



CACCI

Health & Education Newsletter

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Message from the Chairman



Dear CACCI members and friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to our eighth issue of the CACCI Health and Education Newsletter, designed as a platform for us to continuously share information amongst members.

Published twice a year, it will keep you, our members and friends, in touch with the Asian Council on Health and Education activities and events through concise and relevant articles that you can read through in a very short time.

This issue not only highlights the trends in the Asia-Pacific region, but also includes the latest news from the region and interesting reports on health and education. I hope that you will find the articles included in this Newsletter of great value, and look forward to your contribution to the future issues of the Newsletter.

I hope to see you at the upcoming 30th CACCI Conference in Taipei, and I encourage you to 'spread the word' and invite others in your networks to join us. And finally, please do let us know what you think of the newsletter!

I wish you all the best of luck in your endeavors.

With best regards,

Dr. Seyed Hassan Tabatabaei Nejad

Chairman

Asian Council on Health and Education

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30th CACCI Conference to be Held on November 23-25 in Taipei

The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) is pleased to invite all CACCI officers and members to the 30th CACCI Conference scheduled to take place on November 23-25, 2016 at The Marriott Hotel in Taipei, Taiwan.

To be co-hosted by the Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association (CIECA) and the Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC), with the CTBC Bank as major sponsor, the two-day Conference is designed to provide another valuable platform for CACCI members and invited experts to exchange views on measures that the business sector and governments in the region can undertake to take full advantage of the opportunities offered not just by markets in the Asia-Pacific region but by countries in other parts of the world as well.

Focusing on the theme “The Rise of Asia: Taking a Bigger Role in the Global Economy”, the 30th CACCI Conference this year will address the following questions: How can Asia play a much bigger role in shaping the global economy in the 21st century than it did in the latter half of the 20th century? What challenges would Asian countries – individually and collectively – face in playing such a role and how will they meet these

challenges? How should Asia – which in the past was heavily dependent on exports for its growth – nurture its new “second engine of growth”, which is domestic demand, in order to sustain its strong performance?

Eminent speakers will be invited to speak during two Plenary Sessions which will focus on timely and relevant issues, including the following:

Plenary Session 1: Gaining Traction from Regional Economic Integration

Plenary Session 2: Promoting SME Development for Sustainable

and Inclusive Growth

In addition, parallel sectoral roundtable discussions and special session will be organized that will gather government and private sector experts for dialogue and panel discussion on important sectoral issues, particularly on woman entrepreneurship, Information and Communication Technology, youth entrepreneurship, and food and agriculture. ■



Part I

Health

Health Professionals in Global Health Tourism Summit and Fair on September 28-30 2016



Under the patronage of the Ministry of Health of Turkey and the strategic partnership of Associations of Turkish Travel Agencies, the Global Health Tourism Summit and Fair (Health Sumex 2016) will be held at

Congressium Exhibition & Convention Center, Ankara on September 28-30, 2016.

Health Sumex 2016 provides unique opportunity to get in touch with the leading contacts who guide Turkey's health tourism sector and industry which is one of the largest and most attractive markets in Europe. In the organization, actors will have an opportunity to meet with health professionals, to get involved in new profitable business opportunities that will accelerate their imports and exports and to introduce their new and current product range to the leading decision makers of the sector to facilitate their market penetration in their promotional efforts. The participants will also have a chance to fortify their existing business relations and to follow the latest and state-of-art technologies and most importantly to conduct B2B meetings to achieve quick returns and productivity in the sector.

Over 5,000 domestic and foreign participants are expected for the fair. Also, thanks to the efforts of T.R. Ministry of Economy, "Procurement Committees" from Germany, Arab Countries, Azerbaijan, Balkan Countries, Iran, Iraq, United States of America, Latin American Countries, Holland, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Scandinavian Countries, Russia, Ukraine, North Africa Countries, CIS countries, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan

will meet with expo participants.

Turkey, with its unique and strategic geographic location, closeness to Europe, Asia, Middle East, North and Central Africa, Russia and Commonwealth of Independent States, easy transportation means to and from these locations and developed health system, has become a center of attraction. Turkey has achieved a great development in the health sector in the last 12 years. Quality and productivity of health system showed an increase as a result of series of reforms. In addition to the public health services, private health services of the country showed a rapid development in the recent years. Turkey, with its modern hospitals, qualified labor force, expert doctors, technological infrastructure and experience, provides health services in the European standards. Quality of service of many private hospitals in Turkey has been approved by world famous accreditation institutes. Total of Joint Commissions International (JCI) accredited health institutions, 37 of them being hospitals, 3 laboratories, one patient transfer vehicle and one ambulatory medical center, Turkey ranks second in the world.

For more information about Health Sumex, please visit the event website: www.healthsumex.com.

Source: HHB Expo Fair Company, January 27, 2016

HEALTH SUMEX
GLOBAL SAĞLIK TURİZMİ ZIRVESİ VE FUARI
Global Health Tourism Summit and Fair

28-29-30 Eylül/September 2016
Congressium ANKARA TÜRKİYE/TURKEY

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Ankaralı Dünya'nın gözde sağlık merkezleri, çok sayıda tedavi uzmanları ile size hizmet ediyor.
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HBH-EXPO FAVOUR

How Japan is tweaking the cost of health care

April 1 revisions aim to unclog large hospitals, boost efficiency

By Tomoko Otake

The price of health care is changing.

On February 10, 2016, a government medical council approved a long list of revisions for the fees hospitals and pharmacies can charge under the nation's public health insurance program.

The dictionary-thick list reflects an effort by the government to reduce wastage, improve efficiency and encourage community-based health care, by tweaking the earnings of professionals and the costs patients have to pay.

Under Japan's universal health care system, all residents are required to join the public health insurance scheme. In exchange, they receive access to government-approved procedures and prescriptions, for which they pay only 30 percent of the cost or less.

The fee changes, which are approved every two years and will take effect on April 1, are a key policy tool for the government. In a rapidly aging society, needs for medical care are surging without a proportional increase in funds.

Here are highlights of this year's fee review, particularly those with a visible impact on consumers:

Community care

The government is pushing for community-based care by increasing pay for family doctors who treat patients away from hospitals, such as by visiting patients in their homes.

The government wants to steer people away from bed-blocking inpatient care and into home-based or outpatient care. As part of that policy, it has created new pay categories for dementia specialists and pediatricians who see patients on a regular basis.



A list of revisions for fees hospitals and pharmacies can charge under the public health insurance program shows how the government is trying to tweak financial incentives for them. | BLOOMBERG

Hospital surcharges

“Universal access” in Japan's health care has long meant that many patients rush to large hospitals, such as university-affiliated institutions, even for such common complaints as colds. This partly explains long waits at big hospitals, a situation described as “a three-minute consultation with a doctor after a three-hour wait.”

To discourage this, some hospitals have already introduced surcharges of ¥3,000-¥4,000 for people who show up without a referral letter from a doctor. The government is now making it mandatory for large hospitals to levy a surcharge of at least ¥5,000 on a first visit by any patient without a referral and at least ¥2,500 for subsequent visits.

The same goes for dentistry, where patients will be charged at least ¥3,000 for visiting the dental department of

a large hospital without a referral and ¥1,500 for visits thereafter.

Pharmacists and dentists

Community-based care will be expanded to cover pharmacists and dentists.

Dentists who see their patients regularly and offer early intervention for tooth decay and periodontal disease will be rewarded.

Extra fees will also be paid to pharmacies whose customers name them as their designated family pharmacy.

The medical council is also cutting fees for pharmacies that open shop outside large hospitals and process prescriptions issued by those hospitals only.

The government believes those pharmacies — known as *monzen*

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How Japan

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yakkyoku (literally, in-front-of-the-hospital-gate pharmacies) — are not doing enough to serve patients' needs, as they are able to survive commercially thanks to their prime location without being required to provide good service.

Under the new pay table, the fee such pharmacies receive for preparing medicine will be cut to ¥200 from the current ¥410 per prescription. The fee does not include the cost of medicine itself.

It is unclear, however, whether the move will have the intended effect of penalizing such pharmacies, because they might end up getting more business: Less pay for pharmacies means lower fees for patients. Pharmacies that handle prescriptions from a variety of hospitals, not just the nearest one, will avoid the cut in fees.

Generic drugs

The prices of newly released generic drugs will be reduced to 50 percent of the patented versions. They are currently priced at 60 percent. Patients will begin to see more generic names — or the actual ingredients — of drugs printed on their prescriptions, as the government is adding ¥30 for



every prescription that lists them.

Quitting smoking

Young smokers who want to kick the habit will have easier access to doctors.

