

# CACCI

## Health & Education Newsletter

Volume 1

September 2012

### Message from the Chairman

Dear CACCI members and friends,

*It gives me immense pleasure to present the inaugural issue of the Asian Council on Health and Education (ACHE) 's newsletter.*

*The ACHE is one of the newest Product and Service Councils (PSCs) under the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) umbrella that CACCI members agreed to establish during the Istanbul Conference in March 2011. It has been formed with the primary aim of promoting greater business interaction among CACCI members who are interested in the health and education sectors.*

*Health care and education are the two largest government expenditure items in most economies and have been witnessing major transformations and facing enormous challenges worldwide in recent years. This resulted in more tendencies to privatization and liberalization of the markets, and growing opportunities for the private enterprises.*

*I hope this first edition of our newsletter and the future ones can serve as an effective platform for an exchange of information among ACHE members as well as other players in the health and education industries in the region.*

*I would like to invite all members to contribute articles, with accompanying photos if possible, to the next issue of the Newsletter. Kindly send your materials through Fax: 886-2-2725-5665 or email: [cacci@cacci.org.tw](mailto:cacci@cacci.org.tw).*

*I look forward to hearing from you soon!*

Warm Regards

*Dr. Seyed Hassan Tabatabaieinejad*

*Chairman*

*Asian Council on Health and Education (ACHE)*



### About Asian Council on Health and Education

The Asian Council on Health and Education (ACHE), one of the newest Product and Service Councils (PSCs) under the CACCI umbrella, was formed during the 25th CACCI Conference on March 6-8, 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey. Following the establishment of ACHE, Mr. Seyed Mehdi Miraboutalebi, Vice President International Affairs of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries & Mines, recommended Dr. Seyed Hassan Tabatabaieinejad, Secretary and

Member of the Board, International Healthcare Association, to be Chairman of the Council.

The PSCs are sub-councils under the CACCI umbrella that CACCI members agree to establish with the primary aim of promoting greater business interaction among CACCI members who are in the same product or service line.

Membership in the PSCs provides businessmen regular platform for:

Networking; Identifying and addressing issues affecting their respective sectors; Finding solutions to common problems; Working out specific programs to accelerate regional cooperation, particularly in the area of trade, investment, technology transfer, capital flow, and the exchange of information; and Exploring opportunities for business cooperation and joint venture, and initiating and completing business deals.

There are currently 11 PSCs that are operating within the CACCI umbrella. These include the following:

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## About Asian Council

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Asian Textiles and Garments Council (ATGC); Asian Council on Tourism (ACT); Asian Chemical Industry Council (ACIC); Asian ICT Council (AICTC); SME Development Council (SMEDC); CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council (CWEC); Young Entrepreneurs Group Asia Pacific (YEGAP); Asian Council on Water, Energy and Environment; Asian Council on Food and Agriculture; Asian Council on Contracting and Construction; and Asian Council on Health and Education.

Two others – the Asian Bankers Association (ABA) and the Council of Asia-Pacific Furniture Association (CAPFA) – have grown big enough and are now operating independently of CACCI.

PSCs meet at least once a year, usually in conjunction with the annual CACCI Conference held in various member countries. Occasionally, we conduct teleconferences with officers and key members of the PSCs to discuss their activities for the year.

For more information on the above PSCs, please visit the CACCI website at [www.cacci.org.tw](http://www.cacci.org.tw) and go to the “Product and Service Councils”

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The China Post news staff-- Health care systems around the world are undergoing fundamental changes, according to PwC Global Healthcare Leader David Levy, who was speaking in Taipei at a seminar organized by long-term care provider Asia Best Healthcare. During his presentation, Levy highlighted three major forces — regulatory reform, revolution in care and personalized medicine — which are driving change in the health care sector.

Regulatory reform is emerging as all populations demand quality health care at a reasonable and sustainable cost, said Levy. Government and health leaders are looking for cutting-edge solutions that don't repeat the mistakes of mature systems.

