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Health



Health at a Glance: Asia/Pacific 2022



The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant and lasting impact on health systems and economies in most countries around the world, including those in the Asia-Pacific region. Since January 2020, over 1 million people have died due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Asia-Pacific region, and more than 80 million lost their jobs in 2020. Amid the recovery is under way, it is critical that stakeholders identify lessons

and political commitment can countries mobilise the whole-of-government capacity needed to tackle the increasingly complex health challenges of our time. In the months, years and decades ahead, key priorities include investing in innovative health and social care service delivery models, including patient-centred and integrated primary health care; adopting digital health interventions; and creating healthy environments and lifestyles to promote healthy ageing.

Given that health is intricately linked to social, economic and cultural life, delivering this agenda and working towards more just and equitable societies and health systems requires a multidisciplinary, crosssectoral and collaborative approach. Ultimately, investments to achieve quality and accessible health care for all, without financial hardship, are investments in overall economic and social development that will translate into healthier, more resilient and cohesive societies that are future-ready.

OECD / World Health Organization (WHO)

learned, while at the same time leveraging heightened awareness of the importance of health resilience and preparedness to propel investment, commitment, and action towards building resilient health systems that are adequately prepared for the complex health challenges of the future.

Lessons learned across Asia-Pacific during the pandemic

In response to the pandemic, most Asia-Pacific countries introduced rapid and far-reaching measures to protect people's health and livelihoods, ranging from effective contact tracing strategies, to smart containment measures, and later to successful vaccination campaigns. However, the crisis has also exposed underlying health system shortcomings and social and economic inequities often further exacerbating them. As this report outlines, limited access to essential health care services, in particular for disadvantaged groups such as women living in low-income households or rural areas, and high levels of out-of-pocket and catastrophic health spending remain significant issues in Asia-Pacific.

To remedy these and other challenges, universal health coverage ensures that all people can access quality health services, without financial hardship. It is the foundation of a resilient health system, and ensures that when acute events occur, essential health services can be maintained. Building equitable and resilient health systems not only protects people's lives, especially in times of crisis, but also pave the way towards inclusive recovery, social justice and sustainable development.

How to prepare for the future

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated that when health is at risk, everything is at risk. This suggests that ensuring greater resilience and preparedness to shocks – and the required investment to achieve these goals – should be a key element of governments' overall commitment to sustainable social and economic development.

Only with significant and sustained financial investment

CPR and Defibrillators: What you need to know



Before 1958, there was no such thing as CPR. If someone's heart stopped because of cardiac arrest, that person fell to the ground, with no pulse, no breathing. And they were simply declared dead.

All of that changed when doctors at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore discovered cardiopulmonary resuscitation by accident when studying how to shock a heart.

When they pressed defibrillator panels to the chest of a lab dog, they saw a blip in blood pressure. They pressed harder and discovered they could push blood through the body and thus was born CPR.

The problem is that only a tiny fraction of people who have a cardiac arrest and are not at a hospital get CPR.

That, said Dr. Benjamin Abella, medical director of the Center for Resuscitation Science at the University of

Pennsylvania, is “a national tragedy.”

Bystander CPR can be the difference between life and death, as the case of Damar Hamlin demonstrated during a Buffalo Bills-Cincinnati Bengals football game in January.

CPR is not as daunting as it seems; it can be learned in minutes.

At the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, where Mr. Hamlin was treated, Dr. Jason McMullan, an emergency medicine physician, has taught CPR to everyone from Cub Scouts to people in nursing homes.

Here is what you need to know about what it is and how to do it.

What is cardiac arrest and how do you know if someone is having one?

A cardiac arrest, also known as sudden cardiac death, occurs when the heart suddenly stops beating. The person collapses to the ground and is not breathing. There can be many causes.

Why do you need to do CPR?

“You should call 911 but it can take several minutes or more for the ambulance to arrive,” said Dr. Sumeet Chugh, director of the Center for Cardiac Arrest Prevention at Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles. “In the meantime, with every minute that goes by the chances for a successful revival decrease by 10%.”

How do you perform CPR?

It used to be more complicated – you had to alternately press on the person’s chest and give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. But about a decade ago, medical experts realized that mouth-to-mouth was not making things better, was difficult for the public to do and was a disincentive for people to learn CPR.

“Kissing dead people is gross,” Dr. McMullan said.

Research studies suggested that survival is the same with or without mouth-to-mouth. Most people whose hearts stop have enough oxygen in their blood to survive if blood can be pumped through their bodies and, especially, to their brain.

Now CPR is “hands only.” Aim for the center of the chest over the breastbone, or sternum.

“Join your hands together and push hard and fast on the chest 100-120 times a minute to the beat of the song “Staying Alive,” by the Bee Gees, Dr. Chugh said.

There are videos showing how to do it.

And, Dr. McMullan said, even if you don’t push hard enough or fast enough, “any CPR is better than no CPR.”

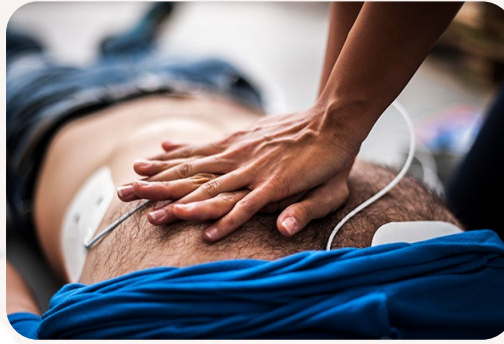
It is possible – though unusual – to break the person’s ribs. But when that happens it is “very unlikely to have any clinical consequences,” Dr. Abella said. “Being tentative about ribs can mean worse CPR and worse survival,” he added.

Why do you have to push to fast in CPR?

“You want to maximize the output from the heart,” Dr. Abella said. “CPR is not very efficient in moving blood. The heart is a better pump, so to make up for that you go faster. You can’t hurt someone. They are already dead.”

How long do I keep doing CPR?

You should keep it up until an ambulance arrives or until another rescuer can take over for you.



What about using a defibrillator?

An automated external defibrillator, or AED, shocks that heart and resets it. When you open the glass box that holds an AED, the device should speak to you, telling you to place two pads on the person’s body according to a diagram.

It analyzes the heart’s rhythm and, if a shock is appropriate, tells you to stand back, press a button and shock

the heart.

“For the cardiac arrests that are shockable it is almost miraculous,” Dr. Abella said. “I have seen patients in cardiac arrest who, by the time they are in the emergency room, wake up and wonder why they are there.”

But defibrillators have to be applied quickly, and so it is important to have more than one rescuer – one to do CPR while the other gets the defibrillator.

“If you are doing CPR you should shout and shout for help,” Dr. Abella said. “If you are alone you should run and get an AED,” if you know one is nearby.

Finding a defibrillator is not always easy. Airports often show their locations on terminal maps.

“The problem is, if you are not in an airport, what do you do?” Dr. Abella said. “For example, I am in a parking structure in the hospital. I don’t know where the nearest AED is and I am a doctor in a hospital. I have no idea.”

If you spend a lot of time in a public place, it could pay off to learn the location of the nearest AED.

The New York Times

Japan’s Health ministry panel endorses nasal flu vaccine for children



An expert panel under the health ministry has endorsed a nasal influenza vaccine for children between the ages of 2 to 18, paving the way for the first-ever approval of a nasal spray vaccine in Japan.

Based on the results of a clinical trial involving children in Japan, the panel agreed on February 27 that the vaccine FluMist Quarivalent is safe and effective in preventing the flu. The ministry is expected to approve the vaccine by around late March.

FluMist is a live attenuated vaccine that contains four flu strains, according to Astra-Zeneca, which developed the

vaccine. In 2015, the British-Swedish pharmaceutical giant entered a licensing agreement with Daiichi Sankyo, through which the latter has the rights to develop and sell the product in Japan.

The nasal spray vaccine, administered in over 30 countries including the U.S., has been favored by some people who fear needles and the pain they can cause. While Daiichi Sankyo filed for approval for FluMist in 2016, it took too years for the vaccine to get the panel's OK because some of the clinical trial data did not meet the criteria set out by the trial protocol, ministry official said.

Some doctors in Japan have imported FluMist from abroad to administer to patients between the ages

of 2 to 49 who prefer nasal vaccines over flu shots. But because the privately imported vaccines, which cost around ¥9,000 (\$66) to ¥10,000, are not approved by the ministry, people receiving them are not eligible for compensation from the government if they experience serious damage to their health.

A runny nose, throat pain and coughs have been reported after taking the nasal vaccine.