Those under age 35 will get 70 percent of their nicotine addiction treatment covered by public insurance.

Coverage has so far been limited to those who register 200 or more in the so-called Brinkman Index, derived by multiplying the number of cigarettes smoked per day by the number of years of smoking. The requirement

will be removed for those under age 35, to offer young people a chance to stop smoking before they get heavily addicted.

Heating/cooling pads

Orthopedic specialists often prescribe heating or cooling pads for medical conditions, but some patients are known to ask doctors to bump up the number prescribed because the pads are more expensive to buy over the counter. To stop this, the pads will be limited to 70 sheets per prescription under the insurance scheme.

Robotic exoskeletons

The insurance coverage of HAL robot suits developed by Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture-based venture Cyberdyne has been approved, to assist with lower-limb rehabilitation of people with progressive neuromuscular diseases. These conditions include spinal muscular atrophy, Charcot-Marie-Tooth Disease and muscular dystrophy. This will benefit some 3,400 patients across the country. The suits provide extra power for limb movements.

Source: Japan Times, February 17, 2016



Development of care robots growing in aging Japan

By Anna Masui

A shortage of nursing-care workers in Japan amid a rapidly aging population is accelerating the development and introduction of robots programmed to perform care-giving tasks.

The government is also spurring the trend, calling for the development of robotics-based nursing-care equipment as part of its Japan Revitalization Strategy.

RT. Works Co., an Osaka-based spinoff from Funai Electric Co., has released an autonomous walking-assist electric cart to help elderly people walk outdoors.

Equipped with sensors that recognize how well users are walking, the Robot Assist Walker RT. 1 helps them walk uphill and automatically slows or brakes when they walk downhill.

Using GPS and wireless Internet connectivity, the Robot Assist Walker also allows users' families to



Robot Assist Walker RT. 1, developed by Osaka-based RT. Works Co., is an autonomous walking-assist electric cart.



Swing Lift CoCoRo, developed jointly by Orix Living Corp. and Moritoh Co., lifts a woman using an arm capable of making a 360-degree turn. | ORIX LIVING / KYODO

monitor them remotely. If there is an emergency, such as a fall, the robot sends a message to a designated email address.

The robot, priced at around ¥246,000, was released in July and RT Works hopes to sell 20,000 units in the first three years.

In October, NK Works Co., a subsidiary of Noritsu Koki Co., began marketing Neos Care, a robotics-based monitoring system to prevent patients from falling out of bed.

Using an infrared sensor system in a camera installed in the patient's room, it recognizes when someone is about to fall out of bed and notifies the caregiver via mobile phone.

Nobuo Nakajima, leader of the robot business project at Wakayama-based NK Works, said the product will give caregivers time to communicate more with patients as robots can take over some of their monitoring tasks.

Orix Living Corp., a Tokyo-based operator of aged care homes and joint developer of the monitoring system, has it installed in its 13 facilities, while

NK Works is also developing systems designed for use in family homes and medical institutions.

In addition, Orix Living has developed Swing Lift CoCoRo, a lift with an arm capable of making a 360-degree turn, to carry a person from a bed to a bathroom.

Developed jointly with Moritoh Co., a maker of nursing-care equipment in Ichinomiya, Aichi Prefecture, the arm is folded inside a wall when it's not in use.

Orix Living spokesman Toru Irie said that with 80 percent of care workers suffering from back pain, the user-friendly lift is designed to lessen the physical strain on them.

In the company's survey of some 1,200 men and women aged 40 and older, about 80 percent of respondents welcomed the prospect of robots looking after them when they need care, saying they would feel more at ease than if human caregivers were present.

Source: Japan Times, January 27, 2016 ■

Next government to build long-term care system: Taiwan President-elect

By Sophia Yeh, Lung Pei-ning and Evelyn Kao



President-elect Tsai Ing-wen of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) said on February 22, 2016 that it is necessary to develop a solid policy on long-term care for the aging population and that her government plans to allocate NT\$30 billion (US\$902.8 million) from tax income and NT\$3 billion from regular government budget to build a long-term care system.

Speaking at an academic seminar to mark the 10th anniversary of the Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology at Taipei Veterans General Hospital, Tsai said that providing long-term care services will be a top priority for the next government, which will be sworn in on May 20, 2016.

An inter-government agency long-term care panel will be formed to carry

out the task by pooling resources from various sectors in the country, she said.

Tsai rehashed her policy platform regarding long-term care services during her presidential campaign advocating hiking sales, gift and inheritance taxes to finance the proposed long-term care services for the elderly.

Tsai also said the hospital's efforts in improving senior care services over the past 10 years and the Veterans Affairs Council's (VAC) experience of caring for elderly people over the decades will lay the foundation for the establishment of a future long-term care system in the country.

As its population is aging faster than many other developed countries, Taiwan has to cope with the challenges this presents, Tsai noted.

People aged 65 and over accounted for 10 percent of Taiwan's population in 2010 and the population aged 65 and over will exceed 20 percent by 2025, making Taiwan one of a few "super-aging" countries, Tsai added.

The aging trend in Taiwan is already irreversible and even stimulus measures aimed at boosting the birthrate will not help turn the tide,



she said, adding that how to cope with problems resulting from the rapidly aging society has therefore become the most pressing issue facing the country.

Tsai said the DPP has devised several long-term care programs, including one she proposed during the presidential election campaign to establish a national aging and health research center.

Currently, Taipei Veterans General Hospital, National Yang Ming University and the National Health Research Institutes have jointly set up an integrated center on aging and health that has laid the foundation for the future national aging and health research center to facilitate domestic development and international cooperation in this area, Tsai noted.

Source: Central News Agency, February 22, 2016



Competing interests converge on health care price-setting panel

By Tomoko Otake

On Feb. 10, 2016, as hundreds of people in business attire watched from the gallery, a panel of experts under the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry adopted a long list of proposals to revise the fees that can be charged by the nation's hospitals and pharmacies for medical procedures and prescriptions under the public health insurance scheme.

While little known to the public, the Chuo Shakai Hoken Iryo Kyogi Kai (Central Social Insurance Medical Council), commonly abbreviated as Chuikyo, has long wielded a huge influence on charting the course of health care policy in Japan.

Under law, all residents in Japan must join the public health insurance system and pay monthly premiums in return for access to government-approved drugs and services for no more than 30 percent of the cost. With Japan's medical expenditures topping ¥40 trillion a year, the smallest change in the fee of one procedure can lead to a difference of tens of billions of yen in the nation's medical bills, and its financial impact on health care providers is huge. The panel's meetings, which are open to the public, are thus packed with people representing various interest groups.

For the latest fee revision, which will take effect on April 1, Chuikyo members had months of heated, often emotionally charged debate over which medical procedures merit insurance coverage, and at what cost.

What are Chuikyo's responsibilities?

Chuikyo, a panel of experts appointed by the health minister, is responsible for recommending a detailed price list of procedures and prescriptions that can be charged by hospitals and pharmacies. The health ministry then adopts the fee changes as recommended.

The panel is not responsible for deciding how much the nation spends on



A nurse tends to a patient at a Tokyo hospital in September 2014. Japan spends more than ¥40 trillion a year on health care, the details of which are decided every two years by a panel of experts. | BLOOMBERG

health care in total. That is determined by the government. But Chuikyo tweaks the fee table to make sure the total cost is kept in check.

For fiscal 2016, the government decided in December to increase total fees by 1.03 percent from 2015. Of the ¥40 trillion Japan spends on health care per year, roughly 70 percent is for medical care, 20 percent for prescription drugs and 10 percent for dentistry.

The fees are revised every two years, and Chuikyo members hold intense discussions over several months to accommodate the varying interests of the parties concerned, particularly doctors' associations and insurance societies.

Who serves on the panel?

Under the Social Insurance Medical Council Law, the health minister must appoint 20 members, including seven from the "payer" side. They include officials from health insurance societies, a representative from business lobby Keidanren and the head of a municipal government.

The law also says seven members must come from the "supplier" side. Currently, members include three executives of the 167,000-member doctor group Japan Medical Association and another from the 100,000-member pharmacist group Japan Pharmaceutical

Association. JMA has long had strong links with the Liberal Democratic Party, donating funds and supporting LDP candidates in elections.

The other six people on the 20-member panel are "members representing public interest" and are usually scholars specializing in public administration. The current panel chairman, Kuniaki Tanabe, a Chuikyo member since April 2014, is a public policy expert at the University of Tokyo.

While faces have changed over the years, the predominance of industry group representation at Chuikyo and its role as a price regulator has changed little since its launch in 1950.

How do the panel's discussions take shape?

In most sessions, health ministry officials put draft proposals for fee changes on the table.

