



## Collaborative Projects to Reach the Unreached in Southeast Asia and Attain Education For All Goals by 2015

### Project 3

Conference to promote awareness of education for girls and women



**Lead Country:** Malaysia

**Target Group:**

Girls and women in rural areas and ethnic minorities

**Activities:**

Sharing of best practices in budget-based gender, school supplementary food programmes, gender responsive projects, basic education for girls

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## PROGRESS REPORT by LEAD COUNTRY (As of November 2010)

Name of Project : **Project 3 - Conference to Promote Awareness of Education for Girls and Women**

Lead Country : **Malaysia**

### INTRODUCTION

The Seminar on Education for Girls was organized by the Ministry of Education with close cooperation from SEAMEO, UNESCO and ASEAN from 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at the Everly Resort Hotel, Malacca, Malaysia. It was attended by 55 participants representing six SEAMEO member countries, United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), Asia South Pacific Association for Basic Adult Education (ASPBAE), UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), and an observer from Afghanistan.

The seminar was themed "Reaching the Unreached" and aimed at:

- identifying major issues and challenges on education for girls
- exchanging view and experiences among SEAMEO member countries
- gaining insights to strengthen existing programmes for girl's education
- providing awareness on the importance of gender responsiveness
- providing platform for participants to discuss existing policies and recommendations to achieve Goal 5 of EFA 2015

The seminar was officiated by the Honourable Tan Sri Dato' Hj Muhyiddin b. Hj. Mohd. Yassin, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia who also officiated the SEAMEO Special Education (SEN) Centre. The Honourable Minister reiterated the importance of this seminar for participants to be aware on the importance of education for girls, discuss issues pertaining to it, share best practices

on gender-responsive project, initiate platform for sharing, and highlight effective policies and strategies. A welcoming remarks was delivered by the Deputy Director General of Education (Policy and Development).

## **ACCOMPLISHMENT AND ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED**

### **FIRST DAY (25<sup>th</sup> October 2010)**

#### **COUNTRY REPORT**

There were 6 country report presentations from Brunei, Thailand, Lao PDR, Philippines, Cambodia and Malaysia. The Country Report presentation gave an overview of each country's education system, gender parity, supported by statistics of enrolment and performance of their male and female students, the issues and challenges faced as well as the strategies to overcome the challenges. It was brought to a close with a representative from UNICEF wrapping up on the country presentations highlighting some pertinent points to be considered by participants.

##### **1. Girls' Education is a Development Issue:**

- The number and proportion of girls in school is a human right. However every year a girl is denied her right to a quality education which increases the chances that she will be subject to violence, abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and her susceptibility to disease, including HIV/AIDS.

##### **2. How are girls doing?**

- 30 years ago, girls represented 38% of all primary enrolment. Today, gender gap has narrowed. Girls representing 48 % and boys 52% of primary enrolment.
- Girls constitutes 55 % out of school children. For every 100 boys out-of-school, there are 122 girls.
- 2/3 of the world/s illiterate are women

##### **3. Based on the 6 country presentations, some of the pertinent issues raised by the presenters are:**

- Access to education
- Quality education
- Poverty
- Training
- Vocational education
- General education

##### **4. Gaps and Challenges to be Addressed:**

- a) Providing access to quality education, especially to the poor, ethnic minorities, the migrants, refugees, orphans, streets children and children with disabilities.
- b) Expanding school attendance, especially in low enrolment schools for both girls and boys.
- c) Advocating policy interventions and providing budget allocations, especially to run programmes.
- d) Decreasing drop-out rates, especially secondary boys at secondary school level. Increasing their completion rates from Grade 6 to Grade 7.
- e) Providing formal or non-formal education by having alternative delivery modes for out of school youth and adults.
- f) Ensuring safety by avoiding and eliminating physical violence in school.
- g) Child labour – the absence of education correlates directly to child labour. It is common that children follow parents to work in the plantation.
- h) Providing sex education. There is a need to provide protection for teen mothers to resolve issues of teen pregnancy. It is a phenomena which is confronting us and what do we do to help them?
- i) Providing or focusing general education or vocational education to school students.

- j) There is a higher percentage of girls in tertiary education. There is a need to resolve issue of why do boys do poorly.
- k) In spite of girls performing better in some countries, women are still underrepresented in key positions.

## **SECOND DAY (26<sup>th</sup> October 2010)**

### **EXPERT PAPERS**

3 papers were presented by programme specialists from UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) – Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics Unit (AIMS), United Nations Girls' Education Initiatives (UNGEI), UNESCO Bangkok and Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE).

- Gender Review on the Achievements of the SEA Countries by UIS-AIMS.
- An Overview on UNGEI and an Evidence-Based Advocacy for Gender Equality by UNGEI.
- Introduction to the GENIA Toolkit by UNESCO Bangkok.
- Gender Equality Counts – Tracking Evidence the ASPBAE Way by ASPBAE

### **MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE (1)**

2 papers on sharing Malaysian experiences in gender analysis/research were presented:

- Gender Analysis of Classroom and Schooling Process in Secondary.
- Action Research in the Classroom: To Enhance the achievement of Form Fove Beta Boys Thermochemistry Using the D.I.Y. Method

### **BREAK-UP SESSIONS 1**

Participants were divided into five groups to discuss on

- Identifying issues and challenges using the GENIA toolkit.
- Advocacy Plans based on issues identified

The second day of the seminar was brought to a close with a representative from ASPBAE wrapping up on the country presentations highlighting some pertinent points to be considered by participants.