Flu shots are voluntary in Japan, but people the age of 65 or older, and those over 60 who are immunocompromised or have certain diseases, can have part of the cost subsidized by the government. Other people who receive them, including children, pay the full cost, which is around

¥3,000 to ¥5,000 per shot.

Meanwhile, the health ministry approved Pfizer's bivalent COVID-19 booster shot for children between the ages of 5 to 11. Previously, children in this age group only had access to COVID-19 shots designed to protect against the original strain.

The bivalent booster is designed to protect against the original strain and the BA.4 and BA.5 sublineages of the omicron variant.

As of February 28, 23.2% of children between the ages of 5 to 11 had received two COVID-19 shots, while only 8.9% had received three shots of the vaccine.

Japan Times

Excellent & Compassionate Healthcare wins The Makati City 4 Accolades at Healthcare Asia Awards 2023

Defining healthcare excellence, The Medical City. TMC Ortigas bags Healthcare Asia's Hospital of the Year award two years in a row and the Marketing Initiative of the Year award. TMC Clinic wins Primary Care Provider of the Year while TMC South Luzon gets its second ESG (Environment, Social, and Governance) Program of the Year award.

The Medical City (TMC) is currently the largest healthcare network in the country with one main facility in Ortigas, Pasig City, four provincial hospitals, and over 50 clinics in Metro Manila and select provinces, all operating under a single brand.

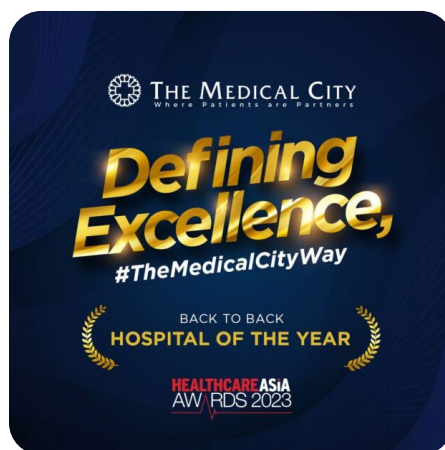
These recent recognitions signify the TMC enterprise's ongoing commitment to sustain healthcare leadership through its exceptional quality of care and unparalleled lead in research and innovation.

Healthcare is one of the most rapidly changing industries as new data and strategies emerge from time to time. The TMC enterprise is rising up to the challenge as its leaders and medical experts relentlessly pursue quality and safety practices, improved care delivery, and better ways to heal and help patients.

While he is grateful to the award-giving bodies for the accolades, TMC enterprise President and CEO Dr. Eugenio Jose F. Ramos says TMC's continuous improvements and advancements are for the people and community it serves.

"The face of healthcare is changing fast, and as we maintain our equanimity, we strive to remain true to our purpose—our north star—that we exist to protect, promote and enhance the welfare of those we serve: our patients and everyone else who value good health. What we are today confirms that narrative, and we are truly proud," says Dr. Ramos.

This is TMC Ortigas' third Hospital of the Year award,



with the first and second awards given in 2020 and 2022 respectively. Also in 2022, TMC Ortigas was recognized as among the country's top Level 3 hospitals by the Department of Health (DOH) and one of the Philippines' Best Employers, based on a large-scale study by the Philippine Daily Inquirer and international market research firm Statista.

Dr. Ramos was also awarded Asia's Most Inspiring Executive at the Asia Corporate Excellence & Sustainability Awards (ACES) held in November 2022 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Aside from scoring major awards and citations in 2022, TMC Ortigas also made headway in healthcare research and innovation, earning for it the much coveted Hospital of the Year award at the recently concluded Healthcare Asia Awards. The awards program recognizes remarkable performances or cutting-edge development from healthcare organizations across Asia. The awarding ceremony was held on Wednesday, March 29 at Shangri-La Singapore.

TMC Ortigas continues to be at the forefront of clinical and biomedical research in the country through its rapidly expanding Clinical and Translational Research Institute (CTRI). Leveraging on its robust network, the health institution established a clinical trial unit structure that spans all TMC enterprise hospitals, a first in the country.

TMC fosters innovation in healthcare and medical research, which even the government recognizes, leading to the creation of the first-ever research fellowship program in the Philippines, the Physician-Scientist Research Fellowship. With support from the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (PCHRD), the program aims to expand the country's pool of health research experts, especially those who can address the unmet medical needs of Filipinos.

TMC Ortigas has likewise integrated the practice

of 3D printing in its medical care as it brings added value to personalized patient care. And, as TMC moves toward novel therapeutics, it explores Phage Therapy to combat a possible post-antibiotic pandemic. These are just some of the projects of CTRL due to its commitment to cultivate the different aspects of research and to make research an integral part of the values and brand of The Medical City across the country.

Another highlight of TMC Ortigas' innovation is its remote services which have been improved and expanded through the "COVID HomeCare Program" and "Hospital-at-Home," enabling its medical practitioners to administer antibiotic infusions, laboratory testing, and physical consultations right in the patients' homes.

Every beat matters: Marketing Initiative of the Year

In mid-2022, TMC Ortigas launched its #EveryBeatMatters campaign to promote cardiovascular services through a combination of original music, video, and graphic material.

The music tracks used in the campaign featured BPM (beats per minute) ranging from approximately 150 bpm to 100 bpm to 50 bpm, representing the actual BPM ranges depicting a fetus' heartbeat during sonograms, an average person's heartbeat at the high end of normal range or the recommended for CPR, and an average person's heartbeat at rest.



Hospital of the Year & Marketing Initiative of the Year

This novel use of original music helped The Medical City engage its audiences with both commercial and medically accurate audio-visual content. It likewise provided TMC cardiovascular services its own brand through original music, for use in marketing, patient education, and service delivery not just for TMC Ortigas but for the rest of the enterprise hospitals.

TMC Clinic: Primary Care Provider of the Year

TMC Clinic operates over 50 ambulatory clinics in Metro Manila and in select provinces and offers a wide range of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.

Even during the global pandemic, TMC Clinic continued to grow and maintain a total of 52 conveniently located fully-operational clinics equipped with the most sophisticated air safety and purifying systems. That the clinics were positioned as non-covid facilities conveyed equal importance given to all health and medical care concerns.

Going beyond the basic requirement of organized primary care facilities, TMC Clinic made multi-specialty care even more accessible to patients, addressing the distinct health-seeking behavior of Filipinos in the community and corporate levels. Each clinic is strongly supported by selected specialists—Family Medicine and Internal Medicine—to deliver primary

care coordination, and other specialists and subspecialists for coordinated care referrals and follow-up of patients.



Hospital of the Year & Marketing Initiative of the Year

Over the past two years, while working to further strengthen the organization, TMC Clinic had also worked to expand its specialized

medical care in the ambulatory care setting, including several services in select clinics. These services include Hemodialysis, Ambulatory Surgery (Minor cases), Rehabilitation Medicine and Physical Therapy, Endoscopy, Cardiac Rehab, Sleep Laboratory, Women's Health, Mental Health, Bone and Joint Clinic, and Corporate Clinic, more popularly known as clinic management services in companies.

Because of the widespread challenges brought about by the global pandemic, TMC Clinic has ensured not just the safety of its clinics, but that expert primary medical care and attention remained possible and accessible.

TMC South Luzon Red Gala: One Step to End HIV/AIDS

Every year to commemorate World AIDS Day, TMC South Luzon conducts lectures and offers free HIV screenings to its employees and patients. In 2021, TMC South Luzon established the Center for Reproductive Health and STI Treatment (CREST) in its pursuit to turn the advocacy into a larger scale. CREST is a DOH-accredited facility where linkages, diagnosis, treatment, and continuum of care and support for people with HIV are provided.



TMC South Luzon – ESG Program of the Year

To launch and promote the center and its advocacy, TMCSL held a fundraising event dubbed "Red Mask Gala: Runway for a Cause" on December 1, 2021 at The Monochrome Nuvali, Santa Rosa City, Laguna.

For its first year, the event featured 50 doctors, employees, and guests who walked the runway wearing their best outfits and the “red masks” that were custom made for the donors. The funds raised benefited two foundations – Project Ribbon & Duyan: Cradling for Children with HIV and TMC South Luzon’s Young Adult Care Assistance Program (YACAP).

In its second year, the theme of the event was Filipiniana and it was titled “Red Gala: Unmasked” to refer to the easing and lifting of some COVID-19 protocols.