Members then exchange their views and seek to find a middle ground. The suppliers tend to call for more spending and more insurance coverage for patients, though their positions tend to be self-serving. The payers, especially health insurance societies, generally argue for fee cuts amid frustration with having to increase members' insurance premiums in recent years as the population ages and medical costs soar.

The insurance societies mostly comprise workers representing individual companies or industry groups, and are particularly keen to curb the mushrooming costs to care for retirees. They tend to argue against what they see as excessive and wasteful spending by the government.

What issues were discussed this time?

Among the revisions included in a dictionary-thick list are the introduction of a mandatory ¥5,000 surcharge for people visiting large hospitals for the first time without referrals from their local doctor.

The surcharge, exempt for emergency visits, is meant to steer people away from rushing to large hospitals for simple complaints such as a cold. Another is limits on the number

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Competing interests

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of medical heating and cooling pads orthopedic specialists can prescribe to 70 sheets per visit.

One of the most contentious revisions was a proposal to help younger people quit smoking.

The health ministry presented the idea of extending treatment to people aged under 35 as among measures to prevent cancer, saying that in the long run expanded insurance coverage would help reduce the cancer rate and save the nation nearly ¥13 billion in medical costs a year.

JMA members endorsed the plan, suggesting that underage smokers should also be included.

But Shuji Shirakawa, deputy chairman of the National Federation of Health Insurance Societies, better known as Kenporen, balked at the idea. Kenporen is the federation of 1,400 workers' health insurance societies with 30 million members, a quarter of the entire population of Japan. Shirakawa

maintained at a session in October that people smoked at their own risk, so insurance coverage should be limited.

"It is the policy of our country to insure sick people" and not to prevent people from getting sick, he said. "We don't allow doctors to claim fees for helping people quit drinking, but allow them to do so for treating people suffering from alcohol addiction."

Other members also argued that instead of subsidizing nicotine addiction treatment, the government should focus on educating the young on the health risks of smoking. Others pointed to the low success rate of the smoking cessation treatment, with only about a third of the 3,471 people who underwent it in 2009 completing the five sessions.

In the end, however, JMA's argument won over the panel, and the treatment for younger smokers was included in the fee revisions.

Will the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement affect the panel's ability to set prices in the future?

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has repeatedly denied that the nation's universal health care system will be threatened in any way by the free trade deal.

"The annex (of the agreement) calls for transparency in the procedures to decide drug prices, but it falls within the current framework in Japan," Abe told the Lower House Budget Committee on Feb. 15. But not everyone is convinced.

Norihiro Kimura, an associate professor of health care policy at Takasaki University of Health and Welfare in Gunma Prefecture, said U.S. pharmaceutical companies may still be able to sue Japan in connection with the TPP.

"I think it's possible that in the future the pharmaceutical companies will invoke the ISD (investor-state dispute settlement system) of the agreement to make Japan raise drug prices," Kimura said.

Source: Japan Times, February 29, 2016

Nestle rolls out mobile health awareness program

In celebration of its 150th anniversary, Nestle rolled out the New Life Better Life program in Taiwan in April 2016, a press release from the company stated.

The program utilizes mobile devices and software to assist health-conscious users track activity and diet information. The company feels that the program will effectively take advantage of the growing use of mobile electronics and growing consciousness of physical health among the public.

The program combines one-on-one nutrition consultancy, custom diet planning and integrates with the new Epson Pulsense PS-500 heart rate monitor with activity tracking. The company is partnering with World Gym on the project and hopes to use the program to promote its Nestle Health Supplement, the promotion on which

they are working with entertainer Richie Jen, the company stated.

The program was well-received at its launch in Singapore, where the company is promoting it as a professional, inclusive health plan incorporating diet, exercise and other activity components. It's estimated that up to 78 percent of users so far have either achieved or exceeded set targets and would recommend the program to friends, according to the company.

From now until May 25, users can log on and register at the "New Life Better Life program" website (<https://www.jiajien2016.com.tw>) for discount of 50 percent off regular program costs: a comprehensive package valued at more than NT\$25,000 for only NT\$12,000 payable over three monthly installments, averaging NT\$4000 per month. The program starts from June



This photo shows an advert used to advertise a new lifestyle program developed by Nestle that combines health supplements, dietary consultation, courses at a popular gym and more. (Photo courtesy of Nestle)

6 and runs to Aug. 28 with special exclusive memberships available to only 100 users. Log on and register today to seize the opportunity to join this exciting 10-year healthy living program, the company stated.

Source: China Post, April 15, 2016

PH healthcare industry set for growth

By Jocot De Dios

PHILIPPINE healthcare has seen increased activity and opportunities in the last few years.

While healthcare demand is still driven by traditional factors such as aging populations and consequences of modern urban lifestyles that lead to increased incidences of disease, there are other factors that are stimulating exciting growth and innovations.

Mandate for coverage

The business process outsourcing (BPO) sector, estimated to have generated about \$21 billion in revenues last year (from about \$19 billion in 2014), has contributed greatly in improving the spending power of an expanding middle class, as did the almost \$23 billion remitted by overseas Filipino workers in the first eleven months of 2015 (compared to \$27 billion remitted in 2014).

With the Philippine Health Insurance Corp.'s (Philhealth) mandate to cover 100 percent of the population, demand for quality, affordable and accessible healthcare is on the rise. Among other opportunities, this allows the private healthcare sector to collaborate with public counterparts in providing improved services to Filipinos.

According to World Health Organization (WHO) data, healthcare spending as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2012 was highest in Vietnam (6.6 percent) compared to Cambodia (5.4 percent), Singapore (4.7 percent) and the Philippines (4.6 percent). There is still a long way to go for Southeast Asia as a region given that it had the lowest average at 3.9 percent compared to the rest of the world, with North America leading at 17.2 percent, the European Union at 10.2 percent, and Latin America and the Caribbean at 7.7

percent.

Still, as a nation, we are already on the road to improvement. Per capita healthcare spending for the Philippines has actually grown from \$78.1 in 2009 to \$118.8 in 2012—a growth of more than 50 percent. Should this trajectory continue in tandem with economic growth, healthcare services will eventually reach a greater portion of the population than what is currently being served today.

The digital age

Digitization and improvements in ICT (information and communication technology) are disrupting not only traditional businesses, but even those not immediately thought of as potential beneficiaries—such as the healthcare sector.

From electronic patient records to the wireless transmittal of patient files for remote diagnosis, improvements in technology and communication will lead to a more efficient and cost effective delivery of healthcare services. Telemedicine, or the use of electronic communications to transmit and exchange medical information and data to treat patients, is fast gaining momentum in the region.

With the increasing penetration of smartphones, wireless tools and other similar technology, primary care and specialist referral services, as well as remote patient monitoring and patient medical health information are just some of the services that can be performed and enhanced by telemedicine.

Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia have started adopting healthcare IT solutions to bring the sector to the next level. In 2009, Singapore developed its National Electronic Health Record initiative, which would allow healthcare practitioners in the island



state access to a patient's records across the healthcare spectrum.

Malaysia started its Hospital Implementation System way back in 1993 with the first telemedicine project in 1996, while Thailand started with the creation of its National Health Information Committee in 2010.

The Philippines has already developed an eHealth Strategic Framework and Plan for the period 2014 to 2020, which aimed to utilize information and communication technologies in the health sector. This will support the delivery of health services and manage health systems for greater efficiency and effectivity, and is in line with providing universal healthcare to all Filipinos.

One of the strategic goals of this framework is to establish unified and coherent health and management information systems, and also to capitalize on ICT to reach and provide better health services and support the attainment of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

To be sure, there have been initiatives along this space to push an eHealth strategy. For example, the Department of Health (DOH) in Region 4B (Mimaropa) has launched what seems to be the first interactive telemedicine system in the country at the Dr. Damian J. Reyes Provincial Hospital in Marinduque. The system currently provides medical

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PH healthcare

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consultations and diagnostics through video calls.

In an archipelago such as the Philippines, the opportunities for telemedicine are endless. Even the delivery of simple medicines across inaccessible areas is now being piloted through the use of drones.

One only has to note the latest in medical technology to appreciate the direction that healthcare providers should be looking at, as practitioners and patients alike continue to look for ways to improve healthcare services, diagnosis and treatment.

The recent Consumer Electronics show in Las Vegas introduced new applications that provide convenient virtual check-up and diagnosis, which include smartphone apps. Handheld devices are now being introduced that allow consumers to measure temperature, heart rate, and oxygen levels. These are even equipped with cameras that allow examination of the throat and inner ear in order to allow doctors to perform online examinations. There are also new devices being introduced to the market such as wrist-worn blood pressure sensors that deliver information to a smartphone.

