order to improve the quality of life'.

Gender mainstreaming began in 2000 with the issue of Presidential Instruction Number 9 on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development. It was reiterated and operationalized in the National Development Programme 2000–2004, which contained 19 gender-related development programmes in five sectors, including education. The Ministry of Education and Culture then reinforced gender mainstreaming by issuing Decree Number 84, Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender

Education at the Central, Provincial and District and City Level.

Gender mainstreaming is additionally underpinned by favourable financial and operational structures. Financially it benefits from the emphasis placed on education financing, which amounts to 20 per cent of the annual national budget. It is implemented in a concerted way by the joint effort of gender mainstreaming working groups at national, provincial and city levels and through collaboration with external organisations such as the Centre for Women's Studies, NGOs and the mass media.

Further directions

1. Ministerial regulations are needed to mandate efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5.
2. Sex-disaggregated data for all participation and performance indicators must be systematically collected from all education units at all administrative levels.
3. Curricula, learning materials and training packages must not reflect gender bias or gender stereotyping.
4. More practical training handbooks on gender mainstreaming must be produced.
5. The allocation for play and learning equipment, supplies for libraries and laboratories, and ICTs, directed towards achieving equality of opportunity in the learning process for all boys and girls in all subjects, should be increased.
6. There should be more incentives for teachers to improve the performance of both girls and boys.

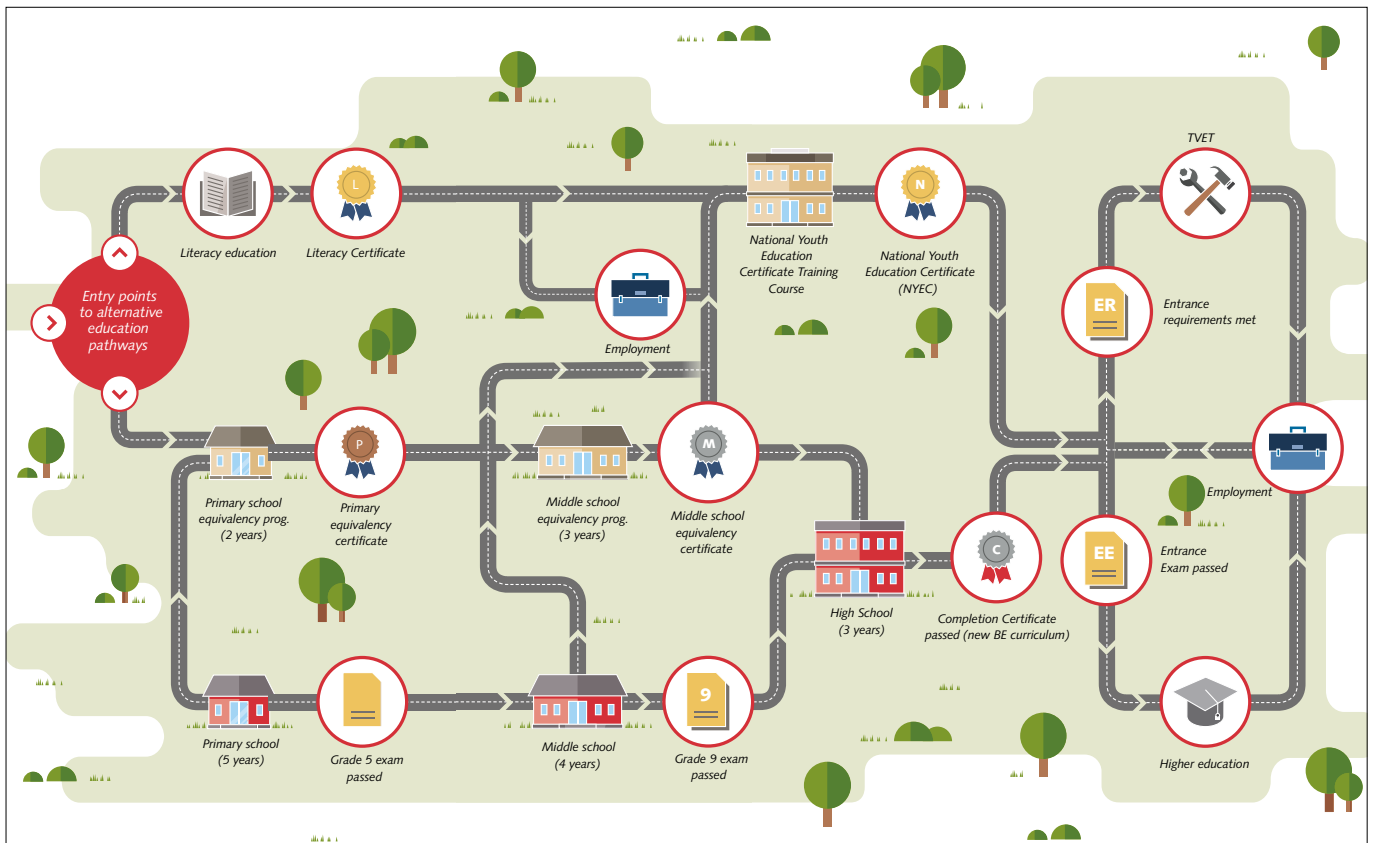
5. THE BIRTH OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION IN MYANMAR

Overview

Alternative education is the framework response to the approximately 2.1 million out-of-school children and adolescents who have never studied or who have dropped out of the formal system in Myanmar (UIS data). This framework also targets 3.5 million adults with low levels of functional literacy.

Led by the newly established Department of Alternative Education (DAE), the framework's objective is to provide equally accessible, certified, high-quality learning

Figure 2.1. Alternative education pathways map



Source: Myanmar National Strategic Plan 2016–21, page 162–163.

opportunities for target groups and to develop their capacities to grow and sustain Myanmar society in the future. The new education strategy aims to provide, by 2021, a range of opportunities from which people can benefit in pursuing their career aspirations, and other motivations for lifelong learning. Alternative education is one of nine ‘transformational shifts’ in the national education strategic plan.

Implementation

Recognizing education as a human right for all, the government is implementing three key strategies for alternative education: strengthening coordination and management; expanding access; and enhancing quality. This applies to four programmes being phased in to all Myanmar townships over the next five years. These are: primary school equivalency (two years, full time), middle school equivalency (three years, full time), a National Youth Education Certificate (NYEC) (three years, full time) and adult literacy (one year, part-time). Areas of learning include literacy and post-literacy, income generation and vocational training, early childhood care and ICT for flexible learning.

DAE is securing partnerships with non-governmental providers, including those from the community and the private sector, with the aim of decentralizing the system

so that it will be contextualized, flexible and responsive to people’s needs. A grant scheme is also in development to help cover partner provider costs, and DAE is undertaking a public awareness campaign to raise funds. In addition, a national database is being developed to help coordinate appropriate provision and to capture a baseline of what already exists locally to determine the next steps, with a focus on quality. The database will link to the national education management information system.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is starting the Multiple AE Pathways Programme to expand options for currently unreached or unfulfilled learners. This is to support their learning ‘upwards’ and/or between alternative and formal education systems based on completion certificates. The expansion means increasing the number of partners accredited to offer the Non-Formal Primary Education Equivalency Programme (NFPE EP) with an initial emphasis on marginalized people, particularly in rural settings. National coverage of other alternative education programmes is being increased, including the Non-Formal Middle School Education Programme.

NFPE is supervised and managed by four committees at central, regional and state, township and learning centre



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Girls attending alternative education classes in Myanmar

levels. The curriculum is designed by a technical team and delivered by trained teachers and facilitators who are monitored and evaluated, along with content and learning processes, by delegates from township and region. Among the stakeholders are the MoE, NGOs (including international NGOs), private donors and members of the community. Research is under way to strengthen the primary school equivalency, adult literacy and other programmes.

The NYEC is currently being tested as a pathway for out-of-school youth to pursue technical and vocational education and training, higher education and employment. It will signify completion of incorporated short-term, youth-centred training

programmes (combining classroom learning, apprenticeships and volunteering) and study in selected countries.

In association with other agencies, DAE is developing the AE Quality Standards Assessment Framework to establish minimum standards across teaching and learning areas, including the environment, pedagogy, outcomes and resources. The ultimate focus is on student learning. This strategy includes use of the assessment framework database to analyse and report on activity, for example by township officials and inspectors. Through this approach, alternative education data will be included in the basic education database.

A robust national certificate system such as the NYEC opens and maintains clear pathways to future education, training and employment possibilities. Other examples of completion certificates accredited by the MoE are offered by the NFPR EP and the Summer Basic Literacy Programme. The thinking is that an increase in the awarding of these certificates not only strengthens the functionality and benefits of pathways, but could also increase enrolment (as learners see the increased viability of these programmes segueing to other programmes).

A key aspect of quality is teacher education; hence, a new national programme is being designed and implemented. Important actions associated with this development are clarifying teacher competencies and articulating them in programme modules developed by experts and at institutions.

The next phases in developing the alternative education framework in Myanmar are: improving and scaling up the four programmes for national coverage (2017 to 2018), and provisioning, monitoring and improving programme design and implementation (2018 to 2019, 2020 to 2021). Key principles are 'ownership' by stakeholders, capacity and resource development (social learning), and transparency.

Facilitating policies and the institutional framework

The National Education Law of 2014 recognizes non-formal education in Myanmar as flexible, outside the formal system, and based on 'upgrading' curricula. This law also establishes equivalency programmes to the formal education system. Other key policy commitments are to basic literacy programming; implementation by local, non-governmental partners; and continuous learning opportunities, including self-learning.

Alternative education can also be found in the draft Basic Education Sub-Sector Law. There are three main policy commitments outlined, including strengthening relevant governance through forming alternative education coordination committees. The others support equivalency standards for learner mobility between alternative and formal systems, and more pathways for out-of-school youth.

Further directions

The Education Strategic Plan 2016–2021 makes the following proposals:

- *Policy, institution, strategies and coordination:* The government should be viewed as guarantor of the right to education, with authority set by policy and the establishment of institutions and systematic frameworks to meet the learning needs of all those in Myanmar. More specific and appropriate policy measures, alternative learning strategies and quality assurance designs are required to address out-of-school children through evidence-based study and analysis. Inclusive education of disabled children is underlined in this research and approach. Multi-sectoral coordination and adaptable response methods must be improved and strengthened under the leadership of the MoE.
- *Financing:* Cost estimation for alternative education covering a five-year period is 1.36 to 1.49 trillion MMK (approximately US \$1 billion) or 9.5 to 9.7 per cent of the total estimated cost of the strategic plan. Both the government and development partners need to increase their financing to the education sector to make up a financing gap of US \$600 million and meet the target of US \$3.1 billion projected under different scenarios.
- *Staffing, capacity and partners:* DAE has insufficient staff and capacity to research, design and implement the four alternative education programmes. Therefore, the department is contracting with NGOs, community-based organizations and others to assist in this work, particularly with implementation. Education colleges will be in charge of training teachers for alternative education. Partner providers will be certified by DAE before setting up provision in townships (that is, they will need to meet the minimum quality standards currently being developed).
- *Teaching and learning materials:* Programme management, teaching and learning materials (best practice DVDs, for example) will be given to partners by DAE, along with demonstrations. The DAE is developing scripted lessons for teaching and learning processes in the four programmes. The idea is that these lessons will help those who are less trained and/or experienced to teach at a standard level.



