

WHAT WORKS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA PROJECT DESCRIPTION

It is the intention of SEAMEO STEM-ED to create a website to display research evidence on the effectiveness of various literacy, mathematics, science, and STEM programs and curricula that are available for use by educators in the region. The objective is to encourage policymakers and educators to consider this evidence when making decisions about the adoption of programs and curricula.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this project is to provide educators and policymakers in Southeast Asia with evidence of the effectiveness of various programs and curricula in literacy, mathematics, and science. Similar websites have been constructed in the United States, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere, but they do not contain evidence about the programs commonly used in Southeast Asia. It needs to be done because now decisions are made in schools and in the ministries of education without regard to evidence of effectiveness. It is timely because there is strong interest in improving school performance in Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar, and other countries in Southeast Asia. The end result will be a website providing educators with rigorous evidence of the effectiveness of the curricula and programs available for their use.

OBJECTIVES

- Stimulate the production of systematic reviews of the effectiveness of curricula and programs available for elementary and secondary level literacy, mathematics, and science instruction.
- Increase the amount of research done in the region that meets international standards.
- Increase over time the number of visitors to the website.
- Increase the use of evidence in decisions by policymakers about education.

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

The scope of the project is region-wide in Southeast Asia. The website will be accessible to educators and policymakers across the region. The contents of the website will eventually cover the entire region. In order to be relevant to the entire region, the project must:

1. Identify the programs and curricula in use across the region;
2. Set standards for the research to be considered as evidence of effectiveness;
3. Identify and review the existing research on the programs and curricula in use;
4. Where there are no studies that meet the project's standards, stimulate the creation of such studies;
5. Provide staff development for researchers across the region in the use of methods that meet international standards;

6. Stimulate the creation of systematic reviews of research on the available programs and curricula; and
7. Where there are no or few programs or curricula in use that are effective, share the evidence on programs and curricula found effective in other parts of the world.

DELIVERABLES

The deliverables for the project will be:

1. The What Works in Southeast Asia website;
2. Three workshops in methodology each year for researchers from across the region;
3. Systematic reviews of research to be posted on the website.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

The expected benefits should be:

1. An increase in the decisions of policymakers and educators in the region that are based on evidence of effectiveness;
2. In the long-run, improved outcomes in literacy, mathematics, and science.

STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES

The primary stakeholders in the project will be school leaders, such as principals, academic heads, and department chairs, education policymakers, and university researchers. Over time, the project intends to change their mindsets so that they consider evidence when making decisions about school programs and that university researchers use more rigorous methods and recognize the value of producing systematic reviews.

The initial beneficiaries will be policymakers, school leaders, and teachers, but in the longer-term, students and parents will benefit from the improvements in education decision-making.

PROJECT TIMELINE AND SOURCES OF FUNDS

The initial source of funds will be Chevron Corporation, but the project will seek additional funding to provide training to faculty and encourage the production of systematic reviews. The project will collaborate with the Goethe Institute and some of the costs will be shared.