GE's thrust to become a leading digital-industrial company has led to similar innovations in handheld ultrasound equipment, which is currently being deployed in Africa and Southeast Asia. Equipped with Bluetooth capability, Vscan Access, a portable handheld ultrasound device allows medical professionals to



increasingly reach remote areas in the country, scanning pregnant women and wirelessly transmitting images of fetuses to doctors even in faraway hospitals, to help determine whether mothers need to proceed to a health center or hospital for appropriate care.

Asean integration

With the start of the Asean Economic Community in 2015, we cannot dismiss the effects—as well as opportunities—presented by the expected free flow of goods, services, capital and skilled labor in the regional healthcare sector.

Given the different levels of healthcare services in Asean, increased cross-border investments and even potential consolidation are to be expected.

The Philippine healthcare sector has been attracting the attention of players within Southeast Asia and even the Middle East given the size of our population and the relative underinvestment in the sector.

The largest private healthcare provider in the country, Metro Pacific, counts eleven hospitals in the group with a total of about 3,000 beds across the Philippine islands. A relatively new entrant into the healthcare space is the Qualimed Health Network, owned and operated by the Mercado Hospital Group in partnership with Ayala Land. Qualimed currently has seven operational facilities with four more (two hospitals and two clinics) scheduled to open this year.

One competitive advantage the country has in this field is its skilled medical practitioners. The Philippines had over 110,000 medical course graduates in 2014.

Filipino medical professionals are renowned across the world for their skills and brand of care. Particular restrictions in the exercise of professions and the granting of work permits in some Asean countries can enhance the value of our medical professionals not only in the Philippines



but also in countries where the practice of their trade is relatively easier.

This could also raise the confidence of medical tourists as they contemplate destinations in the region that offer value yet quality medical care.

The future of healthcare

The Philippine healthcare industry is particularly poised for exciting growth. Increased government spending and contributions from sin taxes are being channeled to improve on the delivery of and access to public healthcare. In the private sector, business expansion and opportunities currently unfolding have caused major local and regional business groups to look more closely and expand their investment plans in the sector.

The Filipino's physical well-being and health are critical to ensure inclusive and sustained economic growth. Healthcare that is accessible and affordable for all is an aspiration that can be attained if we all take advantage of the opportunities before us.

Jocot de Dios is a former Undersecretary of the Department of Energy. He has joined the private sector in various leadership capacities, expanding his expertise in power and energy specifically in the sector of gas and petroleum, being a former managing director of Nido Petroleum Ltd. in Australia and chair of the PNOC-Exploration Corp. At present, he is the CEO of GE Philippines.

Source: *INQUIRER.net*, May 9, 2016 ■

Indonesian Hospitals Seek to Benefit From Digital Health-Care System

By Edo Karensa

Several hospitals and medical facilities in Indonesia are keen to benefit from a digital health-care system as it is more effective and efficient, despite a long waiting period for full implementation, leading health professionals said.

With the rapid development of information technology, the health-care industry has seen an opportunity for a new business model involving digital assistance, because the use of information and communication technologies help health-care professionals and patients better manage illnesses and health risks.

Siloam International Hospitals president director Romeo Lledo said there are still many challenges for the Indonesian health-care system to keep up with rapid developments in the digital era.

Many hospitals still remain focused on the medical standardization process, he said.

Romeo said it was important and necessary to reach a high standard of medical treatment first, before

implementing the enormous recent advances in health-care systems.

“We need to standardize everything before taking the more serious step of migrating manual data used in the medical system to a digital format,” Romeo told the Jakarta Globe at the sidelines of the 2016 Healthcare Asia Forum in Jakarta on Thursday (April 28, 2016).

Taking a small step to the more advanced use of information technology, the Siloam Hospitals group is currently working to compile a more integrated patient database, which can be accessed from anywhere.

This will enable doctors to access patients’ medical history stored by the Siloam Hospitals group from any of the group’s hospitals in the country.

By the end of 2015, the Siloam Hospitals group was operating 20 hospitals, with a combined capacity of 4,800 beds supported by 2,100 doctors and 8,200 nurses, in 14 cities across Indonesia.

The company aims to have 10,000 beds in 50 hospitals in 25 cities,



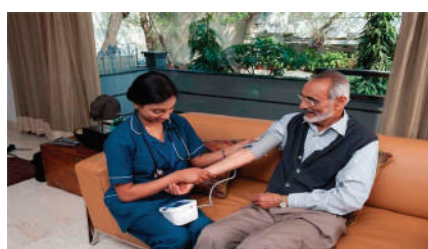
Through the more advanced use of information technology, the Siloam Hospitals group is currently working to compile a more integrated patient database, which can be accessed from anywhere. (Photo courtesy of Siloam International Hospitals)

treating 15 million patients, by 2017.

DNA Diagnostic Center clinic manager Yuri Obon said the government should regulate how digitization will help the health-care industry, although the progress of digital adaptation was currently running at a very slow pace.

“As a whole, the government has not regulated it, so those who start to shift into the more advanced use of a digital health-care system will inefficiently run two systems at the same time: a manual and a digital one,” Yuri explained.

Source: Jakarta Globe, April 28, 2016 ■



Domestic medical devices market estimated to grow 15% by 2020: Report

According to the report, the global medical devices and technology market is expected to grow to \$520 billion (nearly Rs 34.62 lakh crore) by 2020.

Domestic medical devices market is estimated to grow organically at 15% to \$8.6 billion (nearly Rs 57,263.1 crore) by 2020 and industry estimates indicate a much larger potential to grow to \$50 billion (nearly Rs 3.33 lakh crore) by 2025, says a report.

“The domestic medical devices industry is small, with a disproportionate reliance on imports

and a complex regulatory environment. The market is estimated to grow organically at 15% to \$8.6 billion (nearly Rs 57,263.1 crore) by 2020, significantly higher than global industry growth of 4-6 %,” a report by Deloitte and NATHHealth said.

The global medical devices and technology market is expected to grow to \$520 billion (nearly Rs 34.62 lakh

crore) by 2020 from an estimated \$3.7 billion (nearly Rs 24,636.45 crore) in 2014.

Medical devices play a role not only in screening, diagnosing and treating patients but also in restoring patients to normal lives and in regularly monitoring health indicators to prevent diseases.

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Domestic medical

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With technological advancements, the role of medical devices is now expanding to improve the quality of care at each stage of the healthcare continuum.

The industry is largely dependent on imports with most local manufacturers producing products in the lower end of the technology value chain, the report said.

The country's healthcare industry is on a high growth trajectory having evolved significantly in the last decade.

From the current levels, the

industry is expected to reach \$45 billion (nearly Rs 2.99 lakh crore) by 2018 and over \$280 billion (nearly Rs 18.64 lakh crore) by 2025. In this scenario, augmenting healthcare infrastructure due to increased demand and improved access is expected to provide the requisite industry growth.

The current per capita spend on medical devices in India is significantly low at \$3 (nearly Rs 199.5), compared to other economies such as \$7 (nearly Rs 465.5) in China, \$21 (nearly Rs 1,396.5) in Brazil and \$42 (nearly Rs 2,793) in Russia.

The Government of India's 'Make in India' initiative presents a platform

for the sector to revisit the operating model, identify key imperatives for growth and explore possibilities for creating a step change in the medical devices sector, the report said.

The Central government has in recent years, implemented several policy measures to address the challenges of medical devices industry. Some of these include Draft Drugs and Cosmetics Amendments Bill (2015), 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in medical devices under automatic route and 'Make in India' initiative for promoting indigenous manufacturing.

Source: DNA India, March 20, 2016 ■

The Big-Data Future Has Arrived

It is now possible to measure everything, from the movement of billions of stars to each heartbeat.

By Michael S. Malone

Big data, the tech story of a few years ago, is now beginning to show big results. The science of using powerful computers, ubiquitous sensors and the Web to crunch mountains of raw data to uncover previously invisible insights is increasingly used in businesses, universities and government agencies. It is transforming our understanding of everything from fetal development to cosmology.

Already, thanks to big data, we have learned that toddlers learn language not from repetition—which we've thought for centuries—but by hearing words used in multiple contexts. We've also found that premature babies are at greatest risk when their heartbeats are stable (healthy baby hearts are more erratic). Researchers are making inroads into understanding the external influences on autism (carbon-dioxide levels, room temperature) and how urban crime can largely be isolated to just a few blocks, even individual buildings. These and other big-data breakthroughs can be seen Wednesday night in the

PBS documentary "The Human Face of Big Data," based on a 2012 book of the same name, to which I contributed an essay.

We can now identify impending bouts of depression, even suicidal tendencies, by looking at the changing lifestyle (social media usage, diminishing movement) of potential victims.