A revolution in care is being driven

## Brief Profile on ACHE Chairman Dr. Seyed Hassan Tabatabaieinejad

With qualifications on Methodology of Healthcare and Social Research, Development of Healthcare Clusters and Sustainable Healthcare, among others, Dr. Seyed Hassan Tabatabaieinejad has been involved in the medical sector for many years.

Dr. Tabatabaieinejad was Secretary of Students Scientific Research Center, Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS) from 1993-1996, Research Advisor, TUMS Medical School from 1995-2000, Editor of Official Publication of TUMS Medical School from 1996-1997, Head of Industry Relation Office, Iran's National Medical Research center (NMRC) from 2001-2003, Deputy for NMRC's Development of Management and

Resources from 2002-2003, Member of Iran's Medical Ethics National Committee from 2002-2005, Member of Research Supreme Committee, Iran's Medical Council from 2003-2005 and Secretary, Export Development Taskforce, Iran's Ministry of Health and Medical Education from 2008-2009.

Currently, he is Chairman of Imafar Co., a company of events services, Secretary and Member of the Board, International Healthcare Association as well as Managing Director of Sina Health System.

Born in 1972, Dr. Tabatabaieinejad graduated from TUMS Medical School in 1998. He can speak English and Persian.

## New technology transforms health care industry: expert

By The China Post news staff



by technology that is eroding traditional models and shifting toward delivery of care anywhere and the empowerment of individuals, Levy said. Health systems worldwide are working to develop a patient-centric health economy that is consumer-driven, as seen in other industries. Consumerism will transform how health care is directed, delivered and financed in the coming years, according to Levy.

### Impact of New Science

Advances in science are being driven by a new understanding of genetics care and cures that are transforming the practice of medicine

and the nature and pace of innovation. This new science will be the core of health care that is more personalized, predictive, preventative and participatory, enabling the focus to shift from treatment of diseases toward an emphasis on prevention, wellness and health, said Levy.

PwC Asia Healthcare Leader Ronald Ling, who was also attending the seminar, shared the Asian perspective that Asia is well positioned to draw on global trends and emerging best practices as it develops its health care system.

In addition, from a local perspective, PwC Taiwan Healthcare Deputy Leader Lily Wong highlighted market opportunities for Taiwan's pharmaceutical and medical device companies ready to adopt a “faster, better, cheaper” mindset, given their particular competitive advantages and deep understanding of the China market.

Source: The China Post, Nov. 20, 2011. II

# Elderly care gives unique opportunity

By Andrew Sheng

Oscar Wilde used to say that the tragedy of old age is not that one is old, but that one is young. I belong to the baby boomer generation, born from 1946 to 1965 that helped to create an era of incredible economic prosperity and technology, and also responsible for the biggest financial bubble, as well as consumers of planetary resources at a rate that will leave future generations poorer. Many of us feel that before we go to the other side, we must do something to give back to society what we were able to enjoy.

In the U.S. alone, there are 75 million baby boomers, or nearly one quarter of the population, of which roughly half are reaching retirement age. In Japan, three employed persons support one retiree, but in 10 years, it will be two to one. Harvard professor Arthur Kleinman, one of the authorities on public health, estimates that China may reach that situation by 2050. There are currently 3.2 million nursing home beds in China, but the number of people who may need such beds is reaching 12 million.

As Asian societies become more prosperous, it is time to rethink the push for growth and to consider a better quality of life. Increasingly, there is awareness that only three things matter more for most people — reasonable income/jobs, social equality and a sustainable environment. Asia is still able to deliver these because there is still growth to generate resources to deal with social inclusivity and the environment. It is much tougher in European countries that are facing financial crises.

Population aging should not be seen as a cost, but as an opportunity. One of the primary goals in global rebalancing is to shift Asian production out of excessive reliance on manufacturing and exports to domestic consumption and services. Services account for only 43 percent of China's GDP, 56 percent in India, but over 75

percent for the U.S., Europe and Japan.

