

ERI-Net Expert Meeting: Finalization of Research Frameworks

7-8 March 2013

Sakura Room, 37th Floor, The Imperial Queen's Park Hotel
Bangkok, Thailand

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Background

Education Research Institutes Network in the Asia-Pacific (ERI-Net) was established by UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in 2009 to facilitate regional collaboration among education research institutions in conducting research work on education issues that are particularly pertinent to the Asia-Pacific region. Currently, 23 institutions from 16 countries and economies are the part of this network.

Since 2009, the network has produced regional studies on key issues mostly in the areas of higher education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Past topics included research on the impact of economic crisis on higher education (2010) and international student mobility (2011). In 2012, the members of ERI-Net met in Bangkok, Thailand to share findings from two regional studies conducted since 2010: (1) public private partnership in higher education and TVET and (2) the question of youth employment – innovative approaches to human resource development. The results of the studies will be published in 2014.

While ERI-Net has been successfully facilitating knowledge generation and dissemination primarily from the higher education and TVET perspectives, it is increasingly recognized that a sector-wide perspective, focusing on coherence among sub-sectors, is much needed in order to identify and analyze problems and propose solutions in the education sector as a whole. In this context, ERI-Net members agreed to expand the scope of research for ERI-Net to go beyond higher education and TVET, revisiting the original objectives of the network at its annual meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand (30-31 July 2012). The group also agreed to discuss proposed topics of research for 2013, as per below:

1. The transition from secondary to higher education
2. A policy study on integration of non-cognitive skills in education

However, due to the insufficient time for discussion, ERI-Net members were not able to finalize the research frameworks during the 2012 meeting. In this context, UNESCO Bangkok is organizing an expert meeting on 7-8 March 2013 to further discuss the research topics and finalize the analytical frameworks of the regional studies.

Objectives of the meeting

1. Create a platform for discussions among experts with diverse backgrounds and expertise
2. Identify the most pertinent issues for the Asia-Pacific region to be covered under the 2013 ERI-Net research topics presented above
3. Finalize two research frameworks and agree on the next steps and the schedule.

Expected outcomes

1. Finalized two research frameworks
2. List of researchers
3. Work plan



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Bangkok Office
Asia and Pacific Regional
Bureau for Education



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AGENDA – DAY 1

1st day	
08.30-09.00	Registration
09.00-09.30	Opening Opening remarks, Gwang-Jo Kim, Director, UNESCO Bangkok Introduction to the seminar themes, Satoko Yano, EPR Unit, UNESCO Bangkok Introduction of participants
09.30-10.00	Coffee break and photo session
Topic I: Integrating non-cognitive skills in education	
10.00-12.15	Presentations: Non-cognitive skills and education Chair: TBC Presenters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we know about “non-cognitive skills” from international discourse? (Gwang-Chol Chang, Chief, EPR Unit, UNESCO Bangkok) • Zest for living – How Japan translated non-cognitive skills into education (Shinobu Yume Yamaguchi, Tokyo Institute of Technology) • Education and Vision 2020: Education in Malaysia: Integration of 21st century skills (Dr Zabani Darus, Ministry of Education, Malaysia) • National Curriculum Change for Reinforcement of Character Education in Korea (Dr Misook Lee, KICE)
12.15-13.30	Lunch
13.30-15.30	Plenary discussion I: Scoping “non-cognitive” skills and competencies for research – definition, domains and indicators Moderator: Gwang-Chol Chang, Chief, EPR Unit, UNESCO Bangkok
15:30-16:00	Break
16.00-17:30	Plenary discussion II: Finalisation of research framework Moderator: Satoko Yano, EPR Unit, UNESCO Bangkok
18:30	Welcome reception dinner Hosted by UNESCO Bangkok

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AGENDA – DAY 2

2nd day

Topic II: Transition from secondary to higher education

09.00-10.30	<p>Overview of research framework Moderator: Libing Wang, APEID Coordinator, UNESCO Bangkok Presentations: Trends and issues on transition from secondary education to higher education in Asian countries Chair: Molly Lee, Former APEID Coordinator, UNESCO Bangkok Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Case of China (Kan Yue, Zhengjiang University) • The Case of Malaysia (Haji Ibrahim Haji Che Omar, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan) • The Case of the Philippines (Ester Ogena, Philippine Normal University)
10.30-11.00	Coffee break
11.00-12.30	<p>Plenary discussion I: Finalisation of research framework Moderator: Libing Wang, APEID Coordinator, UNESCO Bangkok</p>
12.30-13.30	Lunch
13.30-15.00	<p>Plenary discussion II: Finalisation of research framework Moderator: Libing Wang, APEID Coordinator, UNESCO Bangkok</p>
15.00-15.30	Break
15.30-16.00	<p>Next steps Chair: Gwang-Chol Chang, Chief, EPR Unit, UNESCO Bangkok Presentations of research frameworks Finalization of the work plan</p> <p>Closing Wrap-up and closing remarks, Libing Wang, APEID Coordinator, UNESCO Bangkok</p>

