

Technology-Enabled Innovation in Southeast Asia (TIESEA)

Expert Forum - Opportunities and Risks for EdTech in Southeast Asia
11 October 2022
BETT Asia, Athenee Hotel, Bangkok



Introduction to the TIESEA Project

The TIESEA project, commenced in August 2021, to assess the status of Technological Innovation in Education in South East Asia. The project is funded by the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific and administered by the Asian Development Bank (ADB); the implementation is through a joint venture between the Belgian international consultancy IBF, and the UK-based EdTech company, Learning Possibilities (LP).

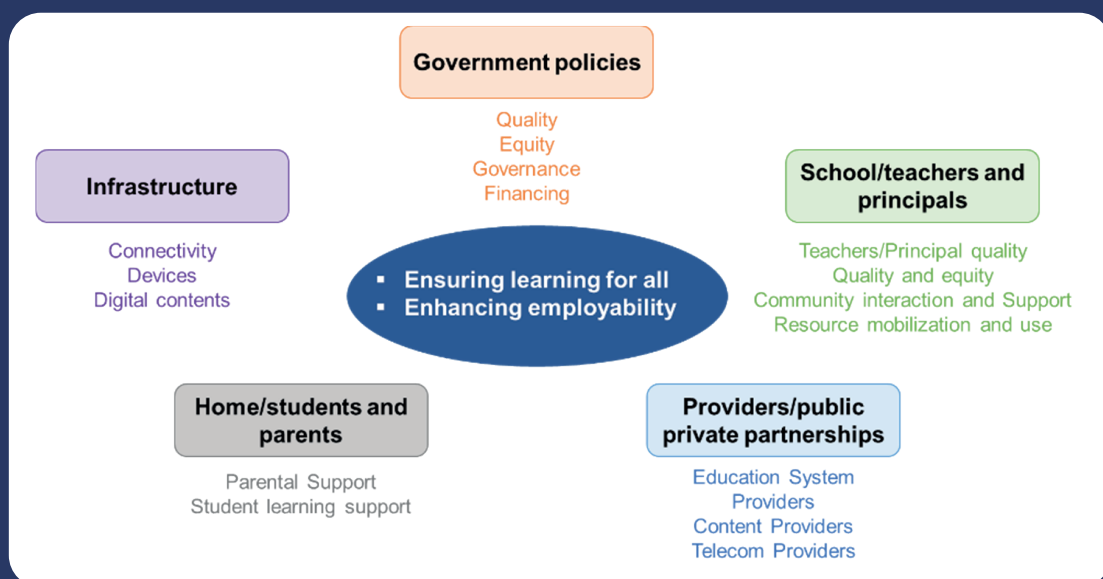
The purpose of the project is to understand what educational issues can best be addressed through the intelligent application of Education Technology (EdTech). Beginning with surveys of what is currently happening in EdTech in the four target countries of Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam, coupled with country diagnostic analysis, 'eReadiness Reports' have been compiled. These reports have been used to identify the ways in which technology solutions can be targeted and to design pilot EdTech interventions accordingly in each country.

The project has four main outputs:

- (i) EdTech diagnostics in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam conducted and disseminated;
- (ii) EdTech interventions in the four countries tested;
- (iii) Impact of EdTech interventions evaluated;
- (iv) Support for scaling up EdTech interventions in the four countries provided.

The analysis was completed using the ADB's Digital eReadiness Framework (DeRF). The framework looks at the five key aspects of EdTech country by country – infrastructure, government, teachers, students, and suppliers, and provides a narrative and analysis. (see figure below). In brief, the country findings were as follows (see next page):

The DeRF framework, which is outlined below, provides the basis and the structure of the EdTech readiness reports for the four countries in this study.



The Digital eReadiness Framework – Five Pillars of the EdTech Assessment for a country.
Source: ADB



KE Consultants meet staff and students at S'ang High School Cambodia



Naringgul teachers accessing Moodlebox (Indonesia)



RTC Tagaloan - Welcome Committee (Philippines)



KE Consultants in Viet Nam



Country studies are available on the project website (www.tiesea.org), together with a synthesis report – please follow the QR code to access the reports.

Country Findings



In **Cambodia**, the extent of fixed-line connectivity is extremely low and the country has fast shifted away from high-cost infrastructure and towards mobile communication. This represents, in a country with a population of 17.23 million people (2022 census), the equivalence of 1.2 connections per person. Cambodia offers the most affordable mobile service in Asia, with an average monthly subscription cost of about \$4, but access can be patchy in the more rural parts of the country. Ownership of smartphones is high, but, other than these hand-held devices, availability of and access to hardware in schools is very low. No more than 17% of upper secondary and 5% of lower secondary schools have IT suites and only few devices are available for the younger learners. In general, apart from in a small number of New Generation Schools, teachers' EdTech skills are weak and their eReadiness is low. In many ways, the issues are related to pedagogy rather than technology.



In **Indonesia**, based on the successful 'teach less, learn more' strategy, underlying their Study from Home (Belajar dari Rumah) initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (MoECRT) is advocating that all schools switch to the optional, student-centered Freedom to Learn (Merdeka Belajar) curriculum. This new curriculum aims to help K-12 students develop 21st-century skills through a student-centered and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) pedagogical approach and builds resilience to future emergencies through the effective integration of EdTech tools and a blended-learning approach to the teaching-learning process. Teachers' ability to use EdTech tools has improved during the COVID-19 pandemic with more teachers and students now aware of the rich range of online materials and tools available to them. Nonetheless, existing challenges of low internet connectivity and limited device ownership are prevalent in the more remote regions of the archipelago; these may exacerbate the digital divide with students in Java and larger cities benefiting more, and sooner, from these initiatives than their rural and poorer cousins.



In the **Philippines**, the large extent of the closures of educational establishments meant a rapid shift to online learning with all the attendant issues related to lack of eReadiness. However, the government and its agencies are planning to turn complex educational challenges into opportunities. A major implementing strategy is the use of educational technology in the delivery of learning to hard-to-reach student. On the positive side, the novelty feature of educational technology in remote learning has made students interested in ICT-based learning. The vocational education and training agency, TESDA, has been running a successful, and widely acclaimed, online program (TOP), in selected subjects, during the closure of training establishments.



In **Viet Nam** digital transformation in education is one of the top priorities for the Government and the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the rapid improvement of digital education infrastructure, helping Viet Nam move quickly and be relatively ready for the digital transformation in education. However, in the past five years there is a large gap between education-related regulations and actual processes in education technology in Viet Nam. Often, these regulations do not keep up well with the development of the industry. During the period of school closure, 80% of Vietnamese students studied online, higher than the world average of 67.5%. After almost three years of coping with COVID-19, the digital skills of students and teachers up to the present time meet the needs of online teaching and learning in general. However, a large number among around 1.2 million K-12 teachers still require further training in computer and online pedagogy skills. The early period of the pandemic revealed many weaknesses in this segment on a national scale, since the difference in the access of learners to online education and equipment resulted in an uneven experience for many students.

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