TMCSL’s Chief Operating Officer Dr. Jose Enrico Juliano described the fund-raising activity as the hospital’s “small contribution” with artistic expression, while rekindling awareness and advancing progress on

HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care in the country. Santa Rosa City Mayor Arlene Arcillas once again lauded TMC SL for sustaining its advocacy which she said is

complementing government efforts in preventing HIV/AIDS. Last year’s fashion event raised Php 100,000.00 this time for the Positive Action Foundation Philippines Incorporated (PAFPI), a non-government organization (NGO) that supports People Living with and Affected with HIV and AIDS.

About The Medical City

The Medical City is the country’s largest healthcare network with its main facility located along Ortigas Avenue in the business district of Pasig City, Metro Manila, while the provincial hospitals are situated in Clark, Iloilo, Laguna, and Pangasinan. This is supplemented by a network of over 50 clinics in strategic locations scattered all over the Metro and in select provinces, a concrete proof of the hospital’s commitment to make high quality healthcare accessible to its growing customer base. For more information, visit www.themedicalcity.com.

Inquirer.net

By End of 2026, 55% of Healthcare Organizations in Asia/Pacific Will Have Data Governance Frameworks in Place to Prioritize the Ethical and Explainable Use of AI in Healthcare



IDC predicts that by the end of 2026, 55% of healthcare organizations in Asia Pacific will have data governance frameworks in place, prioritizing the ethical and explainable use of AI for predictive, preventive, and personalized care. This is just one of IDC’s predictions unveiled in its latest report, [IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Healthcare Industry 2023 Predictions – Asia Pacific Implications](#).

“Digital transformations of the healthcare delivery systems in Asia Pacific will accelerate, including further technological advancements in the realms of prescient digital twins and intelligent medical robots that serve patients’ healthcare needs more holistically,” says Calvin Lau, Research Director, Head of Public Sector, IDC Asia/Pacific. “However, rising inflationary costs are potential headwinds to additional healthcare investments, compelling healthcare providers to rethink and reallocate healthcare budgets more prudently. The pandemic had also exposed the inability of some public health frameworks to provide care adequately to certain sections of society. The pandemic-induced drive to greater healthcare equity, making healthcare more accessible to more people, will be the future healthcare trend in Asia Pacific”, added Lau.

In the process of aligning with the care needs, healthcare organizations are set to have increased priority on establishing ‘care anywhere’ programs, leveraging clinical data, exploring seamless connectivity, automating care processes, along with strong anchoring on trust, compliance and explainability.

“Healthcare delivery system in Asia Pacific is undergoing a transition towards patient-centricity. This transition is strongly facilitated by the evolution of the digital front door, healthtech ecosystem, and enhanced focus on data, redefining care further into care anywhere, predictive care, and personalized care,” says Manoj Vallikkat, Senior Research Manager, Healthcare Insights, IDC Asia/Pacific. “While there is focus on the use cases that leverage on emerging technologies, moving forward, the industry will witness increased involvement of LOB (Line of Business) heads along with IT leaders, as part of the ecosystem, in evolving patient-centric care models/solutions”, added Vallikkat.

IDC’s top 10 healthcare industry predictions provide guidance to healthcare leaders on preparing and responding to the major storms of disruptions, big tech flips, and after-effects of the pandemic.

#1: Integrated Trust: By the end of 2024, 20% of expenses on care integration solutions will be centered around “trust” to protect data, workflows, and transactions, as well as ensure ethical and privacy compliance, in Asia Pacific.

#2: Healthcare Work Hybridization: By 2025, 30% of healthcare organizations in Asia Pacific will have hybrid work models with more virtualized, automated, and intelligent workplaces leading to increased patient and workforce satisfaction.

#3: Hospital Digital Twins: By 2026, investments in digital twins by large hospitals in Asia Pacific will double, driven by the need for unbiased, real-time simulation tools to improve decisions on operations, care capacity, and patient safety.

#4: 5G Care Anywhere: The maturation of high-speed, low latency 5G networks and emergence of a more connected healthcare ecosystem in Asia Pacific will double the number of patients seen outside the four walls of care by the end of 2026.

#5: Explainable AI: By the end of 2026, 55% of healthcare organizations in Asia Pacific will have data governance frameworks in place, prioritizing the ethical and explainable use of AI for predictive, preventive, and personalized care.

#6: Robotics Beyond Surgery: Driven by workforce shortages and the need for new efficiencies, 1 in 10 hospitals in Asia Pacific will leverage robotics beyond surgery and outside their operating rooms to enhance care delivery by the end of 2025.

#7: ESG Equity: By 2027, digital acceleration and data-driven policies will scale health equity in 50% of healthcare organizations in Asia Pacific, attracting further investments for environmental, social, and governance goals.

#8: Rise of Consumerism: By 2027, 55% of healthcare organizations in Asia Pacific will rely on digital-first strategies, interoperable workflows, and consumer data platforms to empower patients, elevate experiences, and champion trust.

#9: Intelligent Command Centers: By 2028, 1 out of 8 large hospitals in Asia Pacific will have established AI-driven command centers to improve care coordination, reduce costs, optimize operations, and enable care anywhere initiatives.

#10: Healthcare Metaverse: By 2028, 1 out of 15 large hospitals and 1 out of 10 medical education providers in Asia

Pacific will pilot having a presence in the metaverse to drive more immersive

These predictions are discussed in greater detail in the new IDC FutureScape report, [IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Healthcare Industry 2023 Predictions — Asia/Pacific \(Excluding Japan\) Implications](#). Each year, IDC releases its Top Predictions through its IDC FutureScape reports to give a crystal ball view of what is ahead for the rapidly changing ICT industry. These predictions have been used to shape the strategies and business objectives of technology leaders and business executives in the next 1-5 years. To learn more about the IDC FutureScape reports, please [click HERE](#).

For the first time ever, Asia/Pacific Japan FutureScape Reports will come with a complimentary report that provides specific recommendations for tech vendor sales and marketing leaders. Leverage IDC insights to better understand clients' priorities and enhance your storytelling and go-to market plans, access IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Healthcare Industry 2023 Predictions — APEJ Implications: Positioning for Success — Opportunities for Tech Sales and Marketing Leaders (Doc # AP49969522) [market presentation HERE](#). For more information on our role-based guidance, please visit [Tech Impact Business Reports | IDC FutureScape 2023](#).

For more information on this IDC FutureScape document, contact Manoj Vallikkat at mvallikkat@idc.com. For media inquiries, please contact Miguel Carreon at mcarreon@idc.com or Michael de la Cruz at mdelacruz@idc.com.

IDC

Japan PM Kishida wants childbirth covered by public health insurance



Prime Minister Fumio Kishida speaks to The Yomiuri Shimbun at the Prime Minister's Office in Tokyo on March 29. The Yomiuri Shimbun

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida wants to have childbirth expenses covered by public health insurance in the future, as part of efforts to create an environment that is more conducive to having children.

The government will establish a system that allows people to use day care facilities on an hourly basis, regardless of their work situation, and introduce preferential interest rates on housing loans to support households with multiple children, Kishida said during an interview with The Yomiuri Shimbun on March 29.

Asked why the birth rate remains

low, Kishida said: "Young people are not fully optimistic about their future. The reality is that births and marriages have to be pushed to later in life."

"To overcome this situation, it is important to increase the income of the younger generation," he said.

Normal childbirth is not currently covered by insurance because it does not constitute an illness or injury. However, a lump-sum childbirth allowance of ¥420,000 is provided.

The allowance will be raised to ¥500,000 starting in April, but there are concerns that medical institutions will increase their prices. Differences in the cost of childbirth, depending on the region and medical institution, are also seen as a problem.

"We want to promote the 'visualization' of childbirth costs. And after reviewing the services [of medical institutions] and the costs, we want to consider having it covered by insurance,"

Kishida said.

Regarding efforts to reduce the gap in support based on people's work situations, the prime minister said: "Until now, the emphasis has been on providing childcare services for dual-earner households and eliminating the number of children on waiting lists. From now on, it's important to provide the necessary support to all families raising children."

In addition to providing childcare leave for those who work shorter hours, Kishida also expressed his intention to consider new financial support for childcare leave for nonregular workers and the self-employed.

Kishida also said government guidelines needed to be improved to bolster the quality of child care. "The number of 1-year-olds per child care worker will be reduced from six to five," he said.

He referred as well to reducing the burden of education costs, which is one reason people are reluctant to have children.

The prime minister said he plans to work toward the introduction of a system that would exempt students from

paying tuition while they are in school and have them make payments based on their income after graduation.

With regard to scholarships that do not require repayment, Kishida said eligibility will be expanded to the middle class with annual household incomes between ¥3.8 million and ¥6 million for multichild households and students majoring in science, engineering and agriculture from the 2024 school year.