China's 12th Five Year Plan intends to raise the level of services to 47 percent of GDP by 2015, and if the Chinese GDP reaches around US\$11 trillion, the value of the services sector would be nearly US\$5.2 trillion, an increase of US\$2 trillion from current levels.

Almost all policymakers in Asia want to increase the size of the service sector, but very little is known about knowledge and value generation in that arena, because it is much more difficult to measure statistically. There are broadly three types of services — production services related to manufacturing, business services and consumer services. The service sector is a major employer. In the United States, professional and other services went from roughly the same number of workers in 1960 as manufacturing to five times as many by 2007.

But since Asians have invested so much in the manufacturing sector there is a tendency to want to go up the value chain, without appreciating that the most advanced manufacturers and companies have already re-engineered themselves into "servitization of products" business models. They sell the hardware cheaply (like printers) and make more money servicing the hardware, like selling ink cartridges and service warranties. IBM earns more from services than selling computers. Once iPhones and iPads are sold, money from downloading Apps just keeps on rolling in.

Services in emerging markets are mostly concentrated in distribution, education, health, tourism and financial services. Services tend to be domestic-oriented, but increasingly, services such as IT, can be outsourced and produced offshore.

Health and medicare, for example, have become major foreign exchange earners for Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. World medical tourism is



estimated at US\$15 billion business, mainly because in advanced countries, medicare is getting too expensive, whilst in many emerging markets, the quality of medicare is often poor, causing those who can afford it to go abroad for treatment.

Currently, most emerging markets in Asia, like China and India, spend up to 6 percent of GDP on health services, but advanced countries spend over 10 percent of GDP with the leader being the U.S. at 15 percent of GDP. If China were to increase spending to 8 percent of GDP by 2015, the size of the market would increase to US\$880 billion, or just under three times the GDP of Hong Kong.

Professor Kleinman makes the relevant point that medical services can be a tremendous employment generator. For example, it is estimated that 10 million caregivers are required to look after the ageing population in China, whereas there are only 300,000 people working in this field, with only 100,000 professionally qualified.

There is no question that there will be tremendous demand for medicare services in Asia as the population ages. Most Asian economies have less than 2 doctors and hospital beds per 1,000 people, whereas the number of hospital beds in Japan (with the most aged population) can be as high as 14 per 1,000.

Most people would agree that medicare costs in the advanced countries can be excessive. In the U.S., 40 percent of the lifetime medicare costs are incurred in the last two years before death. The good news is that technology and process innovation can bring better health care quality at lower

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# Asia's economic growth faces healthcare risk

By Puneet Pal Singh Asia Business Report, Bangkok

"Health is wealth" is perhaps the easiest proverb to remember for life.

At the World Economic Forum in Bangkok, there is a renewed push by business leaders and policymakers to remind everyone of the importance of this maxim, for individuals as well as for overall economic growth.

Despite being home to some of the fastest-growing economies in the world, the region is lagging behind in healthcare after years of insufficient investment.

"If you look at the healthcare spend in most countries in Asia, the stories are quite telling because majority of them are in low single digits," says Malvinder Singh, executive chairman of Fortis Healthcare.

This has resulted in inadequate infrastructure that has created a big gap between supply and demand, which in turn threatens economic growth.

"If we don't address it and deal with it, we are not going to be able to achieve the desire or the vision that we have," he says.

## 'Most important resource'

The fear is that inadequate healthcare facilities increase the risk of medical problems not being diagnosed and treated properly, thus developing into major health issues.

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## Elderly care

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costs. Doctors using iPads can diagnose problems off-site, provided the patients have all their medical history and tests digitized. Indian hospitals are able to conduct innovative cataract and heart surgery at a fraction of the costs in advanced countries. Asian economies can upgrade their Medicare by leapfrogging the technology and delivery organizations, but it will take strong political will.

It is clear that we can no longer rely solely on the government to provide Medicare. As the population ages, it is the family and charity

"Human capital is the most important resource," says Hu Bo Ciming of Health Checkup Management Group.

