

Results of Wenhui Award 2017: Innovations in the Professional Development of Teachers



The Wenhui Award sponsors, Jury Members and Award Secretariat would like to thank all applicants, referees and supporters for your interest and participation in this year's Wenhui Award. The theme, Innovations in the Professional Development of Teachers, truly touches the heart of education because the quality of education cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and the quality of teaching.

To enable teachers to do their job well, continuous professional development must be provided and easily accessible. The initiatives described in the applications must be highly commended. They revealed the abundance of opportunities for teachers' professional development in and outside of classrooms, within the communities, at all levels, and in both formal and non-formal education. They also emphasized that great teachers are not developed overnight; rather, they require long-term and constant support.

The Jury wants to emphasize that every applicant is a winner. Every effort is valuable because of the impact on their beneficiaries. Congratulations to all!

Unfortunately, the Jury can select only two winners and a limited number of honourable commendations. And here are the results.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Winner: Teachers' Professional Development—Rural Teacher Training Under Culture Management Course Educational Model

Zhao Geng, Deputy Director, Division of Teachers' Administration, Hubei Provincial Department of Education, China

Rural schools in China, as in many other countries, face a shortage of teachers. To mitigate and resolve this problem, the Rural Teacher Recruiting Program was established to recruit college graduates to teach in rural and remote schools. Every year, 4,000 graduates from 300 different colleges in China are recruited through this program. Before deployment, the provincial education departments provide some training to the recruits, but it is not enough. In addition to cognitive knowledge, the new teachers have to learn how to work in a challenging environment. To do so, they have to acquire other skills and attitudes, such as working as a team, accepting the rural students without any prejudices, and be able to teach with limited resources and under difficult conditions.

In response to a demand for innovative teacher training, Mr. Zhao Geng developed the Culture-Management-Course (CMC) model which aims to instill common cultural values, social consciousness and responsibilities with management skills to enhance rural teachers' competencies. The CMC design includes a series of learning communities and intensive courses in which every teacher is actively involved. The training is conducted during the summer vacation, using vacant student dormitories and classrooms of some universities.

Central to the CMC's philosophy that "everyone is a protagonist on and off the stage", the training enables every teacher to realize that they are the protagonists of their training and their unique life experiences, especially in rural education development. This sense of empowerment is passed on to the children in rural areas so that every child can increase his/her self-confidence to step onto the stage of life, and regard and respect everyone, everywhere, equally – a reflection of inclusive education.

In the past ten years, the CMC model has trained about 50,000 new rural teachers who were deployed to about 2,000 schools. The CMC model emphasizes the importance of strengthening teachers' identity, collective sense of belonging, the honor and responsibility of the teaching profession, quality education and teamwork. Social interactions are integral to the CMC model for building an equitable and harmonious society. Thus, the training process involves consensus, empathy and action. Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities utilizing local resource provide practical experiences to connect teachers, students and the local communities in building positive social relationships.

Unlike the traditional lecture format, the CMC model integrates culture and management elements to its training programs. These include (i) Movie Sharing Lecture and Cinematic Thinking for more vivid reflections on theories, ideas and methods; (ii) Joyful Presentation to provide a pleasant and positive atmosphere; and (iii) Picture Sharing Session that uses illustrations, pictures and text for discussions about education and life.

As a result, the newly recruited rural teachers, imbued with strong team spirit and values, social and inclusive consciousness, are able to co-operate and participate more effectively in rural education reform. According to a sample survey, 99.7% of the trainees indicated that the CMC training enhanced their professional identity, sense of honour and responsibility, and team cohesiveness. Evidently, the CMC training has improved the new rural teachers' professionalism, which in turn benefit the students in rural areas.

Winner: GURO21: Gearing Up Responsible and Outstanding Teachers in Southeast Asia for the 21st Century

Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology, Philippines

Advanced and rapidly changing technology has made an impact in every aspect of our lives. Education has to adapt to these changes to be relevant. The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH) was established to provide innovative and technology-oriented learning services and research-based solutions to address current and emerging needs and concerns of its member countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam.

Given its mandate to develop, incubate and transfer e-Solutions to the SEAMEO member countries, SEAMO INNOTECH developed the GURO21 or Gearing Up Responsible and Outstanding Teachers in Southeast Asia for the 21st Century to cultivate an awareness of emerging needs and a willingness to participate in the process of discovery, sense-making, and problem-solving.

GURO21 is a menu of flexible learning courses to address teachers' needs in relation to the technological advances and changing educational trends of the 21st century. The courses were developed based on the Southeast Asian Region-validated Competency Framework for Southeast Asian Teachers of the 21st Century. GURO21 is open to all classroom teachers, teacher educators, and tertiary instructors or professors from SEAMEO member countries.

Prior to the actual delivery of a course, a Learning Needs Assessment (LNA) session with selected teachers and Department of Education staff is conducted to determine the needs of the target participants and their expectations on the course. The LNA also aims to re-validate, at the local level, the significance of the Competency Framework for Southeast Asian Teachers in order to better customize the implementation of the course.