#### **1. HOW DO WE PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY MORE EFFECTIVELY IN EDUCATION?**

- Analysing the body of evidence and identifying the information gaps using and adapting tools and choosing desired and relevant evidence.
- Conducting more research to fill the gaps and inform policy (cross country and within-country).
- Monitoring and tracking while continuously sharpen the questions that we are asking.
- Advocating effectively by choosing our key messages well and coming up with an evidence-based advocacy plan.

#### **2. WHAT FURTHER ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL/REGIONAL DATA REVEALS?**

- Growth rates in secondary and tertiary education population are increasing more rapidly than country populations.
- Our region in SEA is performing better than other regions in general. However, there are countries that still need improvements on gender in education. (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Timor Leste.).
- Based on the statistics presented, different levels of students present different pictures. Girls out-perform boys in pre-school, secondary and tertiary level in the region, but boys out-perform girls at primary level.

- There is positive correlation between the percentage of female teachers and girls' enrollment ratios.
- Across the region, there is a wide range in the amount of per capita public spending for education and very few countries come up to the recommended benchmark of 4% GDP
- Some countries may not be able to achieve gender parity by 2015 because the boys are now the ones being disadvantaged (Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines). These countries need:
  - a) longer term;
  - b) more strategic thinking on what the countries need for their social development and economic growth;
  - c) the roles of men and women; and
  - d) sharper studies having sensitive instruments that will draw out the reasons/causes for marginalization of boys. E.g. UNGEI Study

### **THIRD DAY (27<sup>th</sup> October 2010)**

#### **MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE (2)**

Presentation by representative from Orang Asli Affairs Department on Readers' Motivator Center conducted by Orang Asli Women/Mothers.

#### **VISITS**

Participants were given the opportunity to visit Bukit Piatu Technical School and Readers' Motivator Center, Bukit Payong, Alor Gajah.

#### **BREAK-UP SESSION 2**

Participants were divided into 2 groups to discuss on the strengths, issues and best practices that can be adopted from the visits. Participants also discussed on recommendations and way forward on gender issues .

#### **WAY FORWARD**

Presentations by both groups on recommendations for Way Forward. A number of recommendations were presented for the South East Asia Region in attaining Goal 5 EFA by 2015.

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Drop outs rates to be reduced by half by 2015. Closing the gap between boys and girls, but more focus on the boys using GER. Boys are gems and are a precious human resource.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys as breadwinners- Need to provide incentive to retain the boys/girls.</li> <li>• Suggest a people centric curriculum / education system. The people has the right to choose the system.</li> <li>• Continue to support the secondary school children with support system.</li> <li>• Target scholarships for either boys or girls, depending on who is more disadvantaged in the country.</li> <li>• Continue supporting and expanding the vocational education integrated in the general education, which addresses the dropout of boys and make them more interested in finishing school.</li> </ul>
<p>Access to education, reaching the unreached and the marginalised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish secondary schools in the remote areas</li> <li>• Bring the secondary school setup to primary education.</li> <li>• Tackle the education of mothers of ethnic minorities as entry point for bringing their girls/boys to school.</li> <li>• Advocating the parents on the awareness and value of education so that equal opportunities are given to both boys and girls.</li> <li>• School expansion, school closer to the house; putting up dormitories and hostels for those whose homes are far.</li> <li>• Facility expansion including the separate latrines for girls.</li> </ul>

Reduce dropout rates due to pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide education in non-formal education.</li> <li>• Create awareness among the school children especially for the adolescents.</li> <li>• Reproductive health policy to address the issues of pregnancy before marriage.</li> <li>• Promote reproductive health education.</li> <li>• Put up more Schools of Hope.</li> </ul>
Attracting school children to come to schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better in-service trainings and industry attachment for teachers.</li> <li>• Updating the skills of teachers.</li> <li>• Training for trainers of teachers.</li> <li>• Industry attachment prefer males, therefore an Act should be advocated to change this.</li> </ul>

## EVALUATION

Feedbacks for the evaluation form disseminated to seminar participants, showed:

1. **General organization of the seminar:** 100% of the participants perceived the seminar was good and excellent.
2. **Objectives of the seminar:** 95% of the participants perceived objectives of the seminar met their expectations.
3. **Process (selection of topics, content quality, structure, audiovisual, documentation):** 95% participants perceived the seminar process was excellent and good
4. **Quality of the speakers:** 85% participants perceived the quality of speakers was excellent and good.
5. **Venue:** 85% of the participants perceived that the venue is good and excellent.

Recommendations given by the participants:

- Budget issues for gender disparity need to be addressed by UNESCO, UNICEF or SEAMEO.
- Applying the toolkit in the process of planning and implementing projects related to education.
- Benchmarking a center which has programmes addressing out of school youth.

### B. Implementation Challenges and Other Issues

Even though MOE as the organizer has managed to obtain fund from UNICEF to sponsor lodging and meals for participants, some lower developed countries like Timor Leste still could not attend due to lack of fund from respective countries for travelling purposes.

### C. Recommendations to Enhance Implementation

It is hoped that leading agencies such as UNESCO, SEAMEO could play a more active role in supporting more participation of member countries in attending future seminars or conferences