While there are concerns about the impact of these issues on the health of the individual, they also have a bearing on the overall economy in two major areas, namely productivity and rising costs.

In terms of productivity, the effect is at two levels. Firstly, when people develop major health issues they need time off work to recover.

So either the overall output of the firm where they work will fall, or the firm must pay for a replacement worker, which in turn increases its costs.

The other risk is that people may come back to work without having received proper treatment.

This is equally harmful, as even though they are physically present, their contribution to output may be limited.

## Long-run benefits

The World Economic Forum and Harvard School of Public Health

services that will provide the volunteer services to take care of the elderly. Hospitals, home care and financial support will have to be redesigned to facilitate this relationship so that society rebonds the family, rather than more and more older people living and aging in loneliness.

Taking care of the elderly is no longer other people's problem. As professor Kleinman says, it is Asia's next big challenge and this generation's responsibility.

Andrew Sheng is President of the Fung Global Institute.

Source: *The China Post*, Jun. 9, 2012 II

have forecast that non-communicable diseases, which include diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases, may result in a "cumulative output loss" of as much as \$47 trillion (£30 trillion) globally over the next two decades.

"Our approach to rural healthcare is to create more affordable and portable devices that will allow us to do basic diagnosis and detect health problems," says Stuart Dean GE.

Much of that is expected to come from Asia, which is home to more than half of the world's population.

Investing in healthcare may put short-term strains on a country's finances, though it should bring significant benefits in the long run.

"Human capital is the most important resource," says Hu Bo, chairman of Beijing-based Ciming Health Checkup Management Group.

"Proper health of human capital is necessary for any kind of economic growth to take place in any country."

## Added burden

An inadequate healthcare system also results in much higher costs in the long run.

This is a big concern for the Asian economies, where 40% to 60% of the health expenditure is paid by individuals.

If they are not provided adequate care and medication, their health problems may escalate, and so they will need more expensive specialised treatments.

The direct impact of that is on the spending power of consumers, as they cut down on other non-essential spending, at a time when many Asian economies look to boost domestic consumption.

Higher healthcare costs for Asia's millions of poor also threaten efforts to increase their real income levels and raise living standards.

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## Asia's economic

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“Out-of-pocket payments associated with poor health status and use of health services” has impoverished millions of people in Asia, according to the World Health Organization.

### Threat to opportunity

There is some good news though.

Many firms come up with innovative products and ideas to cater for growing demand for healthcare products, especially from the rural areas in the region.

GE, one of the world's biggest manufacturers of medical equipment, has introduced a portable ultrasound machine.

The machine can be taken to check patients in areas that do not have specialist hospitals, or where people may not be able to afford the cost of travel to urban centres for check-ups.

“Our approach to rural healthcare is to create more affordable and portable devices that will allow us to do basic diagnosis and detect health problems,” says Stuart Dean, chief executive of GE for the Asean region.

Another firm looking to tap into the sector is Novartis.

The drug maker is playing a key role in facilitating the development of “micro-pharmacies” that help in distributing basic affordable medicines, including generic drugs, to people living in villages and rural areas.

There are now almost 250 of these in India, catering for more than 40 million people.

The firm is looking to spread the concept to other countries in the region.

It says the idea to set these pharmacies was to do “social good”, but admits that given the number of people living in rural areas, the project could help improve its profitability in the long run.

“Nobody knows yet,” says Avinash Pramod Potnis, chief executive of Novartis Corporation Malaysia. “The potential could be enormous.”

Source: BBC News, May 31, 2012

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## Universal healthcare essential, Asean+3 health ministers say

By Pongphon Sarnsamak

Asean and its key partners Japan, South Korea and China yesterday jointly decided to make universal health coverage an essential provision for the more than 2 billion people living in the region.