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CLC officers and teachers in a training workshop in Timor-Leste

6. THE NATIONAL EQUIVALENCY EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN TIMOR-LESTE

Overview

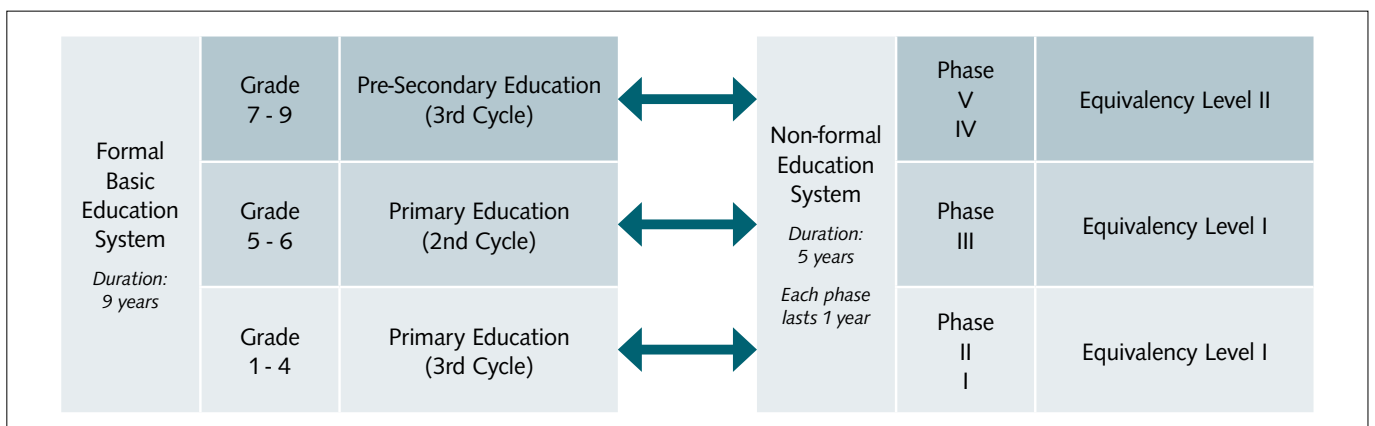
The National Equivalency Education Programme was launched in 2006 to address the challenge of large numbers of Timorese citizens who have not completed basic education by enabling them to acquire it through non-formal education. The programme consists of two levels which are divided into phases corresponding to primary and pre-secondary education. Upon completion of each level, graduates receive certificates that are equivalent to normal school certificates. *Figure 2.2* presents the structure of the national equivalency programme based on Decree Law No. 30/2016, which approved the national equivalency curriculum.

A specific curriculum is applied at each level, focusing on three overarching themes: personal and social development, language development and scientific development. The curriculum also indicates the number of hours and the type

of learning modality (presential or semi-presential) for each subject according to the level of the programme. Presential modality implies face-to-face teaching, while semi-presential combines learning at home with physical presence at study sessions conducted by a teacher. Vocational training has recently been included in the programme curriculum and will be contextualized in each specific organization or community learning centre offering the equivalency programme, based on students' needs and the potential of the local community.

The holistic approach taken to the implementation of programme policies and the management model has been responsible for the success of the initiative across Timor-Leste. Specific actions were developed to ensure the effective realization of the programme: the preparation of learning materials, the organization of teacher training and the establishment of community learning centres, as well as the creation of an online monitoring and evaluation system for the programme. In addition, the government introduced clear regulations on recognition of the skills and competencies

Figure 2.2. Structure of the National Equivalency Programme



gained through the equivalency programme that allow learners to make a smooth transition to the formal education system.

Implementation

The Ministry of Education is in charge of the overall management of the National Equivalency Education Programme. Any public or private institution can submit a proposal, seeking to obtain authorization for opening courses within the framework of national equivalency set out in the decree law approving the national equivalency curriculum. Applicant organizations are required to demonstrate the capacity and expertise necessary to reach the objectives and expected outcomes of the programme. Meanwhile, the current strategic view of the National Directorate for Recurrent Education is to support community learning centres (CLCs), specifically established to run the national equivalency programme and legally defined as institutions that provide community-based learning.

Awareness campaigns have been set up to encourage people aged 15 or over who have basic literacy but who have not completed school to register in the equivalency programme.

The role of teacher is crucial to the implementation and success of the equivalency programme. The programme equips teachers with teaching guides and materials that reflect the approved curriculum content and methodology. Furthermore, teachers willing to conduct courses of the equivalency programme undertake professional training which enables them to familiarize themselves with the objectives of the curriculum, with flexible learning modalities and with appropriate strategies in adult learning.

In order to track progress effectively and react in a timely manner to challenges that arise in the national equivalency programme, an online monitoring and evaluation system was created, and organizations taking part in the education initiative were given access to the online system. Special training was conducted to enable field staff from participating institutions to use the monitoring and evaluation system's software applications. The system captures performance data on students, teachers and recurrent/non-formal education service providers which correspond to performance indicators established for the non-formal education sector.

Achievements

In the last few years, nine CLCs have been established, operating in eight of the country's 13 municipalities. Local communities received block grants in two instalments of US \$10,000 each to renovate physical facilities at CLCs and to purchase the furniture, equipment and learning materials needed for the national equivalency programme and other recurring education initiatives (World Bank, 2016). Level I of the equivalency programme has 48 active classes across the country, while nine classes are being organized at Level II in all nine CLCs with an average of 20 students per class. A total of 601 students have participated in the equivalency programme, of whom 106 passed the national examination and were given diplomas of basic education. It should be noted that the programme contributed not only to increased access to basic education among the youth and adult population but also provided employment opportunities for teachers, thus positively influencing the socio-economic dynamics of the country.

Facilitating policies and the institutional framework

Timor-Leste's framework for lifelong learning is based on two major policies: the National Education Act, which stipulates the provision of schooling for those citizens who have not benefited from education at the right age, and the Base Law of Education, which defines 'recurrent education' as a special type of primary and pre-secondary education targeting individuals who have exceeded the standard age for attending basic and secondary education. The Base Law of Education also lays the foundation for three large-scale programmes in recurrent education, namely literacy education, equivalency education and community-based learning programmes. The National Strategic Plan for Education 2011–2030 (<http://www.moe.gov.tl/pdf/NESP2011-2030.pdf>) outlines the vision and approaches for recurrent education in the country and states that recurrent education primarily focuses on running the national equivalency programme. Decree Law No. 30/2016 was recently adopted, approving the national equivalency curriculum to basic education.

Further directions

The Ministry of Education intends to expand CLCs nationwide, as well as revamping the mechanisms for community participation and the delivery model of the

courses, to boost the effectiveness and outreach of the programme. CLCs have to be well-equipped with the facilities that are needed to create an inclusive and stimulating learning environment. The equivalency programme will be further promoted among the target groups as there is a need to raise awareness of the policies recognizing and validating the diplomas of the national equivalency programme. Level III of the national equivalency programme, which is expected to be equivalent to the secondary school system and will enable learners to continue non-formal schooling beyond the basic education equivalency level, is still to be developed.

7. LIFELONG LEARNING FOR TEACHERS: THE CASE OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Overview

In line with Priority 5 of SEAMEO's seven priority areas – revitalising teacher education – Brunei Darussalam offers many learning opportunities for schoolteachers, as well as non-teachers who wish to take up the profession. These opportunities come in the form of continuing professional development or short-term pedagogical training, spanning the whole spectrum from formal to informal learning. Towards the formal end, schoolteachers can take courses that develop their pedagogy and leadership skills or enrol in postgraduate programmes up to PhD level. On the other hand, a combination of non-formal and informal learning can be found in pedagogical training for volunteers of the Education Intervention Programme or for third-year undergraduates who undertake teaching assistance in schools. Lifelong learning for teachers in Brunei Darussalam is backed by a nationwide emphasis on education, from both government and royalty, and thus receives resources from multiple governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Implementation

Lifelong learning for teachers in Brunei Darussalam is provided by different higher education institutions, each catering for a specific audience and their needs. This section looks at the implementation of four professional development programmes and two pedagogical training ones.

Under the purview of the Ministry of Education (MoE) the provision of formal professional development is mainly

divided between Brunei Darussalam Teachers Academy (BDTA), Sultan Hassanal Bolkhiah Institute of Education (SHBIE) and the Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Advancement (ILIA). The first programme comprises short training courses by BDTA designed to equip teachers with the skills and competencies that were identified as imperative by their school leaders and is the *raison d'être* of this institution, which was set up in 2014 by the MoE. Two other professional development programmes are provided by SHBIE, which is a graduate school of education. One offers postgraduate study to teachers who want to upgrade their qualifications up to PhD level, while the other offers research-based courses that deal with specialized topics such as teaching and learning for the twenty-first century, personalizing pedagogy, and technology. One example of postgraduate study is the Master of Teaching (MTeach), an initial teacher-preparation programme with a research exercise embedded as a crucial component. The fourth professional development programme is an action-based programme delivered by ILIA called the Three-Tier School Leadership Programme. It is based on three core behaviours of a learning-centred leader (Tajuddin, 2015), and aims to develop individual leadership, teacher leadership and school leadership for a wider audience, including aspiring teachers, and middle- and senior-school leaders.

Non-teachers can also receive pedagogical training in Brunei Darussalam via two programmes: the Education Intervention Programme and a programme of teaching assistance. Unlike professional development programmes for in-service teachers, however, these programmes tend towards non-formal and informal modes of learning. The Education Intervention Programme, initiated in 2006, is run as an annual project where community members, including undergraduate or postgraduate students, volunteer as tutors and facilitators to prepare low-achieving primary students from low-income families, who are identified by their respective schools, for the primary school assessment. The programme is a joint effort of multiple parties: it is hosted and funded by the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkhiah Foundation, while the volunteers are sought by ILIA and trained in workshops organized by SHBIE.

In 2009, the Generation Next or GenNext programme was implemented in Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) as a

student-centred approach to education, laying the foundation for lifelong learning: students, including UBD exchange students, are required to participate in a 'discovery year' in the third year of study which can involve teaching assistance. The programme provides UDB students, as well as MoE Scholarship students on summer break from overseas, with an opportunity to work as teaching assistants in schools. Interns are trained by SHBIE in basic teaching strategies and practices, communication skills and classroom management.

The Education Intervention Programme and teaching assistance combine non-formal and informal learning in the sense that non-teachers learn from both structured training courses (non-formal) and their experience teaching students (informal).

Achievements

SHBIE has been successful in producing teachers who continuously practice research to develop and maintain informed classroom teaching and learning. This can be seen in the MTeach graduates who have presented their research findings at conferences and published in international journals such as the *Asian Journal of Management Sciences and Education*, *IJUM Journal of Educational Studies* and the *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*.

The lifelong learning opportunities for teachers in Brunei Darussalam greatly contribute to improving teaching quality in pursuit of student excellence and, in the case of teaching assistance, raising interest among youth in the teaching profession.

Facilitating policies and the institutional framework

Lifelong learning for teachers in Brunei Darussalam is backed by sympathetic education policies. Brunei Visions 2035 places heavy emphasis on education as it aspires for the country to be recognized for its educated and highly skilled population, measured against the highest international standards.

Provision of lifelong learning opportunities for teachers is aligned with the national strategic aim of improving the overall quality of education in the country. To encourage teachers to pursue further education, government scholarships are

available for them to obtain qualifications at a local institution or abroad. Moreover, the Brunei government enacted compulsory professional in-service training for teachers (100 hours per year) in order to upgrade their pedagogical skills and competencies.

