

**KEDI-UNESCO Bangkok joint seminar 2007**

**Gender Challenges in Post Primary Education in East and Southeast Asia**

**(Bangkok, Thailand, 13-15 November 2007)**

**Initial concept paper**

**1. Context**

It is widely recognized that educating girls beyond primary schooling helps to empower them in a way that primary education alone cannot. The Dakar EFA goal 5 makes explicit reference to achieving gender equality in both primary and secondary education.

Issues related to gender parity and equity are complex in secondary education. While access of girls to secondary education in general terms is still an issue in many developing countries in Asia, a lack of access may be more pronounced among certain groups (e.g. ethnic minority girls). Looking only at enrolment at national level can disguise the real picture. Inequalities and biases based on gender can be greater the higher the level of education and the nature of the problem can differ depending on the types of programmes or streams. Inequalities based on gender biases/stereotypes within secondary schools can have an impact on survival and completion rates, on transition to higher level of education (lower to upper secondary, secondary to post secondary) and to the world of work. In some country contexts, gender issues are not confined to the disadvantages faced by girls, but also those faced by boys, which is also becoming a source of policy concern.

Questions of barriers to gender equality in terms of both access and quality in post primary education deserve special attention in East and Southeast Asia, where universal primary education has been achieved or is closed to be achieved. Yet this is a field where limited work has been done until now, compared to primary education.

Since 1997, KEDI and UNESCO Bangkok have been organizing joint regional seminars to bring together experts and government officials from developing countries in the region to exchange knowledge and experiences on various themes related to education planning and management. Since 2002, the seminar has focused on EFA related themes. The theme of this year's seminar will focus on gender issues in post primary education, and will provide a platform to share findings from research work in selected countries and to review various policies and directives related to the theme and discuss how they are applied and what the gaps that exist in the region are.

The seminar benefits from generous financial support from the Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development and is organized in a collaborative effort between KEDI and UNESCO Bangkok.

At UNESCO Bangkok, the seminar is coordinated jointly by the Education Policy and Reform (EPR) Unit and the Asia and Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL).

## **2. Objectives of the Seminar**

1. Share research findings on gender issues in secondary education policies and practices
2. Identify and discuss various barriers to gender equality in post primary education
3. Review various policies and directives in different country contexts and discuss how they are applied and what challenges they face.
4. Identify gaps in the existing knowledge-base to make proposals for more effective implementation and monitoring of the EFA Goal 5.

## **3. Participants**

- Experts from KEDI and UNESCO
- A total of 12 participants from 6 selected countries in East and Southeast Asia. Each country will be represented by two national experts, one on secondary education, another on gender and education. The following countries have been identified tentatively: Vietnam, Thailand, China, Republic of Korea, Cambodia, and Lao PDR.
- Guest international experts and representatives from partner agencies

## **4. Tentative organization of the Seminar**

### **Day 1**

AM

Opening by President of KEDI and Director of UNESCO Bangkok

Why focusing on gender issues at post primary education: an overview (UNESCO BKK)

Korean experiences in tackling gender equality at post primary level (Korean expert)

PM

Introducing country issues by participating countries

Topic 1: Gender analysis of transition to secondary schooling

Sharing of research findings from Vietnam (Transition of ethnic minority girls from primary to secondary education)  
Discussion

**Day 2**

AM

Topic 2: Gender issues in secondary schooling (This topic will be further elaborated)  
Sharing of research findings from \_\_\_\_\_ (to be defined)  
Discussion

PM

Continuation of discussion on Topic 2

**Day 3**

AM

Discussion on how to implement the policies into practice

Discussion on knowledge/capacity gaps and monitoring tools

PM

Recommendations for follow up studies/actions

Closing