The government will release a preliminary draft of its

children's policies on March 31. A council of relevant Cabinet ministers and experts will be established later to work out the details.

By the time the Cabinet approves the Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform in June, the government plans to lay out a general framework for securing financial resources to "double the child-related budget," which is the prime minister's goal.

Asia News Network

Strong regional commitment to One Health approach in Central Asia



Ministry of Natural Resources of Uzbekistan

Natural processes that regulate disease occurrence and transmission are adversely affected by climate change, disturbance and fragmentation of habitats, and increased contact between humans, wildlife and domesticated species - participants from all five Central Asian countries have agreed, highlighting the need for more effective and equitable area-based conservation.

"It is well known that biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate change combined increase the risks of zoonotic disease outbreaks. We are interested to support the coordinated efforts among Central Asian countries to address those risks by raising awareness about the linkages between conservation, ecosystem health and human well-being", said Aziz Abdukhakimov, Minister of Natural Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan, addressing the participants in Tashkent.

With the support of IUCN and international partners, national authorities and experts are ready to take steps towards improving the effective governance and management of protected and conserved areas, and build the resilience of both ecosystems and society in facing these crises. The countries are willing to apply the One Health approach together with the IUCN Green List Standard of Protected and Conserved Areas for nature conservation, best practices related to species management and the latest knowledge on zoonosis research and technology.

"The One Health approach is relatively new within the International Climate Initiative (IKI), and we expect that this innovative effort led by IUCN with national and regional partners will set us on the path of understanding the interdependence of nature conservation and biodiversity, climate, human health and livelihoods, to the benefit of people and nature", stressed Elke Steinmetz, Head of Division of International Cooperation on Biodiversity at the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), a partner that is supporting the initial steps made in

the region in this regard. "This project will be at the forefront of One Health globally and we are delighted to see how it evolves", adds Mrs. Steinmetz.

The countries of Central Asia are ready to support designations of new protected areas, improve the effectiveness of existing protected areas, and recognise other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) while also looking into management practices and governance mechanisms for these areas. These efforts should result in the conservation outcomes beneficial to people, especially local communities and vulnerable groups, while also contributing to the global 30x30 target of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

"The regional commitment to strengthen One Health approach in Central Asia is a significant step towards building a society more resilient to zoonosis. Intact nature and well-governed conserved areas serve people and allow for the natural processes to flow without interruption, and can be seen as contributing solutions to societal challenges", concluded Trevor Sandwith, Director of the IUCN Centre for Conservation Action.

National authorities, international partners and key stakeholders on various levels hope to build on the achievements and efforts made by now, aiming to improve national policy frameworks for effective area-based conservation in accordance with the One Health approach, and aligned with the new Global Biodiversity Framework.



These initial steps were made through a partner collaboration led by IUCN and involving the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan, Ministry of Natural Resources Ecology and Technical Supervision of Kyrgyzstan, Committee for Environmental Protection of Tajikistan, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, Ministry of Natural Resources of Uzbekistan, Institute of Zoology of Kazakhstan, Camp Alatau- Kyrgyzstan, Association of Nature Conservation Organisations of Tajikistan, Academy

of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Michael Succow Foundation, Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species, United Nations Environment Programme, World Conservation Monitoring Centre, and Zoological Society of London.

The initial activities related to One Health in Nature Conservation in Central Asia, including the abovementioned workshop were delivered in the frame of a project that is part of the International Climate Initiative (IKI). The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) supports this initiative on the basis of a decision adopted by the German Bundestag.

IUCN

Mental health startup Intellect partners with Asia's largest private healthcare group



Intellect, the Singapore-based mental health platform that now serves over three million users in 20 countries, is getting ready for a new phase of growth after striking a strategic partnership with IHH Healthcare,

Asia's largest private healthcare group. IHH Healthcare will work with Intellect to develop and customize digital mental health programs for its patients, corporate clients and staff.

IHH Healthcare also made an investment into the startup, without disclosing the amount. IHH Healthcare is Intellect's first strategic investor. Its other backers include Tiger Global, Y Combinator and Insignia Ventures.

Founded in 2019, Intellect's markets now include Malaysia, Singapore, India and Hong Kong. Its platform offers telehealth coaching, services like therapy or psychiatry and mental health screening that can be done online or in-person at an Intellect clinic. It also has self-guided cognitive behavioral therapy-based programs. Intellect has a consumer app, but focuses primarily on enterprise customers who offer its platform to their employees as a wellness benefit.

Intellect CEO and founder Theodoric Chew told TechCrunch that the startup has been in touch with IHH Healthcare for a while because of its leadership position in its markets, and started exploring partnership opportunities over the last year. One goal is to offer a larger continuum of care from preventative to specialized care across the regions that the companies serve. Chew said IHH Healthcare and Intellect will focus on APAC first, but other regions, too.



IHH Healthcare's Ashok Pandit with Intellect founder Theodoric Chew. Image Credits: Intellect

So far, IHH Healthcare's work with Intellect have included a pilot initiative with maternity patients at Gleneagles Hospital Singapore, and plans to offer the platform to corporate clients of IHH Singapore's iXchange and IHH's employees.

In a statement, IHH Healthcare group chief strategy and business development officer Ashok Pandit said, "Mental health issues affect one in every four persons. We are pleased to invest in Intellect, a market leader in this rapidly growing category, to boost their growth and enhance access to millions more people who require support, care or treatment."

Tech Crunch

Why improving women's health must become a social and national priority

Australia is on track to being one of the first countries to eliminate cervical cancer. Its pioneering self-collection programme for cervical cancer tests to all women and people with a cervix is one of many ways it reaffirms its commitment to eliminate the disease by 2035.

Establishing its National Cervical Screening Programme in 1991, the 25 million-strong nation has been a frontrunner in global eradication efforts. Now, ongoing vaccination and screening, strong political will and evidence-backed policies could help Australia make cervical cancer a thing of the past. And its achievement could provide a blueprint for others to eliminate one of the only preventable and curable cancers, if detected early, in our lifetime.

However, women-specific diseases and health, in general, have not been cemented in national policy discussions in Asia Pacific countries and leave women at the sharp end of access to health inequity.

Prioritizing preventable women's health concerns

The experience during the COVID-19 pandemic is a case in point. The global emergency resulted in decreasing HPV vaccination rates, screening and treatment, leading to more women presenting with late-stage cervical cancer, which requires more invasive and less effective treatment.

Only a handful of countries have a comprehensive cervical cancer elimination strategy. In developed countries, incidence rates of cervical cancer are generally low, around 3.6%. The disproportionate burden of cervical cancer in developing countries and medically underserved populations is mainly due to a lack of effective screening programmes.

Beyond nationally driven efforts, there may be access to clearly visible health challenges, societal expectations and barriers that create "invisible" barriers preventing women from getting the care they deserve.

For instance, an Asia Pacific-wide survey by Roche Diagnostics of 3,320 women across eight countries found that 21% of women felt strongly that they are more likely to have delayed or avoided medical treatment one or several times due to a family obligation.

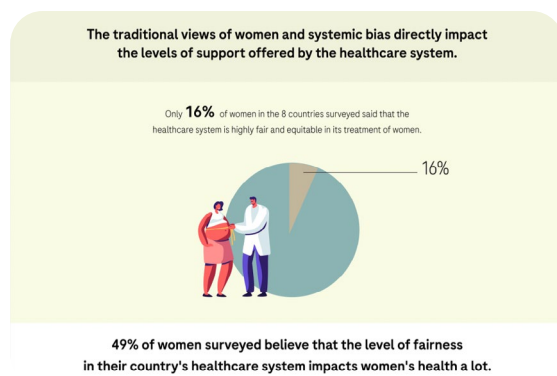
The same research found that knowledge gaps weren't responsible for women not opting for screenings. High-income respondents from emerging markets like China, India and Indonesia said they felt very or somewhat knowledgeable about cervical cancer (93%, 91% and 78%, respectively). But there

remains a barrier to acting, as publicly cited data shows cervical cancer burdens in these countries are not declining and mortality rates of cervical cancer burden in China and India remain the highest in Asia.

As productive and contributing members of society, women-specific health concerns should not be ignored in low- or high-income countries.

Many women, including those in higher-income countries like Singapore, delay having children leading to rising susceptibility to pregnancy complications such as preeclampsia, which is responsible for around 15% of all premature births and 42% of maternal deaths worldwide. Early detection and effective care can vastly reduce the number of preeclampsia-related fatalities and complications but the condition is difficult to diagnose as its symptoms – high blood pressure and swollen feet, ankles and hands – can be mistaken for the normal effects of pregnancy.

