

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project intends to develop a curriculum for school leaders, field test the new curricula, and persuade universities in the region that prepare principals to adopt it in whole or in part, and assist the adopting universities in doing so. It will be a collaboration between the SEAMEO Regional Centre for STEM Education (SEAMEO STEM-ED) and the Teachers' Council of Thailand, and eventually with a number of Thai and regional universities.

BACKGROUND

The overall purpose of the project is to improve the preparation of school principals by preparing them to be instructional leaders and enabling them to create cultures of improvement in their schools. Research literature consistently indicates that the two most significant in-school factors affecting student achievement are the quality of teaching and the quality of school leadership.

Currently, prospective principals are exposed to a great deal of management theory but not provided with practical training to be instructional leaders, including adequate knowledge of instruction or the tools required to evaluate teachers or to coach them to improve their practice. As a consequence, when they are appointed as principals, they often avoid these tasks and do not lead efforts to improve the performance of students.

The underlying reasons for this are 1) that the university faculty that prepare them have little or no practical experience as school principals, and the curriculum of their preparation programs does not provide them with the knowledge and skills that they need to be instructional leaders; and 2) the system provides them with few incentives to be instructional leaders.

This project seeks to demonstrate that if principals are given adequate training and encouraged to be instructional leaders, they will have a positive impact on their schools and on the performance of their students. The project will take a broad view of instructional leadership, including a principal's direct impact on the quality of teaching through supervision and coaching, but also articulation of a clear mission for the school by the whole community, developing teacher leaders and structuring the workplace.

The end result of the project is expected to be the creation of a model training program for principals that effectively develops the necessary knowledge and skills, followed by the reform of principal training in the universities and a significant change in the role of the principal in Thai and regional schools. If this project is not undertaken and sustained, it is predicted that the performance of schools in Thailand and many countries in the region will lag behind other regions of the world and their students will be ill-prepared for the 21st century labor market.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. For example:

- Design a set of courses or curricular modules that will prepare a prospective principal to be an instructional leader and build a culture of improvement in his/her school;
- Initial test the courses or modules as professional development for current principals;
- Demonstration the effectiveness of the new curriculum through the creation of an Academy in collaboration with the Teachers' Council of Thailand;
- Transfer this new leadership curriculum to the principal preparation programs in major universities in Thailand;
- Transfer the new curriculum to institutions preparing principals in other ASEAN nations.

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

The scope of the project is ambitious. The Centre will assemble a working committee of Thai principals and university faculty to advise the staff about the knowledge and skills required of an instructional leader and the courses that might be required to develop them. The agencies now responsible for the preparation and certification of principals will be invited to be partners in this work.

The Teachers' Council and the Centre will make these courses available to current principals and, based on the feedback received from participants, revise the courses as needed.

The full set of courses will be offered to aspiring principals as an Academy. Again, feedback will be used to revise and improve the program.

The final program will be offered to Thai and regional universities to use or integrate with their current leadership programs.

DELIVERABLES

The deliverables can be described in stages. The primary set of deliverables will be the courses or modules for instructional leaders. The second set of deliverables will be the full program or Academy which will be piloted by the Teachers' Council and the Centre, working in collaboration. The final deliverable will be the adoption of the modules by multiple universities in the region.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

The expected benefits will be improved performance by Thai principals who will play active roles as instructional leaders in their schools, which will result in improved school performance. Therefore, the ultimate beneficiaries will be Thai students and their parents. These benefits will be extended to the region as other universities are offered the curricula for use in their leadership programs.

STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES

SEAMEO STEM-ED, the Teachers' Council of Thailand, and other Thai government agencies involved with the training of principals will be the initial stakeholders. The participating school principals will be the primary beneficiaries during the professional development phase of the project. Participating universities in the region will be the beneficiaries during the final phase.

PROJECT TIMELINE AND SOURCES OF FUNDS

The project will begin when Phase II of the Chevron's Thailand Partnership Initiative project begins and funding from the project will be used to develop the new curriculum. This phase of development will last for two years. Additional funding will be sought to pilot the curriculum and prepare university faculty, both in Thailand and the region, to adopt it. It is estimated that the full implementation of the project will take five to six years.