This joint statement was made at the 5th Asean+3 Health Ministers Meeting held in Phuket. The countries discussed means of implementing joint activities in the health sector, especially in terms of universal health coverage, sharing their concerns and expressing their commitment to strengthening this collaboration.

They agreed that the universal health coverage played a crucial role in reducing poverty and giving people access to essential health services.

All participating health ministers said they were committed to establishing an Asean+3 network on universal health coverage, as well as to share and collectively build a national as well as regional capacity to assess and manage an efficient health system that supports universal health coverage.

They will also bring up the issue of universal health coverage at a forum with the United Nations.

The ministers also said that Asean and its key partners should focus on cooperating over issues such as prevention and control of communicable diseases, emergency response mechanisms, mitigating health impacts of natural disasters, food safety, human resource development for health, traditional medicine development and pharmaceutical development including vaccines.

Public Health Minister Witthaya Buranasiri said yesterday that his counterparts praised Thailand's successful implementation of the universal health coverage scheme over the past 10 years. The universal health scheme in Thailand has provided more than 48 million people with essential medical services and has reduced their financial burden.

Witthaya said Thailand would transfer its knowledge to help regional countries, including Japan, South Korea and China, fully implement universal health coverage. He added that Brunei, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos were also interested in the universal health scheme.

Meanwhile, Vietnam's Health Minister Dr Thi Kim Tien Nguyen said his government had set its sights on providing universal health coverage by 2020, which would cover poor people, minority groups and children under the age of six.

“We will learn from Thailand because it is experienced in implementing universal health coverage,” she said.

Vietnam is planning to reform its healthcare system and will work on improving its primary care services and strengthening prevention programmes for emerging diseases as well as infectious and non-communicable conditions like heart disease, cancer, hypertension and mental health, she added.

Laos Public Health Minister Prof Dr Eksavang Vongvichit said his country had issued a decree on national health insurance and financing strategies to ensure equity and easy access to healthcare. Laos is hoping to have its universal health coverage scheme in place by 2020.

“The key direction is to shift from the direct out-of-pocket mechanism to the universal coverage of health,” he said.

Asean+3 health ministers will next meet in 2014 in Vietnam.

Source: The Nation, July 7, 2012

II



# The rise of 'glocal' students and transnational education

***Institutions should seize the opportunity to engage with those who seek an international education but want to stay local***

**By Rahul Choudaha**

**Director of Research and Advisory Services  
World Education Services, New York**

Nearly 100 million people will enter the consumer class (annual income of more than \$5,000) by 2015 in six south-east Asian countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam), according to a report by the Boston Consulting Group. Another report by the McKinsey Global Institute asserts that between 2005 and 2025, China and India will see their aggregate urban consumption increase seven-fold and six-fold, respectively.

This growing consumer class in Asia will expand a new segment of students who are willing to pay for a global educational experience while staying in their home country or region. I call this segment “glocals”— global aspirations with local experiences.

Glocals are characterised by aspirations that usually outstrip both their ability to afford a full fee-paying overseas education and their academic merit to gain admission to an overseas institution with financial aid.

The traditional segment of international students go abroad for a combination of reasons such as career advancement, quality of education, immigration or the experience of living abroad. Glocals differ from this traditional segment as they look for career advancement and quality of education, without having to go very far from home.

In addition to limitations regarding financial means and academic merit, glocals may also decide to stay within their country or region due to regional mobility initiatives. For instance, the ASEAN Economic Community, aims to transform the south-east Asian region into a common market with free flow of goods, services, investment and

workers, which will benefit students as well.

Glocals represent the segment of students who typically seek transnational education (TNE) including international branch campuses, twinning arrangements and online education.

The growth of Dubai as a destination for many south Asian students through international branch campuses is one indicator of growth in this student population. According to the Observatory, with 37 branch campuses, One in five branch campuses in the world is hosted by the UAE.

Malaysia recently announced that it received applications from 25 foreign universities to set up branch campuses, and that the country plans to reach a goal of enrolling 150,000 international students by 2015.