Better health equity can raise awareness and knowledge levels and inspire tangible action in designing policies that give women access to tests and treatments that will afford them longer and healthier lives.



Women's perceptions of fairness in the healthcare system across Asia Pacific. Image: Roche Diagnostics

Shifting the narrative from equality to equity

Men and women each face diverse health concerns across their lifespan but when barriers impact one gender above the other, the question arises as to why healthcare inequities still exist.

More importantly, women's health should not be limited to gynaecological and reproductive health.

Women are much more likely to have atypical heart attack symptoms and be affected by autoimmune diseases such as multiple sclerosis or lupus.

Systemic under-investment preventing access to screening for women-specific diseases and inconsistent implementation of national guidelines for women's health has continued to widen health equity gaps. In three-quarters of cases, diseases that affect women primarily are underfunded compared to conditions that primarily affect men.

Diagnostics is a crucial pillar for healthcare systems, as early and accurate diagnoses significantly impact effective treatment and health outcomes. However, women can face barriers in accessing diagnostic tests, and as data from Roche's Global Value of Diagnostics survey across the Asia Pacific suggests, these barriers to diagnostics can negatively impact women more than men.

However, there needs to be more than a stop-gap approach to offering tests. According to a report by Foundation for Innovative Diagnostics (FIND) and Women in Global

Health, more women in leadership positions – at community, health system and political levels – can drive access to testing.

Much still needs to be done to encourage better access to diagnostics, particularly for women. It begins with policy decisions, ensuring health systems provide for women and that there are accessible tests specific for prevalent conditions unique to them.

Instead of a one-size-fits-all solution, a localized strategy will effectively support developing health systems where a shortage of appropriate hospital or laboratory infrastructure and specialist resources can create additional challenges. Healthcare systems must embrace these differences when communicating, policy shaping and funding research, allowing women to access the information, diagnosis, treatment and care they need when they need it.

Every change matters

At the heart of such societal and systemic shift lies a desire for everyone to want to create change in mindset, behaviours, policies and funding. However, it will take more than empowering women to be more central in their own healthcare decisions to drive change.

As nations rethink how to efficiently apply resources to tackle growing healthcare challenges – the increasing burden of diseases, rising healthcare costs, and inequitable access – the time is ripe to enhance equitable health systems to create greater value for women.

At the family level, women control 80% of healthcare decisions in the home. As the primary caretakers of the family, they make appointments and healthcare purchasing decisions on behalf of partners, children and parents, despite often experiencing the widest health access gap.

And while the role of women in society has evolved, there is still societal pressure to meet certain expectations that can influence major life decisions, from pursuing higher education, giving up their careers and becoming caregivers to getting married at the "right" age. These compounding factors should be considered when explaining varying health-seeking behaviours and the underrepresentation of women in healthcare.

And that is why it is incumbent upon all of us to keep having conversations and collaborating with like-minded stakeholders to raise awareness and shape policies to yield long-term and meaningful solutions that improve women's health outcomes in Asia Pacific and everywhere.

World Economic Forum

Urgent Action Needed in South Asia to Curb Deadly Air Pollution

South Asia is home to 9 of the world's 10 cities with the worst air pollution, which causes an estimated 2 million premature deaths across the region each year and incurs significant economic costs. A new World Bank report shows that there are economically feasible, cost-effective solutions to achieve clean air in the region, but this requires countries to coordinate policies and investments.

[Striving for Clean Air: Air Pollution and Public Health in South Asia](#), released December 14, 2022, says concentrations of fine particulate matter such as soot and small dust (PM 2.5) in some of the region's most densely populated and poor areas are up to 20 times higher than what WHO considers

healthy ($5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). Exposure to such extreme air pollution has impacts ranging from stunting and reduced cognitive development in children, to respiratory infections and chronic and debilitating diseases. This drives up healthcare costs, lowers a country's productive capacity, and leads to lost days worked.

Large industries, powerplants and vehicles are dominant sources of air pollution around the world, but in South Asia, other sources make substantial additional contributions. These include combustion of solid fuels for cooking and heating, emissions from small industries such as brick kilns, burning of municipal and agricultural waste, and cremation.

Air pollution travels long distances— crossing municipal, state, and national boundaries—and gets trapped in large “airsheds” that are shaped by climatology and geography. The report identifies six major airsheds in South Asia where spatial interdependence in air quality is high. Particulate matter in each airshed comes from various sources and locations, for example less than half of the air pollution in South Asia's major cities is produced within cities.

“Persistently hazardous levels of air pollution have caused a major public health crisis in South Asia that demands urgent action,” said Martin Raiser, World Bank Vice President for South Asia. “Curbing air pollution requires not only tackling its specific sources, but also close coordination across local and national jurisdictional boundaries. Regional cooperation can help implement cost-effective joint strategies that leverage the interdependent nature of air quality.”

Several South Asian countries have adopted policies to help improve air quality, but their focus on mitigating air pollution generated within cities is yielding insufficient results. The report shows that current policy measures will only be partially successful in reducing PM 2.5 concentrations across South Asia even if fully implemented. To achieve greater progress, the focus of policy makers should expand into other sectors, particularly small manufacturing, agriculture, residential cooking, and waste



management.

The report analyzes four scenarios to reduce air pollution with varying degrees of policy implementation and cooperation among countries. The most cost-effective scenario, which calls for full coordination between airsheds, would cut the average exposure of PM 2.5 in South Asia to $30 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ at a cost of

\$278 million per $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ of reduced exposure, and save more than 750,000 lives annually.

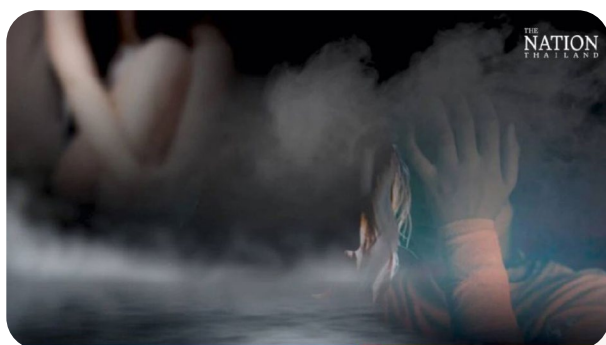
“The economic benefits of policies to reduce air pollution in South Asia exceed the economic costs by a large margin,” said Hans Timmer, World Bank Chief Economist for South Asia. “But optimal solutions depend on several factors such as better monitoring systems, more scientific capacity, greater coordination between governments, and behavioral change among farmers, small firms, and households.”

To this end, the report offers a three-phased roadmap:

- **Phase 1:** Sets the condition for airshed wide coordination by expanding the monitoring of air pollution beyond the big cities, sharing data with the public, creating or strengthening credible scientific institutes that analyze airsheds, and taking a whole-of-government approach.
- **Phase 2:** Abatement interventions are broadened beyond the traditional targets of powerplants, large factories and transportation. During this phase major progress can be made in reducing air pollution from agriculture, solid waste management, cookstoves, brick kilns, and other small firms. At the same time, airshed-wide standards can be introduced.
- **Phase 3:** Economic incentives are finetuned to enable private-sector solutions, to address distributional impacts, and to exploit synergies with climate change policies. In this phase trading of emission permits can also be introduced to optimize abatement across jurisdictions and firms.

The World Bank

More than half of Gen Z in Asia Are Suffering from Poor Mental health



While the Covid-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll on mental health across society, the latest findings from the annual AXA Study of Mind Health and Wellbeing 2023 have revealed that Gen Z (aged 18-24) appears to be taking the brunt of the impact, with more than half of Gen Z globally (53%) and in Asia

(51%) experiencing poor mental health.

The Survey identifies specific challenges they face in today's workplace, while also highlighting the need for employers to explore tailored support to address a potential surge in turnover in young talent.



The research found that Gen Z has the highest proportion of those struggling (associated with emotional stress and psychosocial impairment) at 18% globally and 14% in Asia, more than any other age group.

Globally, only 13% of young people aged 18-24 are flourishing at the pinnacle of mental health, with the proportion being 15% in Asia, both the lowest across all age groups.

This makes 18-24 the only age group globally that has more people struggling than flourishing.

Gen Z show a greater ability to work under stress, though most likely to resign

In Asia's workplaces, the survey reveals that Gen Z talent is affected by several key challenges that pose a potential threat to their mental health.

These include uncertainty about the future (69% vs 59% globally), struggling to separate work life and non-work life (49% vs 39% globally), finding it hard to keep up with the pace of change at work (47% vs 38% globally), and a lack of job-skill fit (16% vs 9% globally).