In 2009, The National Education System for the 21st Century (SPN21) came into force, introducing a number of major educational changes, including state-of-the-art pedagogical approaches, a variety of in-service and pre-service teacher training programmes and updated teacher standards. The new education system also promotes the use of ICT-based technologies in basic and tertiary education, implements an enhanced monitoring system and aims to provide clear career pathways for teaching staff. In the Strategic Plan 2012–2017, the MoE emphasizes the need to expand teachers' capacity and outlines a number of professional development initiatives for teachers in Brunei.

A solid partnership has been created between public and private sectors targeting jointly planned, financed and delivered lifelong learning programmes. Active collaboration between the MoE and educational institutions bolsters lifelong learning implementation through a variety of actions. For instance, under the auspices of the MoE, Universiti Brunei Darussalam and SHBIE conducted holistic research on successful lifelong learning policies and practices nationwide and captured a variety of initiatives based on lifelong learning concepts run by different ministries (such as those for health and for culture, youth and sports) and private companies.

Moreover, education is always a top priority for public spending: in the 2016/17 financial year the MoE received the second-largest share of the national budget at 13 per cent of the total allotment (Thien, 2016). Such a level of commitment has been maintained despite the recent world economic downturn, thus creating strong financial foundations for the education system.

Further directions

In realizing SPN21, the MoE has from time to time drawn up strategic plans that contain a number of initiatives in five important areas for which there are key performance indicators

and targets. These areas are: the quality of teachers; quality of schools and educational institutions; student achievement and success; participation in education; and the quality of post-secondary education. In addition to the aforementioned important areas, the MoE also plans improvements in: professional development at every level; quality leadership at every level; quality teaching and learning; and an emphasis on health, safety, security and environment at every level. The MoE is actively implementing continuous professional development through the BDTA to produce a teaching workforce that is able to deliver holistic education to produce successful students who will be able to meet the country's need for dynamic and sustainable development (Norjidi, 2017).

The existing policy framework and practices contribute to the advancement of the Brunei education system as well as to teacher development. There is a need to regularly monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the educational initiatives, which should be done in cooperation with local and international experts to ensure a comprehensive approach in developing the national education system.

8. TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME THROUGH E-LEARNING IN THE PHILIPPINES

Overview

The Teacher Development Programme through e-Learning (eTDP) is a continuing professional development project for elementary and secondary school teachers in Mauban municipality in the Quezon province of the Philippines. The University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) launched eTDP in 2005 with the aim of improving the quality of education in the municipality by providing opportunities for teachers to acquire new knowledge and upgrade their skills through a blended learning model. To eliminate financial constraints and overcome hindrances to access to technology among the target group, UPOU designed a grant mechanism to provide incentives and support for teachers to pursue continuing studies. Elaborate strategic cooperation between university, industry and government enables the project to mobilize resources effectively, achieving the objectives of the initiative and maintaining sustainability.



Teachers in the eTDP programme in the Philippines

Implementation

UPOU, the coordinating institution, has built strong linkages with the government sector and private enterprise that contribute to the realization of eTDP. For instance, the private organization Quezon Power (Philippines) assumes programme-wide responsibilities which include data collection and analysis for the project design, allocation of funding for the scholarship scheme and monitoring of the programme process and outcomes. The government sector is represented by the municipal administration. Thus, the local government unit of Mauban and the Congressional Office of the First District of Quezon devote funds to teacher scholarships and participate in programme monitoring and evaluation, while the Department of Education – Division of Quezon assists in selecting nominees for scholarships as well as ensuring the recognition of the studies completed within eTDP in participants' workplaces. The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company, the largest telecommunications company in the country, provides infrastructural support in the form of computer equipment to supply eTDP testing centres and schools where participating teachers are employed to facilitate their access to online courses and exams.

UPOU designs the curriculum for formal and non-formal training programmes in science, mathematics, language studies, teaching and the social sciences, provided within the framework of eTDP. To deliver courses, UPOU uses a blended learning model which includes online lessons and sessions organized on campus. In order to encourage teachers' enrolment and ensure their studies progress, the project consortium set up three types of eTDP financial aid to help teachers overcome the obstacles they face in continuing professional education:

- *Post-baccalaureate teacher scholarships* are available for the pursuit of graduate degree programmes in teaching at UPOU via distance mode. The scholarships cover tuition fees and a monthly allowance for enrolled students.
- *Training grants for teachers* to take non-formal courses on innovative pedagogical strategies, design of instructional materials, effective techniques in the laboratory (for science teachers), communication and interaction skills, and incorporation of digital learning tools in classroom teaching. These courses are conducted during the summer

vacation, allowing teachers to undertake supplementary training in their spare time and avoid overload.

- *Technology grants* equip their recipients with a laptop or netbook, mobile data connection and internet access fees up to PHP 500 per month, so that programme participants can use technologies for learning purposes.

A testing centre called eLearningVille was set up specifically to facilitate access to computer equipment and internet services for eTDP participants. The testing centre is based in the Community e-Centre established by government – a public facility offering computer classes that can also be used for UPOU courses.

Achievements

Since its inception in 2005, five cohorts have taken part in eTDP, a total of 164 teachers. During 2009–2013, teachers from nearby island municipalities also participated.

A programme evaluation was conducted in 2015 using surveys and focus group discussions to identify the impact of the programme on the personal and professional development of participating teachers as well as on community advancement. Teachers stated that they were able to apply the knowledge and skills gained through eTDP in their teaching, leading to enhanced teaching quality. They began actively using ICTs in class for such activities as presentations, lectures, storytelling and practical exercises. Digital technologies have reduced teachers' preparation time for classes and at the same time fostered teacher-student and student-student classroom interaction. Teachers also reported that their eTDP study attainments were recognized in their workplaces, and that they were promoted or given new responsibilities (e.g. teacher-in-charge, school administrator, district coordinator) as a result. Furthermore, the upgrade of teacher competencies has had a positive influence on the quality of education in the community. Teachers who have participated in eTDP share programme materials and best practice in planning and organizing classes with their colleagues. Mauban schools have also improved their performance results in the National Achievement Test, a set of examinations taken by Philippine students.

Supporting government policy and the institutional framework

The government stipulated the key national priority of building a solid learning system that corresponds to the demands of country development in the Philippine Education for All 2015 National Action Plan. Another policy document, the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2004–2010, emphasized the urgency of introducing and expanding flexible and diverse learning options to meet the expectations of people of all ages and from different socio-economic backgrounds. Poverty reduction and increasing people's well-being through inclusive education was the focus of the Philippine Development Plan 2011–2016.

The Five-Year Information and Communication Technology for Education Strategic Plan 2008 encouraged the introduction of digital technologies into the academic curriculum in order to create dynamic learning environments in Philippine schools. Distance learning was introduced nationwide through the Open Distance Learning Act 2014 (RA 10650), which institutionalized distance and blended learning programmes in higher education as well as highlighting the need to organize teacher development training on the use of ICT in the teaching process.

Further directions

Stronger infrastructure has to be developed for the programme through the extension of partnership links, especially with private organizations and political individuals. Teacher participants from remote areas face difficulties in accessing an internet connection and a stable source of electricity and often must travel great distances to take sit-down exams. For successful eLearning, having testing centres in the area and a more strategic and holistic learner support system are necessary.

The programme should establish direct networking with schools where participating teachers work, to raise awareness among school authorities of the benefits and impact of the programme. Principals are expected to attend informational sessions on the eTDP initiative and support their teaching staff by reducing their workload if they are enrolled in the degree programme.

The content of the programme should be adjusted, taking into consideration the peculiarities of teaching approaches for elementary and secondary school as well as the major changes affecting the Philippine education system with the implementation of the K-12 programme. Time-management courses have to be introduced to equip teachers with tools and techniques to manage their time and work efficiently under pressure.

The model of eTDP can be duplicated in other areas to facilitate continuing and sustained professional development for teachers, which is essential to ensure a high quality of education.

9. COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES IN THAILAND

Overview

Community learning centres (CLCs), called *Kor-Sor-Nor Tambon* in Thai, are important hubs for non-formal education and informal activities to promote lifelong learning in sub-districts across the country. The Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE) administers these CLCs through provincial offices and district centres. Their non-formal programming includes the content areas of literacy, basic education (general and vocational) and continuing education (e.g. life skills, social development, the sufficiency economy philosophy). Informal activities include reading promotion via printed and digital media, and access to 18,500 community book houses. The main target group is the working population in Thailand, ranging in age from 15 to 59, with emphasis on those without previous or current opportunities to learn. Approximately 3.9 million people from a wide range of social backgrounds participate in CLCs, with 1.4 million in non-formal education and 2.5 million in informal activities.

Implementation

There are 7,424 CLCs in total, with different types depending on geographic location and larger purpose. The common thread is that CLCs offer lifelong learning opportunities to all members of the community, based on specific needs and local contexts. This includes access to centres for sufficiency economy and New Theory farming, democracy promotion and development, digital learning, etc.

2 This was made possible through collaboration between the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and the Ministry of Education through the Office of the Permanent Secretary, together with Total Access Communication Public Company Limited.



Field training on New Theory farming in Thailand

Education and learning coverage in Thailand has increased through the expansion of CLCs in every *tambon* (sub-district). Among 7,424 CLCs nationally, there are 7,255 *tambon* CLCs in 76 provinces and 169 CLCs in Bangkok's *khwaeng* (equivalent to *tambon* in other provinces). To help resource CLCs, the government allocated 2.1 billion baht (around US \$60,000) in 2016. During the first phase of implementation, 1,680 CLCs were equipped with ICTs and a database for education management to support 1.2 million learners.²

In 2015, the government employed 8,672 teachers in CLCs, with two per CLC in larger sub-districts. All are trained in teaching and learning processes, knowledge management, micro-planning, building networks and community links, supervision, and monitoring and evaluation methods. They use a specific management approach, called PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act), to collect data for improving provision. Teachers participate in pre-service and in-service

training related to this and other work.

Good practices in CLCs include relating programmes and activities to content areas of sustainable development and lifelong learning, and working with community partners and resources to extend opportunities to the target population. CLCs are a driving force for community empowerment grounded in the principles of Thailand's sufficiency economy philosophy. Learning themes include household accounting, 'In His Majesty's Footsteps' (royal development) projects launched under the directive of the late King of Thailand and vocational training in New Theory farming. This has practical effects, seen, for example, in learners from agricultural backgrounds applying New Theory farming knowledge and techniques to their work and daily lives. This approach also factors in geo-social community dynamics, and links to other development sectors of the economy, public health and society as a whole.

Achievement

According to the country report, non-formal education and informal learning through CLCs helps people to improve their literacy, and to complete lower and upper secondary education. This enables learners and graduates to attain better occupations and incomes, and develop more life skills related to contemporary changes in Thai and global society. In 2016, approximately 3.9 million people from a wide range of social groups benefited from CLCs, with 1.4 million in non-formal education and 2.5 million in informal learning. This exceeded the annual set target numbers.

From a national perspective, the benefit of non-formal education and informal learning in CLCs is seen in Thailand's systematic development of education and lifelong learning opportunities as part of a broader social initiative. At the sub-district level, benefits are seen in the system helping learners to become more independent in their study practices, with heightened abilities in critical thinking, reflection, analysis and problem-solving.