And, using Google search data, epidemiologists can spot an emerging epidemic before doctors do.

One of the most extraordinary features of big data is that it signals the end of the reign of statistics. For 400 years, we've been forced to sample complex systems and extrapolate. Now, with big data, it is possible to measure everything, from the movement of billions of stars to every beat of the human heart.

Big data is also making its way,



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/IKON IMAGES

almost silently, into everyday life. In Israel, 80% of the citizenry contribute traffic data to help each other commute via the WAZE app on smartphones, increasingly the platform of choice for big data. California is looking at using the accelerometers in smartphones, which detect sudden motion, to create an early-warning system for earthquakes that will be much faster than government-installed devices.

Farmers in the Midwest will soon

Continued on page 14

The Big-data

... Continued from page 13

have measurements taken in their fields nearly down to individual plants—and that will combine data on soil, water and weather to come up with trillions of scenarios for insurance coverage. Victims of natural disasters are now being pinpointed and given aid through real-time analysis of tweets, instant messages and phone calls. Even one of the oldest of arts, geography, is being revolutionized with maps that will change by the second.

But it is in the commercial world where big data has seen its greatest inroads to date. A recent survey by consultants NewVantage Partners has found that the number of U.S. firms using big data in the past three years has jumped 58 percentage points to 63% penetration—while 70% of firms now say that big data is of critical importance to their firms, an astounding jump from 21% in 2012. That's one of the fastest tech-adoption rates ever. Meanwhile, the title of chief data officer—the C-Suite manager of big data—a title that until recently didn't even exist, is now found in 54% of companies surveyed.

The commercial impact of this revolution can be found everywhere from products and services that can predict the unique needs of individual customers, to improved credit precision, to stores that adapt (through special discounts and deals that pop up on your smartphone) to each customer

who walks through the door.

To date, much of this activity has remained hidden from sight. But soon it will burst forth much more publicly—and the experiences of daily life will be profoundly transformed into a new set of personalized, predictive and empowered experiences we can barely imagine today.

Perhaps nowhere will this change be greater than with our own bodies. With new generations of external and internal monitoring devices continuously gathering unimaginable quantities of health and medical data on billions of people, we will soon learn more about the human body in a year than we once did in a century. China is already working to do this on hundreds of millions of its chronically ill citizens. This knowledge will help transform everything from epidemiology to genetic research to individualized medicine and treatment programs.

Most of all, big data is about to ask some cultural questions for which we have no ready answers, much less consensus. For example, who owns our personal data? Today that answer is not clear—and it may take legal precedent, perhaps even the adoption of a Bill of Data Rights, to resolve that question.

These are major challenges, but they will be overcome because the fruits of big data are too valuable. None, it is now clear, is more valuable than what is called “metadata”—



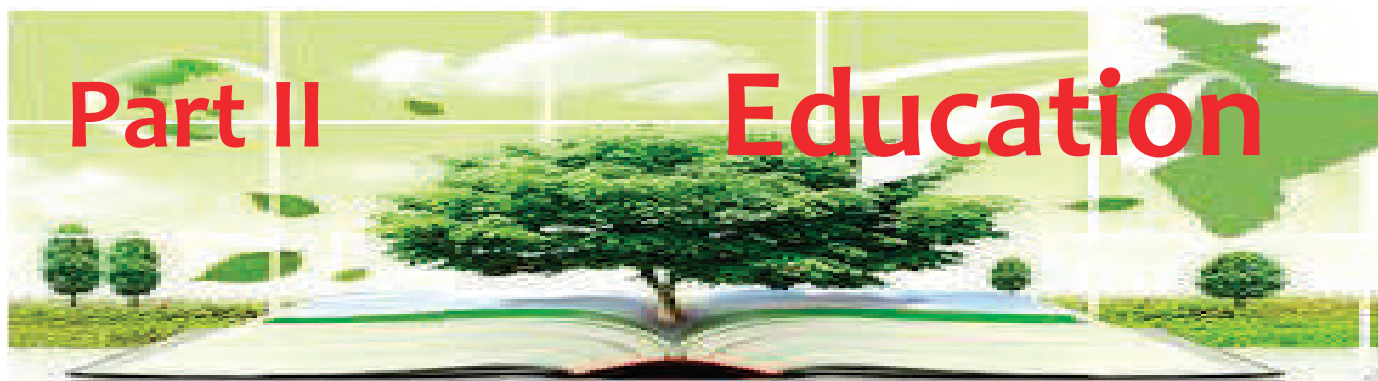
data that derives from, and provides information about, other data. One of the biggest lessons of technology revolutions is that they begin by solving a need you already have—say, tracking how a particular virus spreads in a population—and end by solving needs you never imagined. And that may be the real destiny of big data.

When you can study billions, even trillions, of data points you begin to uncover forces and trends that until now have always been invisible to human observers. What if that impacted wisdom tooth you had at age 10 shortens your life 70 years later? Or if that one fugitive, missed heartbeat last week is a harbinger of cardiac trouble to come next month?

It is the discovery of this metadata that may prove to be big data's real destiny: to teach us to see both ourselves and the natural world around us in ways we never could before.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*,
February 22, 2016





Taiwan Government launches 5-year plan for indigenous education

By Christine Chou

A new program aimed at enhancing the education of aboriginal students was introduced on January 4, 2016 by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP).

Aboriginal experimental schools and courses will be the main feature of the program, which includes a total of 148 measures to be gradually implemented from 2016 to 2020, ministry officials said.

According to the ministry, this will be the fifth program under the same name since 1993. The latest initiative was conceived after holding cross-government negotiations with the CIP, as well as collecting suggestions from panels held in local areas.

In the past, the programs have helped to shed light on laws

concerning indigenous education and the educational rights of aboriginal students.

More than 80 percent of former dropouts have returned to school and approximately 17,649 students have enrolled in higher education between 2011 and 2015, officials stated.

Over the next five years, the ministry has vowed to commit to measures including supporting aboriginal youth by providing after-school courses and other external learning assistance throughout 12-year compulsory education, establishing 10 indigenous experimental schools with the help of the CIP and opening regional aboriginal student resource centers at universities.

Also, the ministry is encouraging institutions that train educators to incorporate “indigenous language and culture courses” into their curriculum and has also urged current faculty to attend relevant classes.

Other stated goals include allocating subsidies to 45 high schools or vocational schools to improve their



quality of aboriginal education as well as adding another 6,500 spots at universities for aboriginal students.

Each year, 50 percent of universities with more than 100 aboriginal students would receive subsidies to hire professional counselors.

The MOE stressed it would annually assess program results and work toward combining the wisdom of aboriginal cultures and regular curriculum, to cultivate social competitiveness and cultural identity in the next generation of aboriginal people.

Source: China Post, January 5, 2016 ■



Media firm seeks to make prep schooling affordable, higher education reachable, via online lectures

By Tomoko Otake

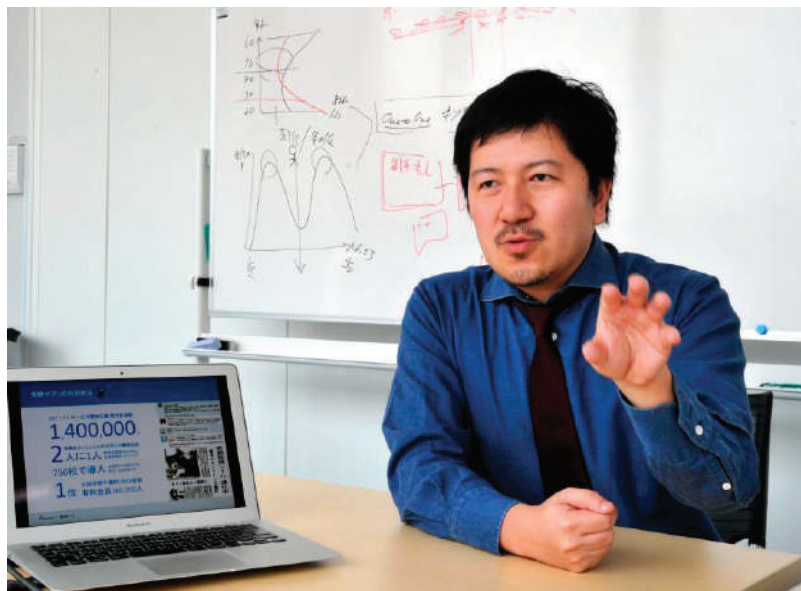
Major media company Recruit Marketing Partners is waging a price war in a field of business that has thrived despite a dwindling pool of clients: preparing for entrance exams.

