Promoting Intercultural Dialogue and a Culture of Peace in South-East Asia through Shared Histories

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Objectives

To develop and promote the adoption of 
innovative teaching and learning materials  
on the shared histories of South-East Asia  
from a sub-regional perspective.  

Timeframe: 4 years  
funded under Korea FIT  
(2015-2018)
Partnerships for a South-East Asia Shared History

Republic of Korea Funds-in-Trust
The Context

- 2015 ASEAN integration
- Increasing economic exchanges resulting in more social and cultural interactions
- Schools shaping mindsets
  - Role of history education in understanding relationships with neighboring countries
“… History will have shown itself to be not an instrument for legitimizing exacerbated forms of nationalism, but an instrument, ever more effective because ever more perfectible, for ensuring mutual respect, solidarity and the scientific and cultural interdependence of humanity.

George-Henri Dumont
Description of the History of Humanity Project

- History of Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind (1968)
- General History of Africa
- General History of Latin America
- General History of Caribbean
- History of Humanity
- The different aspects of Islamic Culture
- History of Civilizations of Central Asia
Experience sharing from other regions: a variety of approaches

- **Consensual narrative approach:** integration in European history (i.e. France-Germany)
- **Dual / multi-perspective narrative approach** when lack of consensus (i.e. Israel-Palestine)
- Incremental approach has proven successful: start by breaking down larger issues into smaller ones
- While government buy-in is necessary, past government-led historical committees at bilateral/multilateral have had limitations
Why teaching South-East Asian Histories?
(findings from the first expert meeting)

- Provide relevant quality education to promote sustainable future (UNESCO’s mandate)
- Be aware of commonalities
- Erase stereotyping
- Equip students with the ability to resolve conflicts
- Foster mutual understanding and respect
- Enhance regional people-to-people cooperation
- Nurture regional identities
Towards developing shared histories for SEA: three pronged approach recommended by experts

**Content/technical**
- Curriculum analysis
- Development of supplementary teaching/learning materials / manuals/ toolkit/ sourcebook for teachers/students for use in history/social studies courses (online?)
- Pilot teacher training

**Political**
- Recommendations to SEA Ministers/Ministries
- Endorsement by SEA Ministers

**Parallel**
- Networking activities/platform among teachers/students
- Museum/ exhibitions on SEA
Activities to date – content development

• 2 expert meetings (2013, 2014)
  Attended by experts and partners, including Dr. Surin Pitsuwan (first meeting) and historians and social scientists from most South-East Asian countries

“It is a better history education that will produce and will provide a strong foundation for understanding where we have come from and to guide us into the future where we are going, as individuals, as local communities, as nation states, as a greater sub-regional grouping.”

Dr. Surin Pitsuwan
Former Secretary-General of ASEAN
Activities to date – content development

Outputs:

- Situational analysis of history education in South-East Asia, and preliminary needs identification
- Suggested thematic framework for the teaching of South-East Asia Shared Histories:
  - (1) People, Land and Water;
  - (2) Interconnected Origins;
  - (3) External and Internal Dynamics in the Shaping of SEA
  - (4) Processes of integration
- Terms of reference for the project’s Technical Advisory Committee
Activities to date – political endorsement

- Endorsement of project concept by SEAMEO High Officials Meeting 36th session (18-20 February 2014)

- Approval of project updates by the SEAMEO Council 48th session (7 May 2015)
Foreseen Implementation steps

1. Quality control and technical oversight mechanisms dev.
   - Expert meeting
   - Technical Advisory Committee set-up and meetings
   - Inception meeting

2. Development of teaching and learning materials about shared histories
   - Preparation of generic materials (content, draft lesson plans)
   - Customization, translation

3. Testing of modules with teachers and students on a pilot basis in a school-based setting
   - Training-of-trainers
   - Pilot testing in schools

4. Dissemination and mainstreaming of the materials
   - on-line platform
   - Included in TTIs materials

5. Information sharing and advocacy
   - Website (UNESCO and partners)
   - Presentation in regional events

6. Monitoring and evaluation
   - Coordination
   - Progress and final reports
   - External M&E
Target beneficiaries

- 6 Member States in South-East Asia
- Teachers
- Secondary level students

Stakeholders

- Ministries of Education
- Teacher Training Institutes
- Schools
- Network of historians
- Universities
Expected outputs

• Thematic teaching and learning **modules** available, addressing various themes related to political, social, and cultural histories relevant to the sub-region
  • **generic modules** in English (addressing 3 topics)
  • **customized modules** in South-East Asian languages
  These materials will aim to emphasize similarities, complementarities and mutual respect, and will also attempt to confront perceptions currently reinforcing differences and antagonism, therefore contributing to a better mutual understanding within the sub-region.

• **Technical advisory committee** to ensure that the teaching and learning materials are methodologically and scientifically acceptable

• **Institutional capacity building** through teacher training institutions

• **Distribution and mainstreaming** of materials through a dedicated online platform
Download the First Expert Meeting Report at
www.unescobkk.org/culture/heritage/shared-histories-sea