Supporting government policy and the institutional framework

The National Education Plan (2017–2036) defines the conceptual framework for policy as creating educational opportunities for all people throughout their lives, with emphasis on the disadvantaged, disabled and those living in rural and remote areas. The strategic plan focuses on equitable non-formal and informal provision through CLCs using community resources.

ONIE is responsible for implementing and supporting non-formal education and informal learning with strategies and focal points for operation in CLCs. ONIE's approach began with a strategic plan, then an operational plan to guide provision and tracking, a campaign to create links within the community, and, lastly, implementation through projects and activities in 2016.

The Ministry of Education has conceived 10 strategies for education reform and more equitable learning opportunities in alignment with the 1999 National Education Act and Amendments (Second National Education Act of 2002 and Third National Education Act of 2010). In the Act, educational

provision rests on principles of lifelong education for all, and the continuous development of knowledge and learning processes through the participation of individuals, families, communities, organizations and so on.

The Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act of 2008 is a crucial policy for developing alternative modes of education and learning, as described in the National Education Act. It focuses on people's lifelong learning practices and calls for the integration of formal, non-formal and informal modes; this contributes to improving capacities towards a better quality of life for individuals, communities, society and the nation.

Further directions

Policy and institution: ONIE's lack of legal status makes it difficult for it to implement its framework and to be involved in decisions on policy and administration. This weakens its negotiating position when arguing for adequate funding, and it is unable to enforce education law. The scale of CLCs' work is considerable in the circumstances, but it would be better if they were given official recognition and institutional status to operate. Policy continuity and enforcement related to educational reform and lifelong learning need improvement. Decentralization and all-sector participation should increase with more flexible management. These challenges and obstacles are addressed in the National Education Plan B.E. 2560–2579 (2017–2036), which includes the following recommendations:

- *Resource use:* More efficient resource management by administrators is needed. One approach is to categorize CLCs based on quality, monitoring and evaluation, relationship to social context and so on. This would support a more equitable distribution of resources, and raise standards in terms of budget, materials and equipment, teachers and staff.
- *Capacity and cooperation:* CLCs and other stakeholders need to develop better teaching strategies and learning processes, curricular content, assessment systems and transfers of outcomes between different modes within Thailand's system. A learning culture should develop to help identify and utilize new models and guidelines accounting for those without education and learning



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Young men in Cambodia learn palm tree handicraft production

opportunities, migrant workers, and a diverse population of nationalities and cultures.

10. RESEARCH ON ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES IN CAMBODIA

Overview

Community learning centres (CLCs) in Cambodia provide non-formal learning opportunities which vary according to local need and community context. CLCs were first piloted in Cambodia between 1998 and 2000 and then increased in number rapidly, from 57 in 2006 to 347 in 2015/16. The target groups of CLCs are drop-out and out-of-school children and youth, graduates of literacy and equivalency programmes and community members seeking vocational skills. CLCs have become the major initiative to promote continuing education in Cambodia, and, in recent years, institutionalization and integration of CLCs into the national education system has been heavily developed. Therefore, there is a need to monitor the outcomes of Cambodian CLCs and evaluate their results in consultation with various stakeholders. Research into and assessment of CLCs gives

a solid basis for analysing the current state of play and for building future strategies concerning the improvement and expansion of CLCs.

Implementation

From October 2016 to February 2017, the Department of Non-Formal Education of the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport conducted an assessment study on CLCs. The objective of the assessment was to determine the factors that contribute to best practice in lifelong learning through CLCs.

The study involved 454 respondents from 23 CLCs in two provinces, Siem Reap and Battambang. The respondents were chosen and classified according to the following categories: 1) learners; 2) vocational teachers; 3) management committee; 4) NFE officials at commune; 5) villagers; 6) village chiefs; and 7) commune chiefs. The data collected revealed the following:

- *Awareness of lifelong learning:* The main sources of information on lifelong learning initiatives were mass media, meetings with the managers of CLCs and local authorities.

- *Spectrum of non-formal educational programmes in CLCs:* The key programmes for respondents to improve their knowledge were income-generation and functional literacy programmes, while equivalency, re-entry and life skills programmes had relatively low rankings.
- *Teaching and learning materials:* The survey verified the availability, accessibility and quality of resources in CLCs. The majority of interviewees asserted that materials and documents referring to CLC programmes were relevant and well-prepared for academic and training purposes. According to the collected data, resources were available in the CLCs, however, few respondents believed that their CLCs had rich teaching and learning documents.
- *Perception of CLCs, CLC teachers and committees of management:* Most survey participants thought that the CLC environment was fit to attract people. Teachers at CLCs were considered to be experienced, enthusiastic about their work and able to share their knowledge and expertise with CLC learners. Furthermore, the respondents saw CLC managers as competent to fulfil their responsibilities in running CLCs.
- *Benefits and challenges of learning in CLCs:* The questionnaire also gathered information on the individual benefits and challenges of learning in CLCs. Learners stated that acquiring vocational skills helped them to increase their revenue, and, ultimately, improved the level of well-being of the whole community. Nevertheless, financial restrictions in terms of lack of scholarships and graduate loans were found to constitute the predominant obstacles for CLC learners.

Facilitating policies and the institutional framework

The current (2014–18) Education Strategic Plan's first policy is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning. This strategic plan corresponds to Cambodia's Vision 2030: Building a Sustainable, Competitive and Harmonious Economy. The policy on processes and functions of CLCs (Prakas No. 2429 in 2015) stresses key features that include: physical infrastructure and equipment, skilled teachers and managers, curriculum, target learners, vocational skills and supportive framework. The circular on non-formal education programmes in the country determines learning areas and corresponding approaches.

Moreover, the government has an indicator scheme to monitor CLCs and corresponding impact. A core 'breakthrough' indicator is the adult literacy rate, with a target of improving the rate from 78 per cent in 2014 to 85 per cent in 2020. Sub-sector outcome indicators include percentages of the 'illiterate' population that completed literacy programming, and children who completed a re-entry programme and entered the formal system. Other sub-sector indicators focus on numbers of people completing skills training and in equivalency programming, and number of CLCs: those with quality standards, and provinces with a non-formal education management information system (NFE-MIS). In Cambodia, all provinces have set up an NFE-MIS to monitor these indicators.

Achievements

The findings of the study of factors contributing to best practice in lifelong learning through Cambodian CLCs were analysed and further developed into recommendations for policy and practice. The study formulated the principal lessons learned about lifelong learning through research and data collection concerning the importance of free-of-charge schooling, open-access resources and a focus on vocational skills which can enable learners to enhance their income-generating activities, as well as the need to disseminate information and raise public awareness of lifelong learning.

Recent achievements include the establishment of guidelines for CLC management, with a manual now available, and codification of CLC standards in 2016 with subsequent implementation directives. Training on necessary competencies for CLC committee members is currently in design, and the next step is to deliver training for them.

Further directions

To enhance inclusion and the quality of lifelong learning opportunities for all, the Department of Non-Formal Education plans to strengthen the capacity of the CLC system through:

- *Public awareness:* Improving awareness-raising strategies for lifelong learning events and campaigns (such as International Literacy Day), particularly by word of mouth

through family and friends, monasteries and web-based communication (including the use of social media).

- *Teachers and managers:* Increasing knowledge of lifelong learning concepts among teachers and managers, and better capacity-building in programme planning and implementation. There is also a need for more training in resource mobilization for managers.
- *Materials:* Improving the quality and distribution of teaching and learning materials in CLCs. Libraries and reading centres also need more current materials. The curriculum of CLCs should be updated in response to the emerging knowledge economy.
- *Investment and resources:* Increasing investment and resources for CLCs and related initiatives. More investment is required from both the public and private sectors. There is currently no budget from the government or other organizations to implement a building design standard for CLCs. A loan scheme is needed for support of graduates.
- *Partnerships:* There is a need for increasing collaboration with development partners and the NGO community for capacity-building and technical support on meeting lifelong learning objectives. Better networking and increased cooperation is also called for between CLCs and local authorities, grassroots organizations, the private sector and key community actors and stakeholders.
- *Monitoring:* Improving tracking mechanisms for streamlined identification, measurement and analysis of progress to improve teaching and learning processes. This would also encourage social learning at various levels and points in the CLC network through stakeholders sharing knowledge and experiences of mainstreaming lifelong learning.
- *Community uptake:* Revitalizing CLCs to grow visibility of lifelong learning programmes and build ownership by the commune. Various initiatives could also benefit from the creation of self-help groups for finding jobs and for sharing problem-solving techniques.

11. THE OPEN HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMME IN THE PHILIPPINES

Overview

The Open High School Programme (OHSP) is a non-traditional learning programme designed to support out-of-school youth and adults by providing them with alternative

learning opportunities. The government launched OHSP in 1998 and adopted it as part of its drop-out reduction programme, which aimed to support between 5 and 6 million Filipinos of school age who faced barriers in attending regular school classes for various reasons – personal issues, domestic difficulties, inflexible schedule, long distances to school, uncomfortable community or school climate. Furthermore, OHSP is considered an effective measure to reduce overcrowding in Philippine classrooms. The key success factor of OHSP is its well-elaborated delivery mode, which is realized through blended learning with distance courses and practical classes, thus reaching a large target audience and enabling students to continue learning and complete their secondary education.

Implementation

OHSP is open to all public and private secondary schools in the Philippines. The condition of access to the programme relates to participation in the capacity-building programme run by the Bureau of Secondary Education of the Department of Education as a preparatory stage for accreditation of an OHSP partner school. In addition, participating schools have to ensure the availability of learning facilities and equipment in the school for distance students (e.g. library, computer room, laboratory and workshop rooms).

The enrolment procedure requires students to take the Independent Learning Readiness Test, which assesses the applicant's capacity in self-directed learning, and the Informal Reading Inventory, which measures an applicant's reading competence. The latter is a key criterion for class placement. The programme provides multimedia materials for studies and oversees individualized instruction, allowing students to adopt the pace appropriate to their ability to acquire and retain information. In this regard, learners elaborate their own student plan that defines their schedule of study activities. An OHSP student can take up to six years to complete secondary education but can also be mainstreamed – every student has a right to enter the conventional school at any time during the OHSP study period.

The programme emphasizes the importance of teacher-student interaction; at the initial stage learners should come to school once or twice a week to meet with a teacher and

to pass the evaluation of necessary competencies. Moreover, OHSP has introduced a firm maximum number of 20 students per class for all classes, which enables teachers to attend to the individual learning needs of students. Participating schools are encouraged to promote and extend a blended learning approach. Attendance at classes in physical education, music, arts and science is based on a schedule agreed to by the student and subject teacher in question. Weekly meetings with a teacher usually occur in the first half of the study year and gradually decrease in frequency once a student demonstrates a lasting ability to learn independently.

The OHSP curriculum follows the revised Basic Education Curriculum for secondary school, though teachers at OHSP courses have freedom to adjust the content of the courses in order to be more reactive to students' demands and expectations. Another important component of the programme, contributing to its effectiveness and efficiency, is student support. To increase socialization and interaction with peers, OHSP students are invited to join various school cultural activities and field trips. Some participating schools took the initiative in visiting at home those students who were chronically absent from class. Others assisted low-income students by offering them free school supplies, free accommodation, meals or allowances for doing odd jobs in the school.