Many families in Japan spend a fortune sending their children to cram school classes at night and on weekends, in addition to regular daytime schooling. With more than half of high school graduates advancing to college, compared with less than a third 20 years ago, pressure to get into better schools remains fierce despite the declining number of students in the country.

According to a 2013 survey by Japan Finance Corp., a government-run financial institution, among the 4,942 households that took out an education loan from the institution between February and March that year, families with two children spent 40.1 percent of their income on education, including both school tuition and fees and their cram school costs, up from 38.4 percent the year before.

A report released last month by Yano Research Institute meanwhile estimated the market size for the nation's cram and prep schools at ¥942 billion for fiscal 2015, up from ¥924 billion logged four years ago.

The upshot is that, in effect, the



Fumihiro Yamaguchi, president of Recruit Marketing Partners Co., is interviewed in Tokyo on Oct. 20, 2015. | YOSHIKI MIURA

kind of education available to a child is increasingly determined by how much their family is willing and able to spend, or more bluntly, the wealth of the family into which they are born.

Fumihiro Yamaguchi, president of Recruit Marketing Partners, aims to change that with a website that he argues offers the same quality of education as existing cram school operators — for a monthly fee of ¥980.

The 37-year-old president of the subsidiary of the Recruit staffing and media conglomerate introduced the online courses for high school students, titled “Juken Sapuri,” (Supplements for Entrance Exams), in 2012.

He said the idea for the service

came when he interviewed scores of high school students and their parents as part of market research for Recruit, which publishes directories of schools and companies.

“I realized that students’ chances of getting accepted by good schools are pretty much determined by how much their parents earn and where they live,” Yamaguchi said in a recent interview.

“Of the 550,000 senior-year high school students who take the standardized entrance exam for universities every year, only a third of them go to cram schools or prep schools. I heard students say they cannot afford to go to prep schools, whose fees are spiraling out of control, or that they don’t have good prep schools in the countryside. A good proportion of those students are resigned and cynical, feeling that it’s unfair and that they have no future. As I listened to them, I felt I should really do something about it.”

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Media firm

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The biggest strength of Juken Sapuri, which now has 160,000 paying members across the country, is a full range of pre-recorded video lectures on all school subjects by top-notch teachers from prep schools. Yamaguchi has succeeded in persuading such top professionals to quit their posts at prep schools and join Juken Sapuri as independent contractors. The teachers lecture alone in front of video cameras as if they were lecturing to a room full of students, with the same fervor and passion.

Many of these teachers are known for their charisma and unique teaching techniques. Yamaguchi said the teachers who joined his service share the concerns he feels about the growing disparity in educational opportunities for children.

“Many teachers told me that, as they get popular and famous, the prep schools assign them to teach the most prestigious courses, such as ones to prepare for entrance exams for medical schools or for the University of Tokyo,” Yamaguchi said. “Such courses are attended nowadays only by students from the richest families. They shared my idea that everyone should have access to the high-quality teaching of prep school teachers, if only virtually.”

The teachers welcome the feedback they get from students in the form of access logs, Yamaguchi said, noting that, based on such data, they



sometimes re-shoot the videos to make lessons better.

For example, if the viewer rate declines after the first three minutes of a lecture, or the users pause at a particular point in the lecture, it could be a sign that the students are getting bored or having a hard time understanding.

Users can choose from a plethora of sections in every subject, be it differential calculus or Roman history. Tutorials are followed by quizzes to test understanding of the material.

Yamaguchi has also marketed the service to teachers at schools, both public and private. Some 700 out of the nation's 5,000 schools now use the site in and outside their classes. The firm provides online tools that help teachers monitor each student's progress for free.

Yamaguchi acknowledged that the service is now in the red, but said it will break even if the number of paying members reaches 300,000 or 400,000 — a revenue level comparable to those of existing prep school operators. A



typical prep school logs annual sales of ¥30 billion with a student enrollment of 100,000, he added.

Having also launched a similar site targeting children in fourth to ninth grades, called “Benkyo Sapuri” (Study Supplement), in April, Yamaguchi said his goal is for the websites to become part of the basic infrastructure for school education in Japan.

What's more, Yamaguchi wants to apply the same “level playing field” idea globally. In April, Recruit Marketing Partners acquired London-based education firm Quipper, which has offered online education courses in developing countries, either for free or for prices affordable to local children. Quipper, for which Yamaguchi serves as chairman, has 3.2 million members, both students and teachers, in nine countries, including the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Russia.

“Developing countries have educational disparities far greater than Japan,” he said. “We would like to expand our reach in K-12 (kindergarten through 12th grade) education, both in Japan and around the world.”

Source: Japan Times, December 2, 2015



Rural teachers offer creative strategies to boost the learning of their students

By Christine Chou

Administrators and teachers from schools in remote areas shared their experiences in incorporating innovative teaching models into classrooms, in an event held by the Ministry of Education (MOE) at the Chang Yung-Fa Foundation in Taipei City, Taiwan on January 24, 2016.

Ministry officials said they hoped the symposium would prompt more rural schools to adopt successful methods and spark inspiration for more innovative curriculum designs around the nation.

Sharing sessions took place in the afternoon, where four speakers took turns discussing their respective experiences, such as in experimental and mixed-age education, special fieldtrips, summer camps, creative teaching methods for English and mathematics, and after-hours coursework assistance, among others.

Education Minister Wu Se-hwa said the ministry had dubbed 2015 the “Year of Innovative Action in Education,” and actively explored different ways to guide the development of rural institutions, which often lack resources when compared to schools urban areas.

The Innovative Development Plan for Rural Education was introduced in April 28, 2015. The plan included 29 sub-programs aimed at enhancing the learning of students, said Wu.

A total of 240 elementary and junior high schools participated in the program.

Lin Yi-song, principal of Youmu Elementary School in New Taipei City’s Sanxia District, shared her school’s experience in designing fieldtrips with themes, such as outdoor exploration, Indigo Dye Art and Hakka Culture, or the ecology of fireflies —



Students at Chung Cheng Elementary School in Lienchiang County play a math game together during a camp activity. School administrators demonstrated the success of the engaging game at the Ministry of Education’s event, Sunday, January 24, 2016. (Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Education)

often spotted in mountainous areas in the region.

Also, Lin shared how the school cooperated with nearby farms and coffee shops, connecting the students and the community their school is a part of.

Principal at Lienchiang County’s Chung Cheng Elementary and Junior High School, Chen Yu-jiao, explained in detail its math program, which requires teachers to undertake special training and coordinate camps for students.

“Math class has to shake students up, make them feel emotions,” stressed Chen.

The MOE stated a main area of focus in the near future would be

helping understaffed schools in rural areas recruit teachers.

From 2016 onward, elementary schools would have to appoint a “reasonable” number of teachers, estimated from students’ total learning hours, stressed the minister.

Education in rural areas could only be “flipped,” if society takes more interest in the economic situation of rural areas, bringing in more resources, said Wu.

Wu expressed his hopes that more people from different sectors would devote attention to creating an equal education environment, where all can flourish.

Source: China Post, January 25, 2016 ■

HK seeks to catch up to future markets through coding curricula

By Wang Yuke, China Daily/Asia News Network

As Hong Kong presses the accelerator on long-neglected IT development, experts say the city still lags behind other locales, right from primary school up.

While schools in other cities move quickly to introduce mandatory computer coding to school curricula, even at the primary school level, IT training in Hong Kong is nascent.

The government has embarked on its Enriched IT Class Program in eight selected secondary schools selected from more than 1,400 primary and secondary institutions, with the program expected to run between the 2015/16 and 2022/23 school years.

By contrast, the UK mandated coding classes for all children between five and 16 in 2014. Children in the Canadian province of British Columbia will be required to learn coding, beginning this September. Finland, Italy and Singapore are making similar moves to update school curricula.

Despite the dilatory start, Ray Cheung Chak-chung, associate professor in the Department of Electronic Engineering at the City University of Hong Kong, is confident Hong Kong can catch up. He emphasizes that the critical thinking skills learned from coding are important in today's work environment, and will become critical in job markets of tomorrow.

This year, all local Hong Kong secondary schools are being invited to apply to participate in the Enriched IT Activities Program, running from March to December.

Coding sharpens minds

The value of teaching children to code, said Daryl Ng Win-kong, an executive director of Sino Group, is that it gives children a solid foundation in problem solving. The acquisition of critical thinking skills is a marked diversion from Hong Kong's examination obsessed educational system, Ng said, adding that coding is also a spur to creativity, as each new application has its own distinctive character and mechanism.