ERI-Net 2013 Research Program
Draft Research Framework for “Integrating Non-cognitive Skills in Education Policies for the 21st Century (Phase I)”

Objective of the research studies

- To provide a mapping of how countries in the Asia-Pacific region integrate the concept of non-cognitive skills in their education policies
- Identify emerging trends, good practices and challenges that can be further investigated by the ERI-Net members in Phase II

Regional context

Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region are beginning to realize the importance of integrating non-cognitive skills¹ in schools in order to equip students for the future in a more holistic manner. This issue is particularly relevant in the Asia-Pacific region where many countries excel in the acquisition of cognitive skills, as demonstrated in their performance in international assessment, but also face criticism for focusing too much on cognitive skills and exam-driven results. At the same time, some countries in the region are making concerted effort to integrate such skills in education (e.g., pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment), mostly under the name of *21st Century Skills*. This research study will attempt to uncover country experiences by focusing on how different countries define ‘non-cognitive skills’ within their context, and identify emerging regional trends and areas for further regional research.

Research questions

1.1 Non-cognitive skills in the education system

- Does the education system in your country provide definitions and explanations for non-cognitive skills? (An example is provided in Annex B.)
- Is the concept of non-cognitive skills clearly articulated in education policy (e.g. vision, mission, goal, and objective) of the country and/or districts/regions?
- What are the desired outcomes of such integration of non-cognitive skills in education?
- Why is it important for the government to consider the integration of non-cognitive skills?

1.2 Achievements and challenges

- How does the government assess the impact of integrating non-cognitive skills in schools?
- What are the views of other stakeholders (e.g. students, parents, community, partners) surrounding the integration of non-cognitive skills in schools?
- Are there partnerships with other organizations to promote the integration of non-cognitive skills in schools?

¹ The glossary in Annex A and B provides definitions of some key terms for establishing common understanding.

- What are the government's plans/future directions for the integration of non-cognitive skills in schools?
- What would you suggest to the government to strengthen the integration of non-cognitive skills in education? This could be in terms of policy, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, or other areas.
- What are the areas that require more in-depth research at the regional level?

Expected outcomes and timeline

- Identification of the participating ERI-Net members (December 2012)
- Expert meeting to finalize the research frameworks (March 2013)
- Draft country report (March-July 2013)
- ERI-Net meeting to share the research findings and identify areas for further research (September 2013)
- Finalization of the country reports (December 2013)
- Regional synthesis report (February 2014)

Annex A

Glossary of key terms

Cognitive skills

Ability to comprehend, retain and use formal education competencies such as numeracy, literacy, logic, scientific knowledge, ICT literacy, etc.

Non-cognitive skills

Social, behavioral and emotional competencies that facilitates one's understanding of, and participation in society; such as (1) Respect for diversity (e.g. empathy, cultural sensitivity, understanding of social discriminations, acceptance, tolerance), (2) Inter/Intra personal skills (e.g. communication skills, teamwork, leadership, trust, motivation, sense of purpose, organizational skills, self-esteem, self-discipline, perseverance, patience, emotional stability), (3) Critical/Inventive thinking (e.g. reflective thinking, thinking ahead, adaptability, logic), and (4) Responsible citizenship (e.g. political participation, community involvement, environmental concerns).

Meta-cognitive skills

Conscious ability to identify/recognize personal development process (e.g. VARK: Visual, Audio, Reading, Kinesthetic), which contributes to comprehension and retention of information through active participation.

Social outcomes of learning

(As defined by OECD: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/19/2/38907391.pdf>)

Social Outcomes of Learning go beyond what can be measured by labor market earnings and economic growth. The two domain areas are health, both physical and mental, (i.e. obesity, mental health and addiction); and civic and social engagement (i.e. volunteering, political interest and trust/tolerance). In addition to the two chosen areas, additional cross-cutting themes are also considered: intergenerational effects of learning via the family and home environment; distributional effects of learning: how different social groups benefit from education; and negative effect: inequality.

Annex B

Non-cognitive outcomes of education

Based on the definition of non-cognitive outcomes of education in Annex A, the following four categories elaborate on these outcomes and are non-exhaustive.

Respect for diversity

Respecting diversity refers to the ability to learn from others and in particular, the willingness to learn from our differences. These differences could be in the area of culture, race, religion, language, political viewpoint, physical appearance, age and the list goes on. It is important that we learn to identify and appreciate the innate value of each individual, recognize areas of common understanding and agree to disagree when perspectives differ. Other associated characteristics include empathy, awareness, self-concept, acceptance, tolerance, openness and respect.

Inter & intra personal skills

Inter-personal skills refer to social skills, while intra-personal skills refer to personal mastery. This refers to the ability to communicate and relate well to others while managing one's emotions and self-esteem. Associated characteristics include understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses, sociability, presentation skills, collegiality, leadership, organizational skills, enthusiasm, initiative, perseverance, determination, optimism, resilience, collaboration, cooperation, self-efficacy, self-motivation and self-discipline.

