

STEM POLICY ROUNDTABLES PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SEAMEO Regional Centre for STEM Education (SEAMEO STEM-ED) proposes to conduct two or more roundtables of policymakers each year. The roundtables will bring international and regional experts together with regional policymakers to discuss the implications of research findings and experiences in other countries with ASEAN policymakers for the purpose of increasing the efficacy of government actions in the region. This strategy is based on the model of the Aspen Institute's Congressional Seminar which has been used to inform federal policymakers in the United States.

BACKGROUND

The purpose is to encourage more attention to evidence in making policies in the ASEAN countries. It has been noted that policymakers in the region do not always consider evidence in designing policies to improve STEM education. The intent is to make the best available evidence more accessible to policymakers and to give them direct access to leading researchers so that they may ask questions about the implications of the evidence, the forms of action to be taken, and the costs of the actions. Now is the time to do it because there is considerable pressure on all of the governments to improve STEM education. If we will not do so, governments are likely to waste resources on initiatives that have limited or no impact.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective is to organize at least two roundtables each year on issues related to the distribution and effectiveness of STEM education in the region.

Secondary objectives include:

- Recruiting leading international and regional researchers to participate in the roundtables;
- Persuading policymakers from all of the ASEAN countries to participate;
- Obtaining significant press coverage of the roundtables to make the information more accessible to regional educators;
- Making videos of the roundtable discussions to distribute to universities and for use in school leadership and pre-service programs.

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

Due to the impact of the COVID-19, the roundtables for Year One will be conducted virtually, using software like Zoom or GoToMeeting. Therefore, the first task will be to contact the regional Ministries through the SEAMEO Secretariat to find out what software they have for conducting meetings. A decision will then be made about what software to use for the roundtables and the Ministries will be informed.

Then, a series of topics for the ministries will be shared with them to obtain their feedback on the relevance of the topics.

Then, the first two roundtables will be scheduled and speakers recruited. Each nation will be encouraged to have four policymakers and four key university faculty members participate in the roundtable.

This process will be repeated at the beginning of each fiscal year of SEAMEO STEM-ED.

The intention is to encourage national ministries to use the evidence to design or revise STEM initiatives in their respective countries.

DELIVERABLES

The key deliverables will be:

1. The roundtables themselves, at least two per year;
2. The transcripts of the roundtables, which will be posted on the SEAMEO STEM-ED website;
3. The videos of the roundtables, which will be posted on the website.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

The primary benefits will be increased attention to evidence by national policymakers and the increased efficacy of national STEM initiatives resulting from the use of evidence in their design.

STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES

The primary beneficiaries will be national policymakers in the SEAMEO countries. In addition, university faculty will benefit from their increased access to rigorous research and to the research methods used by the participating researchers.

PROJECT TIMELINE AND SOURCES OF FUNDS

The project will begin in 2020 and will continue for the first five years of the Centre's operation. The funds of the project will come from the general Centre budget as well as from donor-funded projects such as Chevron Enjoy Science.