China has also been proactive in offering 1+2+1 dual degree programmes for a decade. A recent announcement by Indian regulators to allow joint-degrees and twinning collaborations between Indian and foreign institutions are also expected to expand the base of glocals. High-quality collaborations, such as the one between Yale-NUS in Singapore, are also anticipated to attract glocals.



Countries such as the UK and Australia have been pioneers in offering transnational education and are best positioned to serve glocals. Nearly half of all international education activity for the UK and one-third for Australia is through TNE or “offshore” provision. In terms of absolute numbers, more than 400,000 students were enrolled in the UK institutions through TNE. More than 100,000 students were enrolled in Australian institutions.

Undoubtedly, students who seek overseas education will continue to grow at a faster pace. It is the glocal segment, however, that is likely to present the next big opportunity for institutions that want to increase their global profile. The needs of glocal students, combined with a changing institutional, demographic, economic and political landscape in emerging Asia calls for an innovative and strategic approach to engage with internationalisation in Asia.

Internationalisation strategies need to move beyond student recruitment and target collaborative relationships of varying complexity and intensity, ranging from short-term exchanges to twinning international branch campuses. Undeniably, strategies will differ according to the priorities and resources of institutions, but higher education institutions need to be prepared to adapt to a major shift in student profiles and corresponding engagement strategies with Asia.

To sum up, a new segment of students is expanding. These are students who have global aspirations but will find more opportunities of education and employment mobility within local regions. This presents a vital opportunity for foreign institutions to understand glocals and strategically engage them through innovative transnational education.

As Arnold Glasgow rightfully said: “The trouble with the future is that it usually arrives before we’re ready for it.”

*Source: Guardian Professional, Jun. 21, 2012.*

II



## ADB Study Highlights Dark Side of 'Shadow Education'



The booming private tutoring industry, known as “shadow education,” is less about remedial help for students and much more about competition and creation of differentials, according to a new report produced by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC) at the University of Hong Kong.

In Asia, it may also dominate the lives of young people and their families, maintain and exacerbate social inequalities, divert needed household income into an unregulated industry, and create inefficiencies in education systems.

“Shadow education is expanding at an alarming rate. It is already most extensive in the Asian region, and increasing proportions of household income are being spent on private tutoring,” said Jouko Sarvi, Practice Leader for Education in ADB’s Regional and Sustainable Development Department.

“Policy makers would be wise to look at why parents feel they need to

engage private tutors, and think about ways to ensure shadow education works with – rather than against – the mainstream system,” said CERD Director, Professor Mark Bray, who co-authored the report with Chad Lykins.

Costs associated with “shadow education” are staggering. In Pakistan, expenditures on tutoring per child averaged the equivalent of \$3.40 a month in 2011, a significant amount considering 60% of Pakistan’s population reportedly lives on less than \$2 per day. In Hong Kong, China, the business of providing private tutoring to secondary schools reached \$255 million in 2011. In Japan, families spent a whopping \$12 billion in 2010 on private tutoring.

The demand for private tutoring is partly driven by negative perceptions of traditional schooling and the belief that extra lessons are essential for academic success. However, private tutoring is not always effective in raising academic achievement; and in some schools students commonly skip classes or sleep through lessons because they

are tired after excessive external study. This means that the shadow system can make regular schooling less efficient.

Some teachers are also focusing more on private lessons than regular classes, leading to another cause of inefficiency. Especially problematic are situations in which teachers provide extra private lessons for pupils for whom they are already responsible in the public system. This can lead to corruption when teachers deliberately teach less in their regular classes in order to promote the market for private lessons.

The report says policymakers across the region need to take a closer look at how shadow education affects family budgets, children’s time, and national education systems. Policymakers should then design regulations to protect consumers while focusing on improvement in mainstream schools in order to reduce the need for private lessons.

*Source: Asian Development Bank, Jul. 4, 2012*

II

## Singapore wants creativity not cramming

By Rebecca Lim BBC News, Singapore

Singapore’s schools have become global role models, with consistently high results in international tests.