Creative and inventive thinking

Creative and inventive thinking refers to the ability to comprehend, foresee and adapt to changes, provide constructive criticisms, question old frameworks for new directions discerningly, analyze complex issues, and make sound decisions. Associated characteristics include creativity, enterprise, resourcefulness and reflective thinking.

Responsible citizenship

Responsible citizenship refers to the ability to understand and make positive the impact of our actions on others and the world around us. More than just civic awareness, this includes political and social participation as well as environmental protection. Associated characteristics include integrity, ethics, moral courage, compassion and commitment.

UNESCO Bangkok ERI-Net 2013 Research Programme Draft Research Framework for “Transition from Secondary Education to Higher Education”

UNESCO Biennial sectorial priority 1: Scaling up equity, inclusion and quality in education and lifelong learning for sustainable development and a culture of peace and non-violence
- Support Member States in providing quality, inclusive and relevant education systems throughout life, from early childhood care and education through to primary and secondary education, as well as higher education and research. Throughout this work, particular attention will be paid to ensuring smooth transitions between the different levels of education and the achievement of a sustainable and measurable impact on education systems

(Source: UNESCO C/5, Resolution for Major Programme I – Education)

Rationale

Higher education (HE) in Asia and the Pacific has seen rapid growth in student enrollment in the past decade, which has resulted in widening access for individuals from different social backgrounds. With the continuous increase in the Gross Enrollment Ratios (GER) for HE, many higher education systems in this region are undergoing fundamental transformation from the traditional elite model of higher learning to a more massified system. In addition, there has been increasing involvement of private and non-traditional providers in the provision of HE in many countries. These trends demand a rethinking of the roles and missions of higher education and its connection with secondary education.

One of the topics to be considered is the transition from secondary education to HE. Each country has adopted different system of screening eligible students for universities, whether it is based on aptitude or achievement tests, etc. In some countries such as China and the Republic of Korea, general college entrance examinations designed and managed by the governments or governmental bodies constitute the backbone of the screening system. In other countries, certificates and diplomas, and other qualifications may qualify candidates for universities. Though each system has its own socio-economic backgrounds and history, neighboring countries’ experiences can serve as good references for policy-makers and practitioners in the field of HE.

Furthermore, the competition for entering into prestigious HEIs or public universities with lower tuition has been fierce in this region, which causes unintended consequences, such as distortion of secondary education and/or much dependency on private tutoring, etc. Realizing this huge impact of the screening mechanisms on secondary education, as well as the importance of students’ well-rounded development, great efforts have been made by Asia-Pacific countries to reorganize their college admission systems to relieve the negative pressure of the screening systems on secondary education. This research will examine the evolution and current situation of college admission systems in different countries in this region for information sharing and partnership building.

Objectives of the research:

- To encourage country-level, evidence-based, and policy-oriented researches on the transition of secondary education to higher education
- To analyze the emerging trends and good practices on the ground for knowledge building and information sharing
- To assist policy makers in formulating or renovating policies on admission to higher education
- To promote international cooperation on the issue of transition from secondary education to higher education.

Key questions

1. What are the policies on the admission of students to higher education institutions (HEIs) in your countries? (Overview based on legislations on admission system)

- Selective access or open access?
- Based on meritocracy or equitable access to higher education?
- Roles of stakeholders: governments (central and regional), HEIs, teachers' unions, NGOs, etc.
 - Ongoing discussions on the rethinking of roles of key-stakeholders, e.g. governmental regulations versus HEIs' autonomy (both public and private HEIs)

2. What kinds of selection mechanisms are working?

- Selection mechanisms with brief history
 - National examinations, university entrance examinations or school based assessments?
 - What is being examined? (e.g. subjects, scholastic aptitudes (SAT), etc.)
 - Scoring systems?
- Latest policies adopted as reform initiatives
 - E.g. more autonomy of HEIs, diversification of selection mechanisms, etc.
 - E.g. affirmative action, scholarships and loan schemes for marginalized students, etc.

3. What are the impacts of the selection mechanisms on secondary education and society?

- To what extent have the mechanisms affected the teaching and learning at secondary education? How prevalent is "shadow education"?
- Are the selection mechanisms considered appropriate for the students' development both in cognitive and affective domain? (or skills development for 21st century?)
- To what extent has the mechanism contributed to social cohesion/inclusion (e.g. in terms of ensuring more access to marginalized students)?
- What are the policies and stakeholders' initiatives (or suggestions) to address some of these unintended impacts?

Expected outcomes and timeline

- Identification of the participating ERI-Net members (December 2012)
- Expert consultative meeting in Bangkok, Thailand (March 2013) to discuss/clarify the research frameworks, information-sharing on progress
- ERI-Net meeting to share the research findings and to identify areas for future research (September 2013)
- Finalization of the country reports and regional synthesis report (December 2013, February 2014)