So far, more than 300 primary school pupils have completed the preliminary program called "Go Code" that began in 2014. The program was initiated by the Sino Group, working in conjunction with social service groups. Ng remarked that every application written by young coders is unique, helping students to embellish their creative faculties. "Apart from English and Chinese, coding is a universal language," said Ng.

Silicon Valley is braced for a potential bursting of the tech-bubble, meaning lost jobs. Opportunities in high-tech elsewhere have flatlined, but the value of learning computer coding

is not limited to students aiming for careers in the field. The importance of the training lies in the challenge for kids to "reckon things out."

Hong Kong still faces a shortage of IT workers. The demand for technicians is already outstripping the number of qualified graduates.

Globally, half of all professional positions and white collar jobs demand at least some IT skills. The percentage is expected to climb up to 77 percent by 2020, predicted Joelle Woo, director of Business Development & Developer Experience at Microsoft Hong Kong Limited. The Vocational Training Council (VTC) offers its own projections that demand for new professional talent in IT jobs will surpass 4,800 annually by 2020.

Another important facet of the Go Code program is that it targets especially underprivileged kids. All 300 of the graduates so far come from underprivileged families. Ng noted that families hard-pressed to pay for monthly necessities can't afford after-school classes for their children. So if those kids get left behind, they could also be left out socially. On the other hand, if they learn coding, they may have a better chance of breaking out of the poverty cycle.

For their graduation project, students were challenged with creating an alarm application. Every application handed in was unique, underscoring the importance of original thought.

Chiu Ka-wing, 12, was proud of her first creation, the "shake alarm app." When the alarm goes off, instead of turning it off or hitting the snooze button, one has to shake the tablet fiercely with two hands to make it stop. After the furious movement, one is too alert to get back to sleep.

Chiu compared coding to dragging building blocks and arranging them

Continued on page 20



HK seeks

... Continued from page 19

in a precise order. An omission or an addition of a single character or a reverse order of two code sequences means failure.

‘Use coding skills to work with greater efficiency and quality’

“Children’s exposure to coding does not mean they all have to develop it as a line of work when they grow up. They can still become doctors, business executives, musicians or whatever they want to be. But everyone can use coding skills to work with greater efficiency and quality, whatever they may choose to do,” said Ray Cheung, director of the Apps Lab at City University (CityU) of Hong Kong, a project that aims to encourage students to develop mobile software from a university-based platform.

Cheung believes the teenage years are golden time for learning coding. But even children between five and 10 can make big strides because they can absorb new concepts easily.

The Apps Lab has kicked off its Ambassador School Program, to expose more secondary and primary students to coding and IT education. Lok Sin Tong Yu Kan Hing Secondary School is among the 24 participating schools. The school introduced a mandatory coding course into its Technology Curriculum in 2014. Form One students learn Scratch, a rudimentary programming language that teaches students to write commands to manipulate a robot to perform simple movements. Students really into coding can join the supplementary Elite Coding Class after regular school hours.

Fung Ling-chung is very interested in coding. He hopes to invent a robot that can pass through an extremely narrow gap, where humans can’t go. The robot could be directed to help in search-and-rescue after a disaster.

“The greatest benefit of learning to code is to help students develop logical and critical thinking as well as creativity,” said Lee Chi-yip, one of the coding teachers at Fung’s school.



Cry for Coding Teachers

One of the big concerns in schools is the lack of teachers with knowledge of coding. Lee started as a teaching assistant. Because Lee has some expertise with computers, he was asked to teach classes in coding.

The school joins the Ambassador School Program partially on the basis that engineering students from CityU will help with the teaching. The plan is for secondary students to pass on what they have learnt to students at the Baptist Rainbow Primary School. Educators think peer-to-peer mentoring could be a solution to the teacher shortage.

Cheung Chak-chung, who supervises the Ambassador Program, said the shortage of programming teachers arises from the fact that programming has been neglected in Hong Kong schools until recently. Only a handful of primary and secondary schools make computer classes compulsory.

On the positive side, Cheung noted that universities are cultivating more teaching-oriented IT graduates. The Hong Kong Institute of Education has established a coding center that encourages IT students to get into teaching after they graduate.

Tipping the Balance to Women

More women are joining Hong Kong’s IT scene but men still predominate. A 2013 Economist Intelligence Unit survey of 57 companies in Hong Kong showed that 88 percent of IT directors are male, and women comprise less than 10 percent of IT staff at more than half of the companies.

The VTC estimates that if few



women pursue IT careers while the demand for IT professionals grows exponentially, only one third of available IT positions in Hong Kong will be filled by 2020.

Choo Chin-sean, a computer science student at CityU, said female students account for only 10 percent of the enrollment. But he believes women are equally as capable as men in IT. “It is a stereotype that computer engineering is the preserve of men, and that holds back girls from entering the field,” Choo said.

Microsoft Hong Kong, in cooperation with Ivey Business School and The Women’s Foundation, ran a four-day program in January called GirlSpark Camp, hoping to inspire female university students to pursue IT related occupations.

Lau Chun-hom, the principal of the Lok Sin Tong Yu Kan Hing Secondary School, adds that girls show as much interest and curiosity about coding as boys. “In some ways, girls have an edge over boys practicing coding. They are more meticulous and aware of detail, which is important in coding. Girls also have more patience for finding errors and solving problems than boys,” he said.

Cheung hopes someday, coding will become mandatory throughout the secondary school curriculum. If coding education were standardized, Cheung believes it would give Hong Kong’s youth a leg up in the international field.

Source: China Post, February 2, 2016 ■

Palestinian teacher wins US\$1 mil. Global Teacher Prize, plans to create scholarships

A Palestinian primary school teacher who grew up in a refugee camp and educates her students about non-violence won a US\$1 million prize for teaching excellence on March 13, 2016, beating out 8,000 other applicants from around the world.

Hanan al-Hroub, a primary school teacher in the West Bank city of al-Bireh just outside Ramallah, was awarded the second annual Global Teacher Prize during a ceremony in the city of Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum was on-hand to present the prize to al-Hroub, however her name was announced by Pope Francis in a video message after he talked about the importance of education and teachers, especially for children who grow up amid war.

"I feel amazing and I still can't believe that the Pope said my name," al-Hroub told The Associated Press. "For an Arab, Palestinian teacher to talk to the world today and to reach the highest peak in teaching could be an example for teachers around the world."

She told The Associated Press that she will use the million-U.S.-dollar prize money to create scholarships for students who excel in order to encourage them to choose careers in teaching.

Her win comes at a time of spiking tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. Five months of unpredictable stabbing, shooting and vehicular attacks by ordinary Palestinian civilians have killed 28 Israelis and two Americans. Israeli forces have killed at least 179 Palestinians, the majority said by Israel



Palestinian primary school teacher Hanan al-Hroub reacts after she won the second annual Global Teacher Prize, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, March 13, 2016. (AP)

to have been attackers.

Israeli officials blame Palestinian leaders and social media for inciting the violence, while Palestinian leaders say it is the product of frustration and despair after nearly 50 years of occupation.

As al-Hroub accepted her award, Palestinians in the audience waved their country's flag and some chanted, fists pumping in the air, "With our souls, our blood, we sacrifice for you Palestine."

In her acceptance speech, she reiterated her mantra of "No to violence" and stressed the importance of dialogue.

"The Palestinian teacher can talk

to the world now. Hand in hand we can affect change and provide a safe education to provide peace," she told the AP.

Al-Hroub was among 10 finalists flown to Dubai to attend the ceremony. The nine other finalists hail from Australia, Finland, India, Japan, Kenya, Pakistan, the UK and two from the United States. Al-Hroub had them stand on stage with her to roaring applause after her speech.

The Global Teacher Prize was established two years ago to recognize one exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession, employs innovative classroom practices and encourages others to join the teaching profession.

The award is presented by the Varkey Foundation. Its founder, Sunny Varkey, established the for-profit GEMS Education company, which has more than 130 schools around the world.

Al-Hroub's official biography says she grew up in a Palestinian refugee camp in Bethlehem, where violence was a regular occurrence. Her biography says she went into teaching after her children witnessed a shooting on their way home from school. That experience pushed her to think more about traumatized children and how classrooms can help. She developed a book called "We Play and Learn" focusing on the importance of playing, trust, respect, honesty and literacy.

The inaugural prize last year went to Nancie Atwell, an English teacher from rural Maine.

Source: Associated Press (AP), March 15, 2016

Lifelong learning: Seniors to get boost for health education, other courses

With the new National Seniors' Health Programme, seniors in Singapore will get access to healthy ageing workshops. Additionally, the National Silver Academy will offer more than 10,000 places across 500 courses at a network of education institutions and VWOs this year.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) will step up efforts to promote seniors' health education, as part of the Action Plan for Successful Ageing, Senior Minister of State for Health Dr Amy Khor said in Parliament on Wednesday (Apr 13, 2016).