But now they want to move beyond this - towards something that cultivates creativity and what they term as “holistic education”.

Minister for Education, Heng Swee Keat, said this is “less about content knowledge” but “more about how to process information”.

He describes this challenge to innovate as being able to “discern truths from untruths, connect seemingly disparate dots, and create knowledge

even as the context changes”.

This strategy aims to prepare today’s students for the demands of the next 20 years.

It means that schools are under more pressure - and will be given more leeway - to come up with creative ways to teach the syllabus.

### Outside the classroom

So instead of the traditional images of high-pressure Asian schools - with rows of heads buried in books - they are trying different approaches to learning.

Putting this into practice, on a sunny April morning, 80 students from one of Singapore’s top schools were trekking outdoors.



The nine to 10 years olds from Rosyth School were on a “learning journey” in a park, incorporating science topics and values such as caring for the environment.

“We are conducting a biopsy to find out why a bee, a fish, a bird and a

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## Singapore wants

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plant mysteriously died,” said student Darren Ong. “Is it because of human actions?”

They photographed “evidence” on smartphones and digital cameras, soaking up facts on plant and animal species on their iPads.

“In one activity, I can cover three topics,” said science teacher Lin Lixun, clad in a white laboratory coat for his role as chief investigator.

“They can really learn through hands-on experience and putting things into action,” said civics and moral education teacher, Joslyn Huang.

### ‘Quality teachers’

This next stage of development follows Singapore’s huge improvement at school level - which has been hailed by education leaders in the US and the UK.

Singapore was placed fifth in reading, second in maths and fourth in science, in the last round of the OECD’s international tests - the Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa).



This put them ahead of every European country apart from Finland.

Teachers such as Ms Huang and Mr Lin are seen as key to this success.

For Mr Lin, teaching science is “sharing a passion” rather than merely imparting knowledge, he says.

High-quality teachers in Singapore are not an accident - but are the result of “deliberate policy actions”, said a report from the OECD.

It identifies the synergy among the schools, the ministry and the National Institute of Education (NIE), which trains teachers and conducts research.

As many other countries, Singapore had once faced a dearth of

good teachers, due in part to the lack of prestige and respect for the profession, said NIE director Lee Sing Kong.

This changed after concerted efforts were made from the mid-1990s to raise the image, provide training and better working conditions for teachers, he told a global round table discussion in March.

“But it does take time to really evolve the quality teaching force,” he said.

### ‘Survival years’

Singapore, a tiny island with few natural resources, has promoted education as a pillar of economic growth since its independence in 1965.

Those were the “survival driven” years, Mr Heng told the Singapore Conference in Washington DC in February.

The late 1970s saw an “efficiency driven” phase focusing on industry-related skills.

In the late 1990s, as the economy advanced to become knowledge based, the emphasis shifted to thinking skills and creativity.

Equal opportunity in education was also used as a way of binding together different immigrant groups, including ethnic Chinese, Malay and Indians.

“In sum, our circumstances force us to take education very seriously because it is critical to our survival and success,” said Mr Heng. “Education shapes the future of our nation.”

### East-west bridge

In higher education, the island nation has attracted universities from the US and Europe looking for a base in Asia.

These include the top business schools INSEAD and the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

The National University of Singapore (NUS) - ranked among the top 50 in the world - has partnerships with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Duke University at graduate and postgraduate levels.

Despite its strong reputation,



Singapore education is not without its detractors.

The Yale-NUS collaboration to set up a liberal arts college drew objections from Yale faculty over Singapore’s human rights record.

Singapore’s school system has also been criticised for being too grades-driven and high-stress - a legacy that may prove a challenge to the ambition for “holistic education”.

### ‘Obsession’ with testing

It is common for children’s schedules to be packed with “enrichment classes” and tuition outside of school.

This month, a parent’s letter in a local newspaper sparked debate over tough maths standards pushing more students toward such additional classes.