The programme is financed by the Philippine national government through the Department of Education. Programme implementation carried out is in collaboration with of the Philippine national government and other organizations

such as local government units, the Commission on Higher Education, the Technical and Educational Skills Development Authority and some local and well as international non-governmental organizations. At the school level, the OHSP steering committee consists of the school principal, an OHSP coordinator, a guidance counsellor and teacher-facilitators. In some cases, student and parent organizations were established to facilitate the collection of financial resources to cover remuneration for OHSP coordinators and teachers.

Achievements

OHSP has proved to be effective in terms of reaching marginalized learners in the Philippines through increased accessibility of secondary education. The majority of students registered in the OHSP come from disadvantaged groups with low-income backgrounds. Within OHSP, these students benefit from an individualized approach, flexible study periods, student support services and learning facilities. These factors help reduce the likelihood of drop-out. Indeed, the Department of Education reported a decrease in the secondary school drop-out rate from 8 per cent in 2004/05 to 6.1 per cent in 2014/15. During the past three years (school years 2014–2017), the number of schools offering OHSP has increased from 252 to 266. A significant increase in the number of students enrolled in the programme was also observed during the period, from 7,218 to 19,503, with the highest enrolment recorded at Grade 9 level during school year 2016/17. During the past three years the number of boys enrolled in the programme has consistently been higher than the number of girls (see *Table 2.2*).

Table 2.2. Student enrolment in OHSP

School Year	No. of Schools	Male	Female	Total
2014 - 2015	252	4,415	2,803	7,218
2015 - 2016	258	4,012	2,600	6,612
2016 - 2017	266	12,144	7,359	19,503

Source: Department of Education. The data for school year 2016/17 were generated as of 25 May 2017



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Group session in the teacher development programme in the Philippines

Supporting government policy and the institutional framework

Development of alternative learning systems and flexible learning pathways has been promoted through the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2004–2010, which includes specification of flexible entry of learners to formal, non-formal and informal educational programmes. The Philippine Development Plan 2011–2016 aims to safeguard economic stability in the country and ensure social development through poverty reduction and inclusivity of education.

The government passed the Open High School System Act (RA10665) in 2015, providing a legal framework for the Open High School System in the Philippines, mandating every division to run learning centres for an Open High School and inviting private educational institutions to establish such centres as well. Since this legislation was passed, significant increase has been observed in the number of students enrolled and the number of schools offering the programme. The Open Distance Learning Act 2014 (RA 10650) and ICT4E Five-year Strategic Plan (2008) supported the integration of ICT into the academic curriculum as well as training teachers for the development of the curriculum for open distance learning programmes and establishing necessary infrastructure for offering distance-learning at educational institutions for all students.

Further directions

Continuing professional development for teachers engaged in the delivery of OHSP courses is the core issue for improvement of quality in the programme. Therefore, specialized training has to be organized on a regular basis for OHSP teaching and administrative staff in order to improve their teaching and/or managerial competencies and understanding of OHSP challenges and perspectives. In addition, OHSP staff should be encouraged to enter degree programmes in open and distance education at universities.

Schools participating in OHSP need to be well equipped, with learning facilities that are easily accessed by distance students. However, as many Filipino schools have limited resources even for regular students, active cooperation with the private sector needs to be fostered to gain support in obtaining supplies and equipment necessary for productive and effective learning.

12. THE OPEN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN VIET NAM

Overview

Education provision in Viet Nam has had to expand and diversify to satisfy the learning demands of the population. This has led to the widespread adoption of open and distance learning, 'focusing on opening access to education and training provision, freeing learners from the constraints

of time and place, and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of learners' (UNESCO, 2002, p. 8). An open university has the potential to reach students in rural and remote areas as well as to cater for larger numbers of students by increasing the efficiency of the teaching staff through online learning. Hanoi Open University and the Open University of Ho Chi Minh City are the largest providers of distance education in Viet Nam, and their key function is to contribute to building a learning society – a national scheme that aims to transform Viet Nam into a learning society where everyone has the opportunity to learn continuously throughout life, anytime, anywhere and at any level.

Implementation

In the 1990s, the Government of Viet Nam established two open universities, Hanoi Open University and Ho Chi Minh City Open University, with the objective of developing and promoting open and distance learning in the country. The two universities were pilot institutions for the design of online and blended learning courses for learners of all ages and different backgrounds. Currently, they offer undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and equip students with the necessary materials for self-study. Their courses are distinguished by flexible schedules and the variety of delivery modes: distance, conventional (face-to-face) and blended. Students often have the chance to attend weekend classes, either at the university they are registered with or an affiliated local institution, for tutorials, exam revision and assessment. Moreover, Hanoi Open University has taken the initiative in delivering distance learning through an online platform, and in 2015 it received official development assistance funding from the Korean International Cooperation Agency to improve its online infrastructure. The Open University of Ho Chi Minh City has similarly developed its online platform, called eLearning, which came into effect in 2016.

The two open universities run various continuous professional programmes in a wide range of academic and vocational fields. Learners have an opportunity to take degree or non-degree programmes, long-term or short-term training depending on the subject and objective of the courses. The majority of programmes are jointly coordinated with private enterprise and public organizations. A strong partnership has

been built with media agencies such as Viet Nam Television and the Voice of Viet Nam, which broadcast university educational programmes, specifically created in television and radio formats. Furthermore, the open universities actively cooperate with continuing education centres and vocational centres at municipal and provincial level to expand outreach and raise public awareness of the opportunities provided by distance learning.

The Ministry of Education and Training recently allowed some other universities to launch distance learning programmes, taking the experience and recommendations of Hanoi Open University and Ho Chi Minh City Open University as a foundation for their institutions' initiatives. Currently, there are 21 providers of open and distance learning in Viet Nam, running online and blended learning courses in natural sciences, social sciences, business, engineering, education and other disciplines.

Achievements

Open and distance learning have granted access to education to a vast number of Vietnamese people, thereby improving their quality of life and employability. The majority of Hanoi Open University graduates are employed within one year of graduation, ranging from 77 per cent to 100 per cent depending on the faculty.

Facilitating policies and the institutional framework

Inclusivity and access are common themes in Viet Nam's education policies. In fact, the Education Law in Viet Nam asserts that 'all citizens, regardless of ethnicity, religion, sex, family background and social standing are equal in learning opportunities'. The sentiment is reiterated and transformed into a commitment in the national Strategy for Education Development 2011–2020, one objective of which is 'building a learning society and creating equal opportunities for everyone, especially the ethnic minority groups, the poor or children of prioritised families, to learn lifelong'.

Lifelong learning was operationalized in 2005 when the government initiated the National Framework for Building a Learning Society, which aims to create a whole-country learning society where non-formal and informal modes of learning, including open and distance learning, are promoted



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and developed alongside formal education. The project is a joint effort involving all ministries, with the Ministry of Education and Training and the Ministry of Labour, Invalid and Social Affairs acting as coordinators. The framework is now in its second phase (2012–2020).

The government established a national steering committee on building a learning society for 2012–2020 that focuses on promoting lifelong learning opportunities for citizens and intends to support the expansion of distance learning courses across the country. The urgent need to improve work-related skills and provide continuous development training is acknowledged in the Human Resource Development Strategy 2011–2020. Guiding principles on developing and bolstering distance education are outlined in the Information Technology and Communication Development Strategy.

Further directions

In general, the open university system strives for more flexibility, inclusiveness and diversity in terms of learners'

background and abilities. Modernization of distance-learning technologies and facilities should be done by increasing state funding as well as by strengthening the network among private, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions. There is also a need to raise awareness among policy-makers, local leaders and university authorities on the benefits of lifelong learning initiatives and different modes of delivery and formats of both non-formal and informal education. The value of alternative education has to be recognized and acknowledged to be equal to the conventional form, and the two open universities ought to play a key role in elaborating tools and mechanisms for assessing and validating the learning outcomes of non-formal and informal education. Universities involved in the provision of distance learning are encouraged to arrange cooperative activities with local and international universities, aiming to share experiences and best practices, conduct joint scientific research and organize workshops and conferences on the challenges and prospects for open and distance learning.

13. GLOBALIZED ONLINE LEARNING IN MALAYSIA

Overview

Recognizing the urgency to revamp the educational landscape of the country to adapt to the fast-changing demands of the labour market, societal needs and technological advancements, the Ministry of Higher Education launched the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education), which outlines the development prospects and directions for the higher education sector. The new strategic policy emphasises a holistic and innovative approach to the promotion of lifelong learning nationwide and includes the theme of globalized online learning as one of 10 paradigm shifts to be made to foster excellence in Malaysian higher education. Furthermore, as Malaysia ranks seventh in Asia in terms of internet penetration, it has the potential to embed online technologies within educational practice. The aim in bolstering digital education is to widen access and improve provision of good-quality education, enhance teaching methodology and learning outcomes and impart Malaysian knowledge and expertise to the international community.

Implementation

Globalized online learning is seen as a means to provide greater opportunities for flexible learning to students through information and communication technology. The Ministry of Education set up an agenda to achieve the goal of integrating online technologies into education through multiple initiatives in close cooperation with higher education institutions. There are three major strategies in establishing the country's capacity to harness online educational technologies:

- *Launching massive open online courses (MOOCs).* The Ministry of Education encourages and supports universities to create MOOCs in different subjects, focusing on those that are related to Malaysia's niche areas such as Islamic banking and finance, Islamic civilisation and Asian civilisations. The target group of Malaysian MOOCs is not limited to tertiary-level students; the courses also reach a wider audience regardless of educational background, financial status or geographical location. MOOCs designed by Malaysian universities cover a range of subjects in both hard and soft sciences and are taught in Bahasa Malaysia,



English or Arabic. These online courses are available on the Open Learning portal (<https://www.openlearning.com/>), the official platform for all public higher education institutions in Malaysia. Malaysian MOOCs are also offered through the worldwide platforms such as Coursera and EdX. The presence of Malaysian e-learning courses in the international arena enables foreign learners to become familiar with Malaysian higher education and increases the attractiveness of the country as a study destination.

- *Incorporating online learning into curricula.* Online education has become a crucial component of university courses, and up to 70 per cent of programmes are obliged to use blended learning modules. Common undergraduate courses have been converting into MOOCs, accompanied by fundamental modifications in pedagogical approaches, content delivery and assessment methods. Further, blended learning has been encouraged as a way of ensuring that students gain transformative life skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, team collaboration and leadership, indispensable for the 21st-century worker.
- *Cyber capacity-building.* The new modes of teaching and learning introduced into higher education compel universities to upgrade their infrastructure, that is, the software and hardware necessary for e-learning. Consequently, the ministry, jointly with other agencies, is assisting universities to increase the availability of learning devices. Moreover, the agenda foresees the improvement of wireless bandwidth and coverage in Malaysia to boost the availability and, hence the use, of video streaming and teleconference facilities.

To promote lifelong learning opportunities and flexible pathways to higher education, the government introduced Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), spearheaded by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. Within the framework of APEL, the skills and competences of any individual can be assessed and certified no matter how they were acquired. In addition, students may apply for exemption from university modules based on their prior knowledge and experience in the relevant field. This sound foundation for recognition and validation of prior learning in Malaysia creates favourable conditions for promoting and mainstreaming online learning as an accountable outcome of education.

Achievements

The Ministry of Higher Education reports that 20 Malaysian public universities launched 219 MOOCs, with a total of 218,806 students from over 80 countries participated in Malaysian MOOCs, in 2016. In the same year, 53,666 first-year students used MOOCs as part of their compulsory courses at different Malaysian higher education institutions. The ministry target is for public universities to offer 15 courses per institution. In 2014, five Malaysian universities were in the top 500 universities in the QS World University Rankings largely due to their active involvement in delivery of MOOCs.