This last factor has a very strong correlation with mental well-being, as those that have the right job skill fit are 2.5 times more likely to perform their best according to the research.

The results also show that the 18-24 age group in Asia has the highest percentage of people who intend to resign in the next 12 months (21%).

Yet the survey found a clear indication that those in the 18-24 age group who are flourishing are less likely to resign, with the rate being only 16%, highlighting the importance of effectively enabling positive mental health in supporting employee retention.

Workplace mental health support plays a vital role in overall mental wellbeing

Support for mental health in the workplace has risen up the agenda during the pandemic.

The research also reveals that in Asia, companies that provide mental health support are 2.5 times more likely to have employees that are flourishing.

In particular, while 1 in 4 Gen Z employees who feel they are getting good mental health support at work are flourishing, the rate is only 1 in 100 among those that do not see such support, which is the biggest difference among all age groups.

This indicates mind health support in the workplace also has the greatest impact on the mental well-being of Gen Z, making this group a priority target for such solutions.



Gordon Watson, CEO of AXA Asia and Africa said, "While mental health has rightly attracted greater attention in the wake of the pandemic's disruption on our lives, these findings emphasise that the next generation of talent across Asia are facing severe challenges. Companies need to examine how they can make a tangible difference with support relevant to the needs of their Gen Z employees, not only to help with productivity and retention but to tackle this urgent issue affecting societies across the region."



Bubphawadee Owararinth, Chief of People and Brand & Communications said, "This is the first year we have included Thailand in AXA Mental Health study, among the countries and territories, surveyed, Thailand had the highest number of flourishing people. Besides, 66% of Gen Z in Thailand feel they have a job-skill fit, higher than the global average. At KTAAXA, we determined to create the company as the best place to work that encourages our employees to be happy at work and grow with the organization accepting the diversity of employees is important which include the gap generation of Gen Z generation and others which is aligned with the promise of AXA's Employer Brand Promise is "Empowering the potential of employees aiming for success."

Overall people in Asia are getting mentally healthier, believe that stigma is declining

Despite this concern, the research found that the proportion of people flourishing in Asia climbed from 19% to 22%, with Asia seeing a bigger rise than the global average.

By contrast, the proportion of those struggling in Asia fell to 12%, a year-on-year decrease of 2%. This speaks to improving mental well-being across the board. In addition, 36% of respondents globally agree that stigma related to mental health is declining, compared to 31% last year.

The findings show that 25% of people globally are flourishing, with Thailand (36%), a new entrant this year, topping the list and Italy (18%) showing the lowest level.

A closer look at Asian countries and territories in the survey finds that the Philippines had the largest proportion globally of people getting by, at 39%, followed by Hong Kong at 37%. Across the region, the largest proportion of languishing and struggling was in Japan, at 31% and 14% respectively.

Asia News Network

Education

Japanese-language schools to be screens in bid to ensure quality

The government decided February 21, 2023 on draft legislation to screen and certify Japanese-language schools to ensure their quality by setting standards, including on the number of teachers and educational content.

In the legislation, eyed for enforcement in April 2024 after its enactment in the current parliamentary session, the government required instructors at certified schools to obtain a new national qualification for teaching Japanese.

The government's move to strengthen surveillance over Japanese-language schools follows cases of questionable management, such as with one operator that was found to be allegedly making illegal job arrangements for foreign students in 2017.

It is also believed that some schools allowed foreign nationals to enter Japan for work under the guise of being students.

In 2019, the Tokyo University of Social Welfare, which accepted graduates of Japanese-language schools who could not enter other universities due to their poor Japanese skills, was found to have lost contact with more than 1,000 students from overseas in the three years from the fiscal year that began in April 2016.

Under the envisaged new screening system, a certified Japanese-language school needs to meet standards on the number



of teachers, the facility's space and educational content that the education ministry sets according to the number of students and their language levels.

The names of certified schools will be published on the website of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

Schools would be required every fiscal year to report to the ministry the contents of the lessons, the enrollment status of the students and other details.

If the operator's management is deemed inappropriate, it would be subjected to a corrective order.

To qualify as a registered Japanese-language teacher, an applicant needs to pass a national exam that measures the degree of knowledge and skills required for Japanese-language education. After passing the exam, they need to take on-site training in teaching students.

After the legislation is enacted, the government is expected to require schools to obtain certification if they seek to take in foreign nationals who have come to Japan under to student visa.

As a transitional measure, the government will allow instructors to teach Japanese without the qualification for five years after the enforcement of the law.

The Japan Times

Improving the Efficiency of Public Spending on Health and Education in Indonesia

By Saeful Muluk and Ronaldo Octaviano

Indonesia has seen first-hand [the link](#) between government spending on public services and the well-being of its citizens. Public spending on health and education has been shown to increase economic growth, improve health outcomes, and reduce poverty.

When Indonesia's constitution was amended after the democratic transition in 1998, a new provision was added mandating that 20 percent of national and subnational budgets be allocated to education. The introduction of government decentralization in 2001 also assigned greater responsibility for health and education spending to subnational governments. New legislation was adopted requiring adequate subnational government spending. The 2003 National Education System Law requires subnational governments to allocate 20 percent of their budgets to education, while the 2009 Health Law stipulates that 10 percent of spending be allocated to the health sector.



A primary school scene in Luwu Utara District, South Sulawesi Province. (Photo: USAID ERAT)

To back these efforts, the USAID ERAT program (ERAT: "effective, efficient, and strong governance"), which

The Asia Foundation implements in partnership with the International City/County Management Association, facilitated the collaboration of several key ministries on the new Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 84 of 2022. This regulation will introduce a more consistent and mutually agreeable standard for monitoring and recording subnational government expenditures against mandatory spending targets in health and education. All subnational governments are required to follow the regulation as they prepare their 2023 budgets.

Regional disparity in compliance

Subnational governments vary significantly in their spending on health and education. When USAID ERAT reviewed provincial and district government spending between 2017 and 2019, we found that provincial governments spent, on average, 32 percent of their budgets on education. Only three of Indonesia's 34 provinces failed to meet the 20 percent constitutional minimum: West Papua (11.8 percent), North Kalimantan (18.9 percent) and East Kalimantan (19.5 percent).

Meanwhile, at the district level, average spending on education was 25 percent, but 102 of Indonesia's 514 districts failed to meet the 20 percent minimum spending target. In fact, half or more of the districts in less-developed provinces like West Sulawesi, Maluku, North Maluku, West Papua, and Papua missed the target. By contrast, average district spending in the five provinces of Java is the highest in Indonesia, at more than 30 percent, with almost two-thirds of districts spending more than 30 percent of their budgets on education.

In the health sector, USAID ERAT found that 22 of Indonesia's 34 provinces did not meet the 10 percent mandatory spending target. At the district level, however, 90 percent of district governments allocated at least 10 percent of their budgets to health. On average, districts spent 15 percent of their budgets on health, with only 51 districts allocating less than 10 percent to the sector. Most districts in Lampung, North Kalimantan, Papua, and West Papua failed to meet the 10 percent mandatory spending target.



Taking care of health insurance in Barru District, South Sulawesi Province. (Photo: USAID ERAT)

Toward more consistent spending

Both the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Finance monitor subnational government budget allocations, but because they historically lacked the means to sanction subnational governments for noncompliance, they have sometimes struggled to get subnational governments to follow up on their recommendations.

The ministries collaborated to resolve this issue, passing Government Regulation No. 12 of 2019 on regional

financial management. This regulation states that if subnational governments do not meet mandatory spending targets, the Ministry of Finance will delay or cut its regular transfers of funds to the districts—so-called General Transfer Funds. This system of sanctions was implemented for the first time in 2021.

Two years after being adopted, the new sanctions regime appears to have succeeded in increasing compliance with mandatory spending targets. A 2022 Ministry of Finance evaluation found that just 63 of Indonesia's 548 subnational governments had not met mandatory education spending targets, and only nine had not met health spending targets. This was a significant improvement from 2021, when 124 subnational governments did not meet education spending targets and 160 did not meet health targets.

Disputes and collaboration

Unsurprisingly, delaying General Transfer Funds provoked strong reactions from subnational governments. The Ministry of Finance relies on a range of existing regulations and its own framework for determining which expenditures count toward mandatory spending targets, and some subnational governments disputed the ministry's classification system. Subnational governments also questioned the different frameworks used by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Ministry of Health to classify and calculate subnational government spending.