The course is then delivered online via iFLEX or the SEAMEO INNOTECH's Learning Management System (LMS) via Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment). The LMS contains the links to: (1) course modules, (b) required readings; (c) course journals; (d) videos; and (e) soft copy of the Learner's Guide. The learners spend approximately fifty-four training hours to complete the course. The learning materials are designed to be interactive and self-instructional. The participants join other teachers in a class of 10-15 learners and they meet online every week for the live, synchronous (or real-time) three-hour chat and asynchronous (or outside of real-time) discussion sessions for a total of four weeks. The online resources and interactions are effective in addressing spatial limitations, diverse geographical locations and time constraints of busy professionals.

Since its implementation, GURO21 was accessible to more than seven thousand teachers in the Philippines. The success of GURO21 in championing the pursuit of professional development can be attributed to its understanding of how individuals learn when they receive the right support.

Honourable Commendations:

SeeBeyondBorders' Teach the Teacher Program

SeeBeyondBorders, Cambodia

SeeBeyondBorders, an international non-governmental organization in Cambodia, recognizes that quality education can help to alleviate poverty and make a significant impact on the lives of Cambodian families. One of SeeBeyondBorders' initiative is to train Cambodian primary school teachers who, in turn, use their skills to develop knowledge of their peers by building local communities of professional practice. Its Scaffolding Capability And Learning Experiences (SCALE) provides a 'scaffolded' approach that is unique in Cambodia, focusing on building teachers' conceptual and pedagogical understanding through the Core Teacher Training program, in tandem with the Mentoring program to provide ongoing support in their classrooms from trained Cambodian teacher mentors. Localized professional communities of practice are developed to ensure sustainability through the Transition program. Senior mentors are trained to run the teaching workshops on their own in the final Maintenance program.

SCALE is implemented in close collaboration with District Offices of Education and school principals to coordinate professional development activities and embed them into the district plans every year. This approach helps to develop the Cambodian education system as a whole and ensures sustainability is embedded from the start.

360 Approach to Teachers' ESD Professional Development

Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

The professional development of teachers who are looking for innovative approaches to embed Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their subject areas often consists of one-day workshops and lectures, which are not sufficient to create much impact. In response, the Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCE Penang) hosted by Universiti Sains Malaysia, has developed a 360 approach to teachers' Professional Development program. The program offers continuous support by empowering teachers with ESD knowledge through a series of webinar workshops and development of resources; research on teachers' knowledge, attitude and practices in ESD; Schools Sejahtera Club as a platform for teachers to apply ESD in co-curriculum activities; and the Regional Sejahtera ESD Network for teachers, schools, NGOs, government institutions interested in championing ESD.

RCE Penang is one of the seven foundation RCEs of the United Nations University's UNDESD initiatives. It works with local and international education communities, engaging teachers in embedding sustainability principles in the school curriculum for over 10 years. RCE Penang has been promoting international partnerships with other RCEs, e.g., RCE Greater Western Sydney, RCE Greater Phnom Penh and RCE Southern Viet Nam.

Training Local Teachers for Sustainable Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education in the Southern Thailand Conflict Zone

Yala Rajabhat University, Thailand

Yala Rajabhat University (YRU) was the first teacher training institution in Thailand's southern border provinces, where the majority of people are Muslim and speak the Patani Malay language. The region experiences separatist violence that has led to thousands of lives being lost, including those of teachers and school administrators. YRU, as the main source of professional education personnel for the conflict-ridden region for 83 years, aims to produce high quality teaching professionals with skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the people in the region.

Children speaking the Patani Malay language do poorly in the monolingual Thai government schools. Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), designed to empower and strengthen community identity and potential, has demonstrated significant success in advancing students' academic performance and confidence. YRU has mainstreamed MTB-MLE into the curriculum of pre-primary/primary teacher education. It also provides in-service training for teachers and administrators in MTB-MLE schools as well as MTB-MLE teaching internship program – the first of its kind in Asia. The project has helped to improve the educational outcomes in Thailand's Deep South, and can be replicated in other regions in conflict.

Shortlisted applications:

- **Innovations in the Professional Development of Teachers**

Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Bangladesh

- **Improvement of Quality and Performance of English Teachers through Psycho-Pedagogic Approach**

Habibul Haider Chowdhury, Dhanmondi Kochi Kantha School, Bangladesh

- **Teach the Teacher Program**

SeeBeyondBorders, Cambodia

- **Teachers' Professional Development—Rural Teacher Training Under Culture Management Course Educational Model**

Zhao Geng, Deputy Director, Division of Teachers' Administration, Hubei Provincial Department of Education, China

- **Innovations in the Professional Development of Teachers by 321 Education Foundation's Ignite! Teacher Training Program**

The 321 Education Foundation, India

- **Scaling Up Innovation and Excellence in Teaching**

Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools, Kazakhstan

- **360 Approach to Teachers' ESD Professional Development**

Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

- **Innovations in the Professional Development of Teachers**

Malaysian Financial Planning Council, Malaysia

- **GURO21: Gearing Up Responsible and Outstanding Teachers in Southeast Asia for the 21st Century**

Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology, Philippines

- **Sa Pinas, Ikaw ang Ma'am/Sir (You're the Teacher, Ma'am/Sir)**

Philippines National University, Philippines

- **Training Local Teachers for Sustainable Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education in the Southern Thailand Conflict Zone**

Yala Rajabhat University, Thailand