Facilitating policies and the institutional framework

The Ministry of Higher Education intends to continue to advocate ICT-enabled learning following the steps and initiatives outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education), aiming to put Malaysian education on a par with the highest international standards. The National e-Learning Policy or Dasar e-Pembelajaran Negara (DePAN) presents a framework for e-learning advancement at Malaysian higher education institutions based on five pillars: infrastructure, organizational structure, curriculum and content, professional development and e-learning enculturation.

The Blueprint on the Enculturation of Lifelong Learning for Malaysia 2011–2020 addresses the challenges in promoting lifelong learning at national level and delineates guiding principles and actions to ensure successful development of



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A woman trained to analyse the tsunami alert system in Malaysia

lifelong learning in Malaysia. One of the economic targets stated in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan 2016–2020 is to narrow the income gap between citizens and improve the livelihood of poor people by unlocking their potential productivity through a variety of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Further directions

The Ministry of Higher Education plans to establish a National e-Learning Centre, which should serve as a powerhouse aiding the creation of digital courses, providing a platform for displaying and assisting the process of sharing best practice in e-learning, particularly in MOOCs, among stakeholders. Universities have to focus on building a solid infrastructure that enables all possible actors to take active part in delivering or studying e-courses. Additionally, credit-transfer mechanisms for students completing MOOCs are to be instituted in all Malaysian universities, which will also promote harmonization of higher education process across the country. Furthermore, academic staff should undergo training on teaching methodology, content development, and assessment approaches while creating or conducting a MOOC. Finally, there will need to be energetic promotion of online learning to raise awareness of its benefits and opportunities and accustom Malaysian universities, academics and students to the use of digital technologies in education.



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Students in an Industry Competency Framework course in Brunei Darussalam

14. INDUSTRIAL SKILLS QUALIFICATIONS IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Overview

One of the valuable lifelong learning practices in Brunei Darussalam is the linking of multiple sectors – education, industry, government – and the community in the provision of vocational and technical education. This is spearheaded by the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE), a governmental post-secondary educational institution that offers continuing adult education alongside its full-time vocational programmes. The programmes at IBTE are designed in consultation with industry to ensure alignment with the social and economic needs of the country. A prime example of such programmes is the Industrial Skills Qualification (ISQ) – a programme intended to train unemployed youth in one of six trades in the energy sector, the main source of national income. Since its launch in 2013, the programme has achieved great results in terms of graduate employment rates of over 80 per cent. The partnership among different sectors in vocational education is firmly supported by national visions and policies. ISQ is an answer to the Sultan's call for vocational and technical education to be re-evaluated so that it can better meet the needs of the industry and jobs market.

Implementation

Under the Energy Industry Competence Framework, ISQ is a collection of courses that are designed to train unemployed youth in one of six trades: marker/fitter, rigger, welder, scaffolder, heavy vehicle driver and industrial blaster/painter, so that they can work in industry. The programme was jointly initiated in 2013 by the Ministry of Education and the Energy and Industry Department of the Prime Minister's Office (EIDPMO), with extensive consultation with the oil and

gas industry, and was launched at IBTE later the same year. ISQ courses are also a means to create a positive image of Brunei vocational training by issuing internationally recognized certificates, organizing advantageous apprenticeships and providing strong employment support for graduates through frequent meetings with industry recruiters.

To enrol in ISQ courses students must have completed Form 3 or secondary education (see also SPN21, p. 92); the target audience of ISQ courses includes those who are not academically inclined but are good with manual tasks. In addition, school leavers who choose to undertake ISQ are eligible for the *Skim Biasiswa Pendidikan Teknikal dan Vokasional* (BPTV – Technical and Vocational Education Scholarship Scheme) administered by the Department of Economic Planning and Development. It should be noted that the Government of Brunei provides this scholarship with the intention of enabling school leavers to acquire necessary technical vocational skills that will help to realize the country's vision of a skilled workforce and a knowledge-driven economy.

Once enrolled in ISQ, students spend their first six months training at IBTE, followed by four to six months' training and internship in registered training organisations of the energy industry. All training institutions are required to be accredited by international bodies so that graduates' qualifications will be recognized abroad, thereby granting them the chance to work both within and outside Brunei Darussalam. These accreditation bodies include the Welding Institute, the Construction Industry Training Board, the Lifting Equipment Engineers Association and the British Gas Approved Scheme. Another quality assurance measure is that the teaching staff have to attend professional development workshops and to gain industrial experience through internships.

Near the end of their training, ISQ students will participate in the IBTE market day. Here they can meet both governmental and non-governmental employers and potentially get a conditional offer of employment. With this, students will secure a job upon graduation if they fulfil all criteria set by their putative employer.

Achievements

The IBTE Graduates' Employment Study reports that 93.2 per cent of ISQ graduates from the 2014 intake were employed; this figure, however, fell to 87.4 per cent for those entering ISQ in 2015. Overall, ISQ has achieved the graduate employment objective set by IBTE of 80 per cent six months after graduation.

The success of ISQ and other collaborative programmes with the oil and gas industry has stimulated the adaptation of their model to other industries such as construction, hospitality and tourism. All of these programmes will together shape the Industry Competency Framework – a continuation of the Energy Industry Competence Framework, which will ensure the relevance of IBTE's vocational and technical training to the needs of industry and national development.

Facilitating conditions

ISQ, and vocational and technical education more generally, are underpinned by education-focused policies and national visions. For instance, that ISQ institutions are accredited is a direct response to the mission of having first class secondary and tertiary education, including vocational schools, that produce the experts, professionals and technicians required in commerce and industry. Of equal importance is the Sultan's call for the alignment of vocational and technical education to industry and his support for 'a whole-nation approach' (IBTE, 2016, p.14) in which multiple sectors and the community join in developing and delivering vocational and technical education.

The National Education System for the 21st Century (SPN21) puts emphasis on a balanced, relevant, dynamic and differentiated curriculum which is indispensable to improve the quality of technical and vocational education. SPN21 also explains the implementation of the three-tier qualifications system for technical and vocational education as well as

providing guidelines on assessment processes for students' hard and soft skills. Moreover, this policy sets up mechanisms for accreditation of prior learning specifically for technical and vocational training.

The launch of ISQ was in line with the Five-year Strategic Plan (2013–2018) that urged the modernization of technical and vocational education in Brunei and emphasized such overarching themes as curriculum restructuring, broadening apprenticeship options and revamping training environments.

Further directions

Brunei expects an increase in student enrolment in technical and vocational institutions and plans to provide infrastructural and technical assistance to enable these institutions to accommodate larger numbers of students. The growing influx of students requires the government to assure a sufficient number of teaching and support staff as well as raise their awareness of the adopted innovative features of technical and vocational education. Continuous provision of ISQ programmes as well as the review and evaluation of the learning outcomes have to be conducted with the active involvement of various stakeholders, including public and private sectors.

15. THE SINGAPORE SKILLSFUTURE MOVEMENT

Overview

In 2014, the Singapore government launched SkillsFuture, a national movement to provide Singaporeans with opportunities to develop to their fullest potential regardless of where they started in life. This movement marks a major new phase of investment towards helping Singaporeans acquire and develop skills and mastery throughout life. The movement consists of numerous lifelong learning and skills development initiatives for Singaporeans in all education and career stages. Notable initiatives include implementing SkillsFuture Credit, a scheme which grants Singaporeans aged 25 years and above an opening credit of SG\$500 to fund supported skills-relevant courses, and the SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Programme, where vocational graduates are placed in jobs that allow them to receive a salary while engaging in structured on-the-job training. These initiatives

were facilitated through the establishment of the Future Economy Council.

Implementation

The SkillsFuture initiative was introduced to support Singapore's next stage of economic advancement by providing lifelong learning and skills development opportunities for all Singaporeans. The objective is to help Singapore move towards an advanced economy and society, where individuals have opportunities to enhance expertise and mastery of skills, motivated not only by the current demands of their jobs, but by a personal devotion to excellence and a commitment to developing strengths and cultivating skills to support their passion. It also embraces the spirit of lifelong learning and respect for all job skills, and celebrates the skills and growth of every individual, regardless of their background, age or qualifications. The nationwide initiative is open to all Singaporeans.

The four objectives of SkillsFuture are as follows:

- Helping individuals make well-informed choices in education, training and careers.
- Developing an integrated, high-quality system of education and training that responds to constantly evolving industry needs.
- Promoting employer recognition and career development based on skills and mastery.
- Fostering a culture that supports and celebrates lifelong learning.

Because multiple stakeholders are involved, SkillsFuture can be regarded as a 'whole society movement'. Individuals throughout the various stages of their learning and career journeys can access SkillsFuture initiatives to take charge of their learning, develop individual skills and meet personal aspirations.

Companies, industry associations and unions can help to identify skills gaps at the industry level and provide feedback that, in turn, shapes the initiatives. As employers, they facilitate employee training and recognize skills-based career progression. Training providers equip the workforce with the relevant skills required for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

They work closely with industry partners to design and deliver quality training, and also innovate and transform course delivery to support flexible and accessible learning.

SkillsFuture has a wide range of initiatives, each targeting different groups of stakeholders:

Stakeholders	Initiatives
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education and Career Guidance ● Enhanced Internships ● SkillsFuture Earn and Learn programmes ● MySkillsFuture (to be launched in phases from 2017)
Adult learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SkillsFuture Credit ● SkillsFuture Study Awards ● SkillsFuture Fellowships ● SkillsFuture Mid-Career Enhanced Subsidy ● SkillsFuture Engage
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Industry Manpower Plan ● Skills Frameworks ● SkillsFuture Mentors ● SkillsFuture Leadership Development Initiative
Training providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● iN.LEARN 2020 ● Training and Adult Education Sector Transformation Plan

A key initiative at national level, SkillsFuture Credit is designed to encourage individual ownership of skills development and lifelong learning. All Singaporean adults aged 25 and above are eligible to receive government credit worth SG\$500 to fund supported skills-relevant courses. There are also targeted subsidies for adults aged 40 and above to encourage mid-career Singaporeans to upskill and reskill. SkillsFuture Engage enables more Singaporeans to navigate career and training choices. It is a community outreach initiative that complements existing advisory services and resources

available to Singaporeans in partnership with the People's Association, Community Development Councils, Workforce Singapore, and the Employment and Employability Institute. The SkillsFuture website (www.skillsfuture.sg) provides further details of each initiative.

A tripartite Future Economy Council oversees the SkillsFuture initiative at the national level. The council is chaired by the Minister for Finance and comprises government, industry, unions, and educational and training institutions from different sectors, offering a broad range of expertise.

Achievements

SkillsFuture has progressed well, with growing support for expanding the initiatives and programmes. The training participation rate of Singapore's resident workforce (aged 15 to 64) increased from 32 per cent to 42 per cent over the last 10 years (Ministry of Education, 2017), and an estimated 380,000 Singaporeans benefitted from programmes under the SkillsFuture movement in 2016 – about 8 per cent more than the year before. The number of government-funded training places also increased by 11 per cent compared to 2015 (Hui, 2017). The 2016 annual review report demonstrates a wide range of positive outcomes of key programmes as seen in *Figure 2.3*. The government is confident in the ability of SkillsFuture to change mind-sets towards a culture of lifelong learning and skills mastery from a long-term perspective.

