

SEAMEO and Kidzania, Together in Developing Children

The period from birth to 8 years old is a time of remarkable brain development. These years lay the foundation for subsequent learning. The early childhood program itself is important bringing long-term benefits that outperform investment in later stages of education. Therefore investment in early childhood programs is essential to promote children's rights to survival, development and early education.

Development of children is undertaken both in formal and non-formal education through various methods by the family and community with participation from society. The increase of the number of kid education-entertainment centers is proving us that the care of developing children also has increased. Because children education focuses on children learning through play, kid edutainment centers have offered the smart methods to educate children through some games and entertaining programs.

One of the famous kid edutainment centers is Kidzania. Kidzania is an edutainment center for children between 4 to 16 years old. It is a kid-sized replica of a real city, with streets, buildings, retail and different vehicles going around the city. In Kidzania, children play adult roles and they learn how to be a doctor, a pilot, a construction worker, a private detective, an archeologist, an f1 driver and over 100 other professions and occupations. There is a replica of the most representative buildings in a city such as hospital, supermarket, beauty salon, theatre, industrial sites, and many more.

The history of early Kidzania created three important figures: Urbano, the adventurous; Vita, the thinker; and Bache, their fun and affectionate puppy. These characters represent the ideals which are the basis of this nation's reason for being. Kidzania is such a unique one. Children

can flock the city everyday to exercise their rights of “To Be”, “To Care”, “To Know” and “To Play” in an ideal environment.

The first Kidzania was founded on September 1st, 1999 at Santa Fe in Mexico City. The second place is built in Monterrey, Mexico in 2006. After Kidzania opened in Tokyo, Japan in October 2006, finally Kidzania arrive in Jakarta, Indonesia and it's opened on 24 November 2007. Constructions of new Kidzania cities are now taking place in Dubai, UAE; Tokyo, Japan; and Lisbon, Portugal. Now, Kidzania also is under construction in other 8 countries which two of them are Southeast Asia countries – Bangkok (Thailand) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). That is an interesting fact that Indonesia was the third country introduced with Kidzania. There must be some special opportunities of Kidzania's arrival in Southeast Asian.

Kidzania is a safe, interactive and highly educational center where kids wear the uniform and perform the role they are playing. Led by supervisor, kids learn the complexities of the adult world, and learn the value of money and work. It is such an effective program to educate children through entertaining non-formal education. Through Kidzania, children can play the roles of being adult and live their own life as an independent one.

Kidzania is a unique cross-border or multinational education project where the family, the company or community and the society can have a walk together in developing children through some qualified educational program. Unfortunately, Kidzania has some price to pay to get enter. It means only children of rich parents who can play and learn in Kidzania.

In viewing back, two hundred million children around the world under age five do not develop adequately because they live in poverty and have poor health services, nutrition and care. That is our homework to think of together of how we can improve and develop the

programs for early childhood education and make it accessible for every kid. And the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) has to play role in this.

SEAMEO, as an organization that concerns in improving education quality in Southeast Asian, must adapt and modify the concept of Kidzania project. Kidzania must be applied in Southeast Asian holistically, not only in Jakarta. SEAMEO has to make Kidzania accessible for every kid in Southeast Asian.

The early childhood program design should take into account the local cultural norms and sensitivities. That is the important part of introducing children with the local genius and internalizing the values of societies to them. Furthermore, as a cross-border or multinational education project, Kidzania must be adapted to the traditional values of each country in Southeast Asian.