Officials in the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education and Culture recognized the need to develop a mutually agreeable framework. USAID ERAT facilitated their collaboration to develop the framework, and their different viewpoints were incorporated into Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation No. 84 of 2022, "Guidelines for the Preparation of 2023 Subnational Budgets." As noted, all subnational governments will be required to adhere to these guidelines as they prepare their budgets.

Of course, meeting spending targets will not be sufficient by itself. Improving the quality of spending, ensuring that it is directed toward the areas of greatest need and spent on programming rather than administration or other internal costs, and reducing opportunities for corruption are also critical. But the new regulation is an important step toward meeting mandatory health and education spending targets and helping to ensure that every Indonesian citizen gets the basic services they deserve.

About the Authors

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The Asia Foundation

Private education has grown faster in South Asia than any other region in the world

As learning levels in the region grow more slowly than in the rest of the world, the report calls for regulation to focus more on quality and equity across all schools.

A new [UNESCO Report](#) released today shows that non-state actors in South Asia are more involved in every aspect of education systems than in any other world region. Highly competitive examination pressures and dissatisfaction with public schools led to the highest levels of enrolment in private institutions in primary and secondary education than in other regions, but also to extensive private tutoring and an explosion of education technology companies.

With fragmented systems stretched during the pandemic, and evidence of a shift of students from private to public schools, the report calls for a review of existing regulations on non-state actors and how they are enforced. While access to education has grown faster than in any other region in the past few decades in South Asia, learning levels are more than one third below the global average and growing more slowly than in the rest of the world. It recommends that all state and non-state education activities be viewed as part of one system, supported and coordinated ministries of education so that quality and equity can be improved.

The report draws on the global comparative research by the Global Education Monitoring Report at UNESCO and six regional partners: [BRAC](#); the [Institute for Integrated Development Studies](#); the [Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka](#); [Idara-E-Taleem Oaagahi](#) (Centre of Education and Consciousness); the [Center for Policy Research](#); and the [Central Square Foundation](#). Combining the experiences of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, it looks at occasions where the growing advent of private education has put equity under pressure but also at positive practices that have created cohesion across all actors involved.

Non-state actors are influential across all education levels in the region. In early childhood, the private sector is often the main provider, educating 93% of children in the Islamic Republic of Iran, for instance. At the primary level, private schools educate a quarter of students in Nepal, over a third in Pakistan and almost half in India. Low-fee private schools have flourished. Out of all new schools established in India since 2014, 7 in 10 are private independent schools. In Bangladesh, a quarter of primary and almost all secondary school enrolment is in private institutions. International schools have grown alongside the demand for English-language education, effectively doubling in Sri Lanka between 2012 and 2019.

Tertiary education is increasingly private due to insufficient public supply, covering over half of enrolment in Afghanistan by 2020. In Nepal, the limited capacity of the main public university in the country led to the establishment of non-state campuses. Teacher training institutions are also often private with teacher education only provided exclusively by the state in two countries, Bhutan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In 2020, more than 90% of recognized pre-service teacher



education institutions in India were privately funded through student fees.

Competitive education systems and labour markets have led to a surge in private tutoring, putting pressure on household finances. In Sri Lanka, the percentage of households spending on private tutoring increased between 1995 and 2016 from 41% to 65% of urban households and from 19% to 62% of rural households; it increased in

Bangladesh between 2000 and 2010 from 28% to 54% in rural areas and from 48% to 67% in urban areas. The popularity of private tutoring has led to a rise of coaching centres; in India, their number may run into the hundreds of thousands.

An accompanying online education website to the Report, PEER, managed by the GEM Report, contains profiles for every country in the region listing the regulations each have on non-state actors in the region. It shows that existing regulations focus more on non-state schools' establishment and inputs than on equity and quality in the system.

In South Asia, households account for the largest share of total education spending (38%) among all world regions. Their share is particularly high in Nepal (50%), Pakistan (57%) and Bangladesh (71%). In 2017-18, average household expenditure per student attending a private-unaided school in India was over five times than that spent on a student attending government school. In addition, 13% of families saved and 8% had to borrow to pay for school fees. In Bangladesh, around a third of families borrowed money for their children to study at private polytechnics.

UNESCO

Japan's education ministry urges schools to inform police about serious bullying

Examples of bullying the government wants schools to notify police about

Forcibly removing a student's trousers	Criminal assault
Threats to post nude pictures or video	Extortion
Stealing shoes, PE clothing, textbooks, etc.	Theft

Source: Education ministry

The Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry has issued a notification to schools nationwide urging them to consult the police when serious cases of bullying occur.

The National Police Agency has informed prefectural police headquarters across Japan about the education ministry's notification, which was issued on February 7.

National, public and private schools are advised to notify the police immediately about serious bullying cases that could constitute a crime and seek support from the authorities, according to the notification, which states that protecting the lives and safety of children and students is a top priority.

The document included 19 specific examples of bullying that could constitute a criminal violation as schools have been hesitant about filing reports in the past due to a lack of awareness about where the line is drawn regarding police involvement.

According to the notification, if

a student harms a classmate with scissors or a box-cutter while in an uncontrollable emotional state, it could be treated as a bodily injury case. Sharing pictures or videos of a naked classmate among a group by posting files on social media constitutes a violation of the law against child prostitution and child pornography.

Go Kasai, the father of a suicide victim who had been bullied, said: "People tend to make light of bullying. Sending the message that bullying could constitute a crime can serve as a deterrent."

His daughter, Rima Kasai, left a suicide note revealing details about bullying she experienced in 2016 when

she was a second-year student at a municipal junior high school in Aomori City.

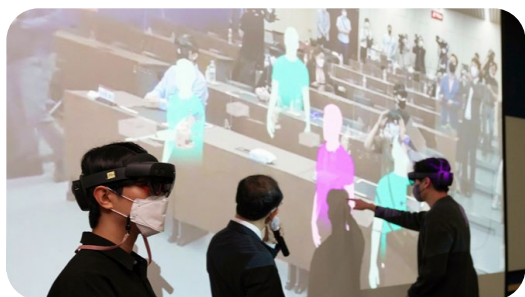
"Ultimately, the ideal measure to prevent bullying is through education in schools," said Kasai, 44.

Midori Komori, the head of the antibullying nonprofit organization Gentle Heart Project, said: "The most important thing is for bullies to acknowledge why they hurt others. I hope the [ministry's] notification does not send the message that bullying is not good because it violates the Criminal Code."

Asia News Network

Metaverse education blossoms in South Korea, Japan, Taiwan

By Dylan Loh



Educators in Asia are dipping their toes into the metaverse, the much-hyped virtual reality where humans can interact socially in cyberspace, even as emerging technology in this space grapples with finding its place in the real world.

From South Korea to Taiwan, schools and other organizations are tapping the metaverse as a tool for instruction, experimenting with VR applications to bring teaching beyond the classroom and devise new ways of imparting knowledge and skill.

Pohang University of Science and Technology in South Korea is working to become a "metaversity" where classrooms are digitalized into the metaverse, offering training courses in cyberspace.

The university, known as POSTECH, serves 1,400 undergraduate and 2,500 graduate students who work with 450 faculty members and 820 researchers in fields like energy, materials, basic science, information communications technology and health.

"Virtual reality technology can be applied in fields that are difficult to access in reality, such as outer space and the nanoworld," Moo Hwan Kim, the university's president, told Nikkei Asia. "In the long run, it will be able to replace classes that require more hands-on experiences or training in dangerous environments."

POSTECH said it invests \$300,000 a year to buy equipment and develop educational programs for students and has pooled \$500,000 to build classrooms that tap the metaverse.

In Japan, at N and S high schools, the largest online high schools in the country, 7,000 students learn through VR

headsets.

Director Riichiro Sono told Nikkei that the organization took to the metaverse to conduct lessons without physical constraints while providing an immersive environment for individual learning.



N and S high schools in Japan took to the metaverse as it offered a platform to conduct lessons without being limited by physical constraints. © Photo courtesy of N and S high schools

The schools surveyed the VR participants last year and found a satisfaction rate of 98.5%, he said, but noted that "it can take time for users to get accustomed to a VR environment" and that "the additional weight of a VR headset can be a deterrent" for some users.

Metaverse adoption in schools comes as some Asian countries work to raise the bar on digital expertise.

South Korea's science ministry said last year that it plans to invest 223.7 billion won (\$166 million) to foster a metaverse ecosystem, including developing a "Metaverse Academy" to train young experts in the field.

Likewise, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said last year that his country would promote efforts to expand the use of various technologies, including the metaverse, to spur digital transformation in the public and private sectors.

Singapore has a national digital literacy program that aims to equip students with skills to navigate a digital society and take on jobs of the future.