Facilitating policies and the institutional framework

In the city-state of Singapore, inter-ministerial cooperation is strong between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Manpower (MoM) at the central level. The Singapore Government established the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) in 2003 to promote lifelong learning and to make Singapore's workforce resilient and competitive. Part of this effort entailed accelerating the shift from an 'employer-centric skills' adult training system to one that placed greater focus on the individual. For instance, WDA worked with private training providers to set up continuing education and training centres that offered subsidised quality training directly to individuals.

The WDA was restructured into two entities in 2016 – SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) and Workforce Singapore

(WSG) – to ensure the effective implementation of two key national priorities: the SkillsFuture initiative and the need to ensure competitiveness and quality jobs for Singaporeans in the long term (MoE, 2016).

As a statutory board under the MoE, SSG's mission is to take SkillsFuture forward by developing an integrated, high-quality and responsive education and training system, strengthening a culture of lifelong learning and pursuit of skills mastery, and fostering employer recognition and ownership of skills. Its mandate includes the training of adult educators; supporting quality adult education centres and private education institutions; facilitating access to high-quality, industry-relevant training throughout life; and creating synergies between pre-employment training and continuing education and training.

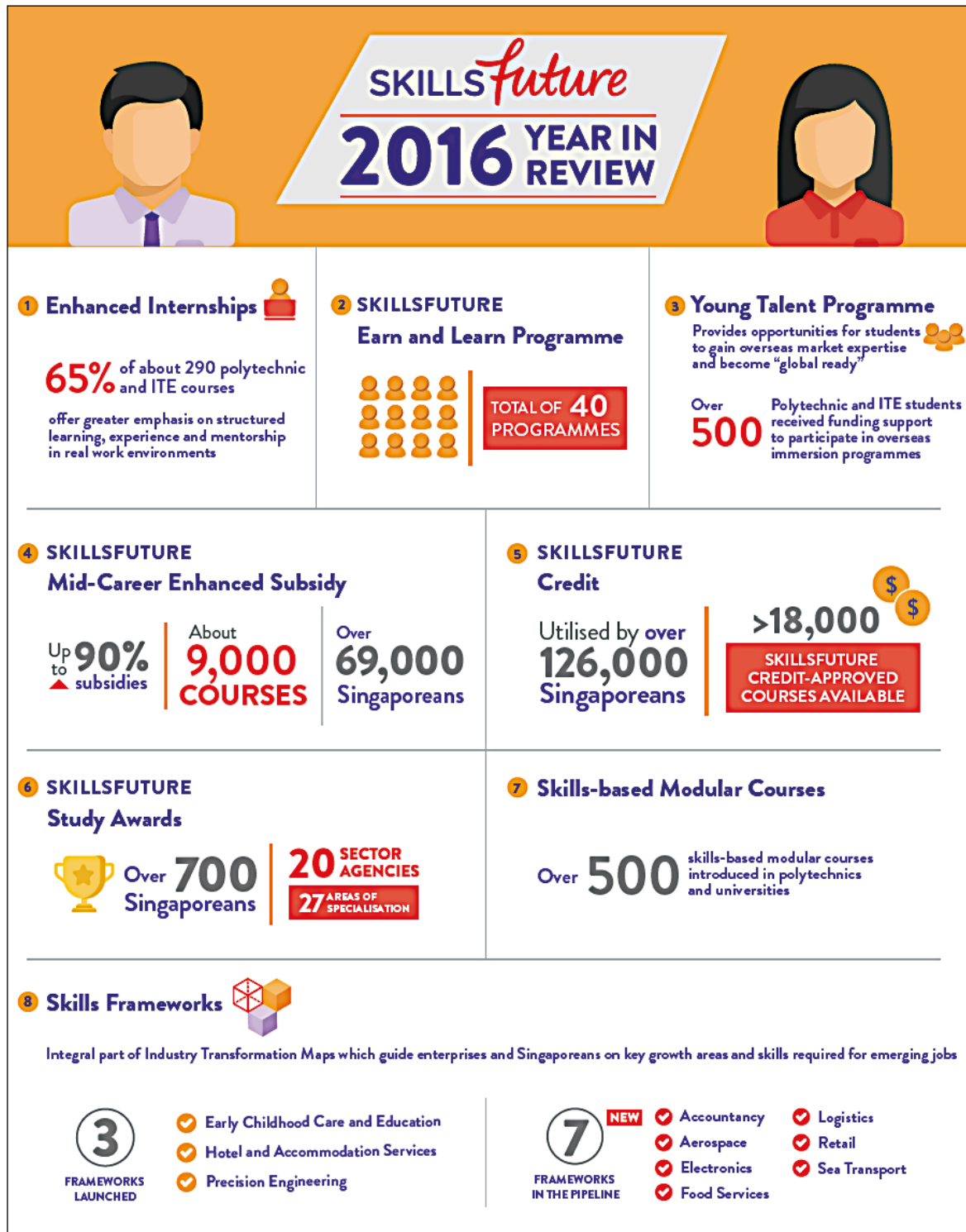
WSG's mission is to meet the need for ensuring competitiveness and job quality for Singaporeans in the long term. Under the MoM, WSG oversees the transformation of the local workforce and industry to meet ongoing economic challenges. It promotes the development, competitiveness, inclusiveness and employability of all levels of the workforce. While its key focus is to help workers meet their career aspirations and secure quality jobs at different stages of life, it also addresses the needs of business owners and companies by providing support to enable enterprises to remain competitive with fewer workers.

Further directions

Singapore is seen as having one of the most skilled workforces in the world. With a well-established education system, education and training pathways in Singapore have accommodated learners of all ages with different abilities and prior learning backgrounds (including learning through work) to participate in learning at different stages of life.

This comes from the government's efforts to encourage the public to think of education as a lifelong process that goes beyond formal schooling, with the aim of moving individuals away from a paper chase for qualifications towards skills-based training and progression. This is facilitated by efforts such as the development of sector-based skills frameworks and greater recognition of prior learning in various forms to ensure greater inter-operability of qualifications, which allows

Figure 2.3. The SkillsFuture 2016 year in review report card



Source: www.skillsfuture.sg

individual learnings from one qualification system to be recognized by other systems under an integrated education and training structure.

Policies and strategies in Singapore are guided by robust research findings. The Institute for Adult Learning, as an active division of the SSG, is working on identifying appropriate

indicators to measure the impact of SkillsFuture initiatives and programmes. Its preparatory study, which used data from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), identified a relatively strong lifelong learning capability in Singapore compared to other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (Freebody, 2016).

Chapter 3: Concluding remarks and guiding questions

A selection of good practices presented by experts from 11 countries during the 2016 expert meeting on lifelong learning organized by SEAMEO CELLL in cooperation with UIL were introduced in the previous chapter. The same meeting proposed six strategic actions for implementation (the full text can be found in the Appendix):

1. Undertake a mapping exercise to identify gaps in SDG 4 to inform policy-makers.
2. Identify implementation gaps in achieving SDG 4 and communicate these to policy-makers.
3. Organize advocacy activities to promote lifelong learning.
4. Conduct multi-sectoral dialogue on the promotion of lifelong learning and seek endorsement from governmental authorities.
5. Find evidence on higher returns from lifelong learning.
6. Enhance the role of local governments and provide incentives for corporate social responsibility.

This set of actions shows the priorities that a regional collaboration could adopt when developing a shared agenda for lifelong learning and new measures for its expansion. Indonesia, Thailand and Viet Nam are participating in exploratory research on the wider benefits of participation in community learning centres initiated by the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) in the Republic of Korea (NILE and UIL, 2017). The Indonesian Government hosted a series of seminars on community education, inviting experts from ASEAN countries. Regional collaborations such as these and the online portals hosted by SEAMEO CELLL, UNESCO and the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub,³ will provide an opportunity to exchange good practices in Southeast Asia and other regions. Many countries supported the idea of having a shared regional agenda for lifelong learning that can be used as a framework and guide.

There is clear, shared recognition across Southeast Asian countries that the need and demand for lifelong learning will continue to grow as will the importance of terms such as 'learning society', 'learning regions', 'learning cities' and 'learning communities'. For countries with an ageing population and therefore a depleted working-age population, the assertion that every individual is important and has to be given the opportunities to develop and contribute to the

fullest extent possible is decidedly relevant.

Will Southeast Asian countries transform their own education systems? Remarks and recommendations inspired from the country reports are presented below, grouped according to the foundations for lifelong learning: vision, policy, quality, recognition and evaluation. Recommendations that were common across countries or especially noteworthy are also highlighted, and are followed by guiding questions for policy dialogue in Southeast Asian countries.

1. VISION: DEFINING THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Adopting the concept of lifelong learning and moving towards becoming a learning society requires more than adjusting budgets and plans over time-limited periods. It involves a change of mind-set: a different perception of learning from pre-school to higher education; and a new idea for how to support the different kinds of natural or informal learning that happen all the time, planned or unplanned. It means changing the understanding, mind-set and culture of the people – individuals, communities, localities, professional and business interests – and helping them see why a lifelong learning system is essential for the common and national good.

The purpose of embracing lifelong learning is directional: *to create active learning systems and societies, enabling the whole population to share in healthy progress and development.* It is a matter of what a national government does as well as what it says. The most prosperous country of our 11, Singapore, does not define a specific lifelong learning strategy; however, its governance indicates a clear sense of direction towards being a particular kind of successful society that cares about its elderly population as well as the economy.

Clear insight is central to developing a successful lifelong learning initiative. This can be seen in countries that give a high level of government support, and where multiple sectors of government at different levels of administration, the private and commercial sectors, and civil society all work together.

Some countries perceive formal schooling as separate from

3 <https://www.sea-illportal.org>; www.unescobkk.org/education/literacy-and-lifelong-learning; <http://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning>; <http://asemllhub.org/>

lifelong learning. Non-formal and vocational education and training systems for youth and adults may be seen as inferior to formal education. Others have fully embraced holistic lifelong learning principles. Defining a lifelong learning vision does not necessarily ensure that it is understood; or that the full implications of adopting a lifelong learning system are fully recognized. Conversely, some countries have not formally adopted any definition, but still think and plan in an integrative way. Community learning centres (CLCs) are becoming key to the way an increasing numbers of countries think about how local – especially rural and otherwise remote and under-served – communities can be reached with an integrated lifelong learning system.

All of the countries stressed a need for more public awareness or 'social marketing' of lifelong learning, and cited the greater role the media (TV, radio and newspapers) and community and business leaders could play. The prevailing perception is that formal education is superior to alternative modes of teaching and learning, such as equivalency programmes and open universities. Many of these 'alternative' programmes do not reach their intended target groups or are seen as 'low value'; targeted communication can resolve this. Local leaders could also guide the future of lifelong learning in their respective areas. Lao PDR reported that approaching all sectors prompted its Ministry of Education and Sports to look at learning in new ways and take account of all forms of learning. Advocacy activities reaching outside the education sector are recommended in defining the societal purposes of education and lifelong learning.

2. POLICY: COHERENT GOVERNING COMMITMENTS TO LIFELONG LEARNING

Coherence of policy commitment, with supporting laws, regulations and financial resources, is needed if policies are to succeed. This requires an understanding of and support for lifelong learning, a strategy for assisting educators and para-teaching staff, and essential physical infrastructure and educational resources. The popular mind-set of embracing and not devaluing lifelong learning is aided by administrative decentralization that is responsive to local diversity and needs, a viable evaluation, and a strong resource framework. It implies using a participatory development process.