At the national level, MOH and the Health Promotion Board will this year start a series of public education campaigns on seniors' health issues, such as nutrition, fall prevention and dementia. This aims to raise awareness among seniors on how they can keep healthy, said Dr Khor.

NEW NATIONAL SENIORS' HEALTH PROGRAMME

MOH will also launch the National Seniors' Health Programme, which is a set of "healthy ageing 101" programmes on health issues that are relevant to the elderly, such as nutrition, exercise, mental wellness and chronic disease management, said Dr Khor.

Under the programme, seniors will be encouraged to go through a series of six basic health workshops, Dr Khor said, adding that they can also attend additional workshops, depending on interest.



NATIONAL SILVER ACADEMY WILL OFFER MORE THAN 10,000 PLACES

Dr Khor also detailed the National Silver Academy, which was first announced in August last year. "We hope that the National Silver Academy can not only fulfill seniors' aspirations to keep learning, but also help shape a new mindset regarding ageing," said Dr Khor.

At the Academy - which is not a physical campus, but is made up of a network of education institutions and voluntary welfare organisations (VWO) - seniors can pursue learning in many areas, depending on their interest. This is to help the elderly remain both cognitively and socially active, said Dr Khor.

Seniors will then be able to take selected full qualification courses offered by ITEs, polytechnics and universities - without needing to take exams - all for a "token fee". Seniors will also sit in the same classrooms with the regular students attending the course.

There will also be a subsidy of up to 50 per cent for those who sign up for

short courses offered by post-secondary education institutions and VWOs.

Courses that the academy will offer include those from educational institutions, including the two art colleges LaSalle and NAFA, those from community-based organisations, as well as other ad-hoc learning opportunities, said Dr Khor.

"For instance, seniors can also attend inter-generational learning programmes conducted by students in school after school hours, on topics such as technology and music," she added.

People aged 50 years and above can register for courses for next month, and the academy will offer more than 10,000 places across 500 courses this year, Dr Khor said.

"I think having seniors learn with younger students in the same classroom will foster inter-generational interactions and also at the same time inspire our younger generation that learning does not stop at any age," said Dr Khor.

Source: Channel News Asia, April 13, 2016



Joining 'Matsu frenzy' a fun, educational journey: foreign students

By Elaine Hou



Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Education

Foreign students who are learning Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan found the annual Dajia Matsu pilgrimage to be a special and helpful experience as they joined the ranks of hundreds of thousands of local pilgrims earlier in April 2016.

This kind of rare opportunity to get up close and personal with Taiwanese culture allowed them to learn more about the local religious activity and its importance to the people of the island, they told Central News Agency (CAN) in an interview.

"I was really shocked when I saw many people participate in the pilgrimage," said Hayato Wong, a 30-year-old student from the United States.

"It was a special experience," said Wong, who is learning Mandarin at Feng Chia University in the central city of Taichung. It was not only a cultural experience but also offered an opportunity to improve his Chinese skills, he added.

Wong was among the more than 100 foreign students from 24 countries who participated in an activity dubbed joining the "Matsu frenzy while learning Chinese," which was co-organized by the Ministry of Education and Feng Chia University.

The students first went to Yonghe Palace in the city's Dadu district, where

teachers from the Chinese Language Center of Feng Chia University gave briefings on the architecture of Taiwan's temples, the legend of Matsu, and the Matsu religious ceremony and its cultural implications.

As part of the activity, the students had to learn some simple words or sentences in Chinese and Taiwanese so that they could interact with the other followers in the Matsu procession, which they joined on April 9 and marched in for about four kilometers.

Some of the students also got the opportunity to experience the ritual of "crouching under Matsu's palanquin." Followers believe that they will receive a blessing from the goddess if they do so.

"It was the most impressive experience of the activity," Wong said of his experience of crouching under the palanquin of the popular Taoist goddess, who is said to protect fisherman and sailors.

Also participating in the activity was Wong's fiancée, Ikuyo Sugimoto, who is also learning Chinese at Feng Chia University.

"I was very happy to have joined this activity," Sugimoto said, adding that it helped her learn more about Taiwanese culture.

The briefings helped her understand the relationship between the

goddess and Taiwan, said the 32-year-old.

During the cultural activity, Sugimoto also learned some words in Taiwanese dialect such as "poe," meaning a pair of half-moon-shaped wooden blocks. They are used for divination at temples in Taiwan by throwing them on the floor to see whether they land rounded-side-up or flat-side-up.

Followers will pose questions and then phrase an answer, before throwing a pair of "poe" to receive confirmation or negation of the answer.

An Indian student learning Chinese at Feng Chia University also found it to be a special cultural experience.

Through the activity, he learned a lot about how Taiwanese people worship the goddess, said Sadnam Singh, 32.

To get up close and personal with Taiwanese culture, he also followed local devotees to lie down on the road to let Matsu pass over, a move to get a blessing, he said.

Seeing so many people join the pilgrimage, he felt that "Matsu is the god of Taiwan."

Marine Abodi, a 31-year-old from France, said participating in the activity was not only fun but also educational.

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Joining 'Matsu frenzy'

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During the activity, she said, she got to know more about the traditional religion in Taiwan and its importance for the local people.

She was impressed to see so many followers, including elderly people, run to touch the statue of Matsu to receive a blessing, she recalled.

Meanwhile, she got to learn some useful words in Taiwanese for daily conversation to help her interact with other pilgrims along the way.

Abodi, a student at Feng Chia University, was also impressed by the Taiwanese people's warmth and kindness. Some Taiwanese people gave them free drinks, she said.

This year was the first time the Ministry of Education provided foreign students the opportunity to join in part of the Matsu pilgrimage that takes followers from Dajia Jenn Lann Temple in Taichung to Fengtian Temple in Chiayi and back over a nine-day period.

"It was designed to help foreign students learn the language while experiencing the local culture firsthand," the ministry said.

It is part of the ministry's initiative called "learning Chinese from everyday life," which encourages foreign students in Taiwan to take part in local cultural, festive activities while learning the language.

As part of the effort, the ministry



has been cooperating with local universities and organizations to organize cultural activities to promote Taiwan as the top choice among foreigners seeking to learn Mandarin Chinese.

Source: Central News Agency (CNA), April 19, 2016

Australia aims to boost international education as mining boom fades

Reporting by Jarni Blakkarly; Editing by Muralikumar Anantharaman

The Australian government outlined a plan on April 30, 2016 to boost the appeal of its universities and education institutions to foreign students, as the country looks to rebalance its economy with the fading of a decade-long mining boom.

An English-speaking country at the doorstep of Asia and offering an enviable quality of life, Australia now sits with the United States and United Kingdom as a top destination for foreign students, many from China and

India.

Worth more than A\$19 billion (\$14.43 billion) last year according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, international education has become the third biggest export for the country after iron ore and coal.

"This is a very exciting strategy to build on the strength of Australia's international education system that has seen over 2.5 million students from overseas study in our world class universities and institutions over the last couple of decades," Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said at meeting of 80 diplomats in the Australian city of Launceston.

The 10-year blue print for boosting international education focused on ensuring nationwide standard quality assurance and regulation as well as increasing support for international students.

While international students have provided a boost for the Australian economy, concerns have also been raised about quality, regulation for smaller private education



University students toss their graduation hats into the air for friends and family to take photos following their graduation ceremony at University of Sydney in Sydney, Australia, April 22, 2016. REUTERS/Jason Reed

institutions and shortfalls in sufficient affordable student housing leading to overcrowding.

Seeing the potential in the growth of the student housing market, Goldman Sachs has partnered with investor Blue Sky to launch a A\$1 billion (\$763 million) fund to invest in the sector.

Source: Reuters, April 30, 2016



A university student wears her mortar hat following her graduation ceremony from the School of Commerce at the University of Sydney in Australia, April 22, 2016. REUTERS/Jason Reed



ABOUT CACCI

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3. Participation in CACCI Annual Conferences and Training Programs - Members are invited to participate in the annual Conferences and various training programs which CACCI regularly conducts either on its own or in cooperation with other

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4. Interaction in Product and Service Councils - Membership in CACCI allows participation in the activities of the various Product and Service Councils (PSCs) of the organization. PSCs are business groupings organized along product or service lines with a primary objective of promoting business cooperation, personal contacts, and technology transfer.

5. Access to CACCI publications – CACCI publishes the CACCI Profile, its monthly newsletter, and the CACCI Journal of Commerce and Industry, a bi-annual publication which features papers, speeches, and other articles pertaining to issues affecting the regional economy.

For more information, please visit www.cacci.biz



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