Sociologist and former Nominated Member of Parliament, Paulin Straughan, speaking at a recent population forum, suggested doing away with the PSLE - a national examination that all students take at the end of primary school.

“If we do that, we free the school from this obsession of testing, and the teachers and educators can focus on teaching and learning, and if we do that, more young couples would be willing to grow larger families,” she said.

That was a radical thought for this competitive nation. For now, teachers are aware that fun activities still need to deliver the results.

“We still structure it such that it is aligned to learning objectives and the things they are supposed to know for exams,” said Ms Huang.

Source: BBC News, May 22, 2012

II



# Education next frontier for Korean Wave: expert

By Oh Kyu-wook, The Korea Herald/Asia News Network

SEOUL--A leading education expert says the South Korean way of learning is becoming an inspiration to developing countries.

Central and South American regions, in particular, are showing great interest in the lifelong learning programs in South Korea, according to Choi Un-shil, the president of National Institute for Lifelong Education.

"Lifelong learning is a growing industry. With the world developing so quickly, people want and need to continue their learning throughout their lives," she said.

"And I believe that Korea holds great potential to take a leading role in lifelong learning."

Choi was invited by the Organization of Ibero-American States, an intergovernmental body for the Portuguese and Spanish speaking nations, and recently visited Latin American countries, including Panama, El Salvador and Honduras.

During her 10-day stay, she met their education leaders and signed an agreement to work with them in exchanging experiences.

Choi noted that she had promised, in particular, to share South Korea's adult literacy teaching programs with the countries.

"The adult literacy rate is still the biggest concern in Latin America, and the countries are eager to learn from Korea how we quickly came out from illiteracy," Choi said.

She pointed out that only 22 percent of people in South Korea were able to read and write before 1945, but now the country boasts a literacy rate of

99 percent, the highest of any country at a similar level of development.

Although the language barrier and cultural discrepancy exists, Choi said she believes the NILE will be able to export some of its programs, such as on-line learning courses and teaching materials, to the developing nations.

Choi said that the countries are also interested in adopting South Korea's Academic Credit Bank System.

The ACBS, which was introduced in 1997, is a unique educational system that is designed to recognize the diverse learning experiences of individuals acquired outside school.

It allows people to obtain a higher education degree equivalent to a university or college through different channels, such as completing courses accredited by the ACBS, passing an exam for self-education and acquiring certificates, Choi said.

"The main purpose of the ACBS is to help more people engage in learning. And I think this system could be a useful tool for those countries with low school participation rates."

Choi said that she believes South Korea's education program will be a driving force in continuing the Korean Wave, or hallyu.

"Hallyu 1.0 was Korean dramas and movies, and hallyu 2.0 was K-pop groups. I think hallyu 3.0 will be Korean education," she said.

Choi, 56, has devoted the past three decades to laying the foundation for lifelong learning in South Korea.

Having earned her doctoral degree in adult education from Ewha Womans University, Choi started in education

as a lecturer at Ajou University, where she founded and directed the Education Research Institute.

She also instituted lifelong learning at the Korean Educational Development Institute, the research arm for the Education Ministry, before taking the helm of the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) in 2010.

The NILE was established in 2008 as a national level organization for lifelong education by integrating separate lifelong education agencies.

Despite its short history, the national agency has been carrying out a wide range of projects, such as researching and developing education programs, training lifelong education staff and supporting regional institutes, according to the president.

But Choi admits that many people in South Korea still miss out on learning, arguing that more education programs should be offered, particularly for those aged between 40 and 50.

South Korea is fast becoming an aged society — where more than 14 percent of the population is 65 or older — and people now need to consider a second job after retirement, she said.

The NILE currently operates five national education centers for lifelong learning, but it is planning to add eight more across the country by 2013 to provide more learning opportunities for older students.

But she added that in order to attract more adults to lifelong learning, people first need to change their perception of learning.

"The end of school does not mean the end of learning, now learning truly continues through life," she added.

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