A holistic and integrated approach to lifelong learning still requires the setting of priorities and corresponding allocation of resources. Priorities depend on where gaps lie in terms of educational attainment and a country's future plan for its society. Some countries are providing training programmes targeting women living in rural areas, some offer learning activities for elderly people. Thailand is using its lifelong learning programmes to integrate foreigners who come to the country to live or work. Other countries are prioritizing the further education and training of teachers, non-formal educators and administrators, believing that by improving their capacities, the quality of teaching will also improve.

A participatory policy development process through the tripartism of government, employees and employers, or multiple-sector consultation and coordination, provides an example of how to successfully translate policy commitment to implementation plans by developing synergies and efficiently mobilizing resources. Coherence can be monitored by analysing policy priorities and allocation of human and financial resources. In addition to resources, government legislations and frameworks provide enabling conditions for implementation of policy such as making room for business sectors' contribution and giving authority to local governments.

Coherent policies and financing for implementation also need to be in place at the decentralized level in cities/districts down to schools/education centres. Resource constraints affect general infrastructure as well as staffing of both classrooms and CLCs. When properly funded, these systems can foster reciprocal learning and exchange of good practices from one locality to another. Authority delegated to decentralized government units, and efficient administration on a smaller scale, can make this easier.

3. QUALITY: PROVIDING INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Building the capacities of teachers and trainers is a priority in most Southeast Asian countries. This refers to initial and in-service training and development that is appropriately assessed and accredited, and implies a firm grasp of

what lifelong learning means for the content and style of the curriculum and teaching. What is called the 'hidden curriculum' is as influential as what appears in textbooks and examination or assessment papers. Teaching that is innovative, adaptable and resourceful – aimed at producing active citizens and active workers – will not succeed if the classroom environment is forbidding, the learners passively obedient or the teacher regarded as the only person in the room whose opinion matters. This is not a sound basis for the formation of self-directed, confident individuals who can fully exercise their citizenship and participate proactively in their community development activities.

An important common concern throughout the region is access for all: to make lifelong learning activities more easily available by different means. One means is suggested by the work of community learning centres in several countries, making learning support as well as informal instruction available in familiar and informal venues close to where people live. The widespread support for CLCs in the region is evidence of an awareness of the importance of providing local spaces in which to learn in groups.

Some countries (such as Lao PDR and Myanmar) recommended improving vocational skills training in secondary schools and equivalency programmes to meet the demand of labour market and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Harnessing modern technologies in education, i.e. through open high schools in the Philippines and open universities in Malaysia and Viet Nam, is recommended not only to democratize access to education but to offer more personalized, modular-based and flexible online learning experiences to all. Providing support to teachers and learners alike in using technology is suggested.

Another important consideration is the recognition of old forms of knowing, sometimes called indigenous wisdom. This reflects the high degree of cultural diversity within Southeast Asian countries, especially in more remote communities which often face significant disadvantage. Efforts to promote inclusion should be sensitive to the need to inform and empower such communities through good-quality education and an acknowledgement of the importance of indigenous knowledge, rather than forcing them into a model that is

mostly created centrally and driven down through the levels of administration (Pillai, 2015).

4. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES FROM ALL FORMS OF LEARNING

Credit recognition and transfer has been a vexed problem for higher education systems in many countries for many years. The principles of equity and open access are clear, but in too many cases implementation of these principles proves to be problematic. Where there is no national qualification body in place, providing learning and education opportunities through Open University or massive open online courses (MOOCs) is seen as key to building assessment tools and certifying learning gained outside formal schools.

There is a tension in several country reports between recognizing the breadth of learning that already occurs, outside as well as within formal systems, and the urgent need to prevent waste and raise participation rates and performance in the early and secondary years of formal schooling and in technical education. For some learners, the benefits of non-credit-bearing practical non-formal education – supporting, for example, parenting and other family concerns, or practical farming or health – may be enough. Some countries are emphatic about the importance of informal learning in the family and community, noting the resistance of communities which value only learning which is classroom-based and carrying credit.

A tension can also be found between the concept of CLCs and providers of purely informal learning and the pressure from government and others to focus and evaluate on the basis of formal classes and assessed results. This pressure detracts from the vision of CLCs as drop-in centres of informal learning where users learn what they choose in their own ways.

A question for all countries concerning credit recognition is how widely it is used and with what success, from the viewpoint of individual learners. In some other world regions, where much effort has gone into creating pathways, bridges and other credit recognition links, it seems that the numbers using it successfully have been quite small; while institutional resistance has been pronounced (Coles, 2006).

5. EVALUATION: SETTING TARGETS AND INDICATORS TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE LIFELONG LEARNING

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) involves: setting targets and indicators to evaluate lifelong learning; participatory evaluation; tools for tracking implementation; indicators for evaluation; and processes of monitoring which are desirably formative – focused on quality enhancement and not just quality assessment. While indicators to track participation and completion of formal and non-formal education are in place, many countries are in the early stages of measuring the impact and effectiveness of lifelong learning.

We live in a risk-and-assess era: an age of monitoring, quality assessment and efficiency, and value-for-money audits. This new managerial culture has grown fast, especially in countries where state provision and direct control have given way to public-private partnerships, the contracting-out of services, and the growing role of the private sector in the provision of goods and services, including education.

So far as possible, systems and institutions are assessed through quantifiable measures. The difficulty with this is that it leaves out hard-to-measure long-term collective and cultural gains, which may matter even more than short-term efficiency savings. The less tangible dimensions of cultural change, which underpin recognition and acceptance of the very notion of lifelong learning, can get squeezed out. Things of value may be lost in an overweening focus on things that are readily quantifiable. Formative and participatory forms of assessment, allowing continuous feedback and improvement, are better than summative approaches, though they tend to be more expensive. Other challenges concern identifying who are excluded from education and what their educational demands are. Education researchers in the Philippines, concerned with low completion rates in MOOCs and eLearning degree courses, suggest a need for more research on how to target learners and improve teaching models and learner support systems. Singapore is planning robust research on adult education workforce development and adult learning pedagogies to inform policy-making.

Another problem is that reliable evaluation depends not only on a good choice of indicators but also on a capacity to collect adequate data. Although we have moved rapidly into a new era of 'big data' and powerful number crunching, this may be expensive and difficult, even impossible for many countries. Not only are the results only as good as the data collected and the questions asked of them, but the burden of data collection tends to fall on the lowest levels of human resources serving the lifelong learning system. Worse still, data collection may be required frequently, in different forms, by different monitoring authorities and their systems. Care should be taken not to produce unintended consequences that outweigh the benefits of the M&E itself.

Research on demands for lifelong learning give good basis for designing contents of teaching and learning as well as in designing appropriate modes and timing of learning. More research on lifelong learning should be encouraged and supported.

6. QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

To build a stronger lifelong learning agenda, Southeast Asian countries need to create a group of change agents for lifelong learning who systematically digest experience and adapt policy and practice so as to *better plan, self-assess and implement*. This must be done in the context of a highly uncertain world, with the vision and hope offered by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in mind. We work not only as educationalists, planners and development workers, but also as citizens of our communities, nation, region and shared world. As always, we need to meet global imperatives in unique and infinitely diverse localities and sub-regions; and to connect through open bottom-up and top-down communications. This means learning how to listen, and how to decentralize national policies in ways that respect local diversity yet give clear common direction.

To expand the pool of change agents, the SEAMEO-UNESCO project, *Towards a Lifelong Learning Agenda in Southeast Asian Countries*, is inviting countries to organize multi-sectoral dialogue focusing on holistic and integrated approaches to education and lifelong learning. The report suggests the following key questions to choose from,

depending on the context, for further reflection at the level of institution, ministry and country:

- How can we embrace the concept of lifelong learning in the development and reform of education and national plans? What purposes should policies and strategies for lifelong learning serve in my country?
- Who are priority groups of learners and what are urgent and important challenges to ensure inclusive and equitable education building on the current conditions of education and lifelong learning in my country?
- What strategies can we develop to expand the provision of rich and diversified learning opportunities and flexible learning pathways for learners?

- What coordination mechanisms and resource mobilisation could be developed to support lifelong learning initiatives?
- How do we provide people with opportunities for quality learning in local communities as well as through online and blended learning?
- What can be done to support the monitoring and evaluation of lifelong learning in my country in light of the Education 2030 Framework for Action and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda?

SEAMEO CELLL invites readers to post the results of these discussions and new developments or practices in the Southeast Asian Lifelong Learning Portal (<https://www.sea-llportal.org>).

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Appendix: Recommendations and strategic actions for implementation

TOWARDS A LIFELONG LEARNING AGENDA IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

RECOMMENDATIONS/DECLARATIONS BY THE SEAMEO-UNESCO MEETING IN HO CHI MINH CITY (4–5 OCTOBER 2016)

PREAMBLE

This document builds on: the advocacy brief on promoting lifelong learning for all, proposed from the Workshop on National Policy Frameworks for Lifelong Learning in the ASEAN Countries held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, in January 2013; the ASEAN Declaration of Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth from the ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 6 September 2016; the SEAMEO 7 Priority Areas 2015–2035; and the Sustainable Development Agenda – Education 2030, with its overall objective of 'Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

The expert meeting on the project *Towards a Lifelong Learning Agenda in Southeast Asian Countries* co-organized by SEAMEO and UNESCO in Ho Chi Minh City, and participated in by 11 countries on 4 and 5 October 2016, would like to seek the commitment of the ministers of education of Southeast Asian countries and their partners on the following findings and policy recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

SEAMEO member countries proposed:

- Developing national policy or legislation to promote lifelong learning for all as integral to national social and economic development and as a key component of the SDG agenda.
- Establishing coordination mechanisms at all levels by involving all stakeholders in lifelong learning.
- Allocating sufficient financial resources and developing mechanisms to mobilize additional funding and other resources in recognition of the benefits of lifelong learning.
- Expanding the provision of rich and diversified lifelong learning opportunities.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS/ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Undertake a mapping exercise to identify gaps in SDG 4 to inform policy-makers.
2. Identify the implementation gaps in achieving SDG 4 and communicate to policy-makers
3. Organize advocacy activities to promote lifelong learning.
4. Conduct multi-sectoral dialogue on the promotion of lifelong learning and seek endorsement from governmental authorities.
5. Find evidence on higher returns from lifelong learning.
6. Enhance the role of local governments and provide incentives for corporate social responsibility.



This report is an outcome of a project on building a lifelong learning agenda in Southeast Asian countries, which aims to address the region's remaining educational challenges in ensuring 'inclusive and equitable quality education and promot[ing] lifelong learning opportunities for all' (Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development). By sharing promising policies and practices in implementing integrated lifelong learning from different perspectives, countries can learn from one another and move their visions for lifelong learning fully into practice.

The publication documents a variety of promising practices from 11 countries, focusing particularly on the features critical to the promotion of lifelong learning for all; namely, inclusive and gender-responsive teaching and learning practices, recognition of learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning, collaboration between social and economic development sectors and coherent national government policies and strategies. The report comprises three main sections: a reflection on lifelong learning in international and national documents, a collection of good practice drawn from their national reports, and a set of recommendations for policies and programmes promoting lifelong learning. It is hoped that these recommendations will stimulate discussion and new developments, in both policy and practice, in the region.