Yet mass adoption of VR remains in doubt. U.S. tech giant Meta, which changed its name from Facebook in 2021 on

the promise of the metaverse, has struggled to demonstrate the metaverse's viability in the past year.

A 2022 global survey of executives from technology, media and telecommunications by KPMG International found only one-third of respondents saying their firms feel prepared with platforms to create applications for the metaverse.

Apart from formal education, the metaverse also has been used to help people develop a deeper understanding of situations that typically confront the less able in society.

The Syin-Lu Social Welfare Foundation, a nonprofit group in Taiwan that offers professional help for mentally or intellectually disabled children and their families, is using VR to raise awareness and help others learn more about people with autism.

Lydia Liu, the foundation's director, told Nikkei that its use of the metaverse involves providing a first-person perspective via immersive digital environments to put the public in the shoes of those with autism, letting them experience what autistic individuals encounter in their daily lives.

"Our goal is to evoke empathy and help others understand the discomfort and inconvenience that autistic individuals may encounter," Liu said.

Nikkei Asia



Chan Soon Seng, CEO of Teach For Malaysia

Teach For Malaysia trains teachers to integrate STEM and the application of the Engineering Design Process (EDP) in the classroom, and run social innovation projects in communities.

The Teach For Malaysia and Micron Foundation partnership is part of a global effort under Teach For All, to which Teach For Malaysia is affiliated.

At the global level, Teach For All has established the Future of Work Initiative: a multi-stakeholder partnership that will bring together businesses and a global network of students, teachers, and communities to rethink the way education can prepare students for the future and empower children and youth to thrive in a changing world.

Under this initiative, Teach For All and its network partners establish a foundational partnership with Micron to prepare students for tomorrow's workforce through STEM and assist teachers with the resources and support.

Through this Future of Work Initiative and in partnership with Micron, Teach For Malaysia is investing directly in the professional development of teacher leaders who are best positioned to inspire and guide students towards STEM and the careers of the future.

Digital News Asia

Teach For Malaysia partners with Micron Foundation to impact STEM Education in Malaysia



Teach For Malaysia announced it is partnering with the Micron Foundation on its flagship Fellowship Programme. The collaboration lets Teach For Malaysia recruit and train teachers to be placed in vulnerable schools, foster collaboration among instructors, and allow Micron team members and students from the community an opportunity to promote STEM education.

With Micron's support, Teach For Malaysia will engage with 57 teachers, reaching over 8,550 students at underserved schools in Perak and Sarawak in 2023.

"Teach For Malaysia is working towards building a movement of promising leaders who will empower students in B40 Communities to reverse their learning losses and build the skills needed for them to be ready for their future," says Chan Soon Seng, CEO of Teach For Malaysia.

From 2020, Teach For Malaysia expanded its work to also train and coach 985 in-service public school STEM teachers under the "Program Duta Guru" or "Ambassador Teacher Programme", in which Teach For Malaysia is the implementation partner, in collaboration with Yayasan PETRONAS and Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE). The programme aims to allow 4,500 STEM teachers to reach 3,960,000 students by 2030.

New UNESCO study highlights impact of climate change on the right to education in Asia-Pacific region

Every year over the past decade, most of the world's new disaster displacements are recorded in East and South Asia and the Pacific. In 2021, Asia and the Pacific accounted for 80 per cent of the world's new disaster displacements.

That is why UNESCO has published a new and timely regional report analyzing the impacts of climate change and displacement on the right to education in the [Asia-Pacific region](#) as part of its initiative on [The impacts of climate change and displacement on the right to education](#). The study is among several regional reports released this year providing guidance for policy-makers, and will contribute to a Global Report which will be released by the end of 2023.

The number of internally displaced persons because of disasters globally has swollen from 23.7 million people in 2021 to 32.6 million people in 2022 according to the International Displacement Monitoring Center. Climate-displaced people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, see their right to education compromised by direct and indirect barriers to education. The protection of the right to education

for specific group of persons affected by climate change, as well as their specific educational vulnerabilities, has not been adequately addressed.

UNESCO carried comparative case studies in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Tuvalu, and Viet Nam. Based on these studies, the report examines not only specific vulnerabilities to climate change and related mobility, but also the impacts of climate change on the right to education in the region.

Key findings of the regional report

- Population growth and rapid urbanization, including in highly hazard-prone urban areas, are heightening the vulnerability of people in the region.
- School closures due to flooding represent massive disruption to education in all of the selected countries. This phenomenon is exacerbated by inadequate school infrastructure and disaster management plans. The continuity of education is also prevented by the use of schools as emergency shelters.
- The lack of financial resources is a common factor to all displacement scenarios in this region. Families are forced to prioritize economic security over their children's education.
- Climate change and climate displacement exacerbate existing educational inequalities and barriers to education. The financially



disadvantaged, girls and women, rural communities, those with pre-existing health risks and persons with disabilities are the most vulnerable to climate-induced barriers to education.

- Climate displaced persons face administrative and language barriers in their access to education, as well as trauma and discrimination.

- Disaster response policies and measures across government sectors are often inconsistent and disintegrated, thereby delaying students' return to learning.

- Among the countries studied, Bangladesh, with its National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement, has the only comprehensive, national-level policy that explicitly ensures the right to education for those displaced by climate change.

Intersectoral action must be taken to address both the common barriers to education as well as the national specificities amidst climate change and climate displacement. UNESCO will continue to advocate for the right to education by providing guidance and recommendations to policy-makers.

The findings and recommendations of this regional report will be shared and discussed with experts and state representatives at a side-event organized on 17 May by UNESCO and the UN University-Institute for Advanced Study of Sustainability on the margins of the 79th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Commission.

UNESCO

ChatGPT is the Start of Online Education, Not the End

By Tim Culpan



Of the dozens of listed companies talking up the potential of ChatGPT-like technologies, Chegg Inc. is among the first to [publicly state](#) just how deleterious the trend could be for its business. It needn't be, though management seems ready to ride the wave of this new innovation rather than swim against the current.

Chegg describes itself as a "student-first connected learning platform." With annual revenue of just \$767 million in 2022, it is nowhere

near the scale of behemoths jumping on the artificial intelligence bandwagon, such as Alphabet Inc., Microsoft Corp. and Amazon.com Inc.

Yet online education is a huge industry, estimated by researcher Statista at \$167 billion in 2023 and climbing to \$239 billion by 2027. Chegg's slice of that market is centered around helping college students with homework and cramming for exams, and charges subscriptions starting at \$14.95 per month. The pandemic was good for business, with revenue jumping 57% in 2020 and 20% the following year.

But then it faced a confluence of factors, including a return to campus and a reduced emphasis on academic rigor by both learners and professors. As a result, sales dropped in 2022.

Still, shareholders seemed to have been caught unaware by the next big challenge. Chegg's shares dropped at least 42% after the Santa Clara-based

company made a simple comment about the advent of OpenAI's generative chat product, ChatGPT. "In the first part of the year, we saw no noticeable impact from ChatGPT on our new account growth and we were meeting expectations on new sign-ups. However, since March we saw a significant spike in student interest in ChatGPT. We now believe it's having an impact on our new customer growth rate."

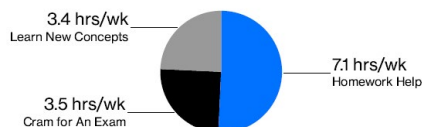
ChatGPT's greatest strength is to mimic human language, allowing it to present information in a coherent and conversational manner that is easily accessible. It has been deployed for countless tasks, with the composition of school essays and writing code among the most productive examples. So naturally, Chegg's customers are logging on to give it a try.

Stack Overflow, a community bulletin board for developers, has

the potential to be the biggest victim of ChatGPT — for over a decade it has been the go-to site for knowledge-sharing and problem solving. Today, you can just ask a chatbot to write code or bug-check your own creation.

Students Go Online For Homework Help

The majority of time spent on Chegg's platform is used for writing homework, a prime area of ChatGPT usage in education.



Source: Chegg

But ChatGPT's biggest weakness is inaccuracy. This isn't a great problem when you deploy it to create simple software, because you can run that code and immediately know if it works (it often doesn't.) It's a terrible attribute if you're using it to teach your kids mathematics, because it churns out convincing answers that are just plain wrong. The last thing we need is confident-sounding bots persuading students that $1+1=3$.

Chegg's investors are right to be concerned about the advent of ChatGPT. Any interruption to the status quo threatens a company's business model, and the introduction of a revolutionary new technology is among the most disruptive developments.

Harvard Business School professor, Clayton Christensen, outlined this conflict in 1997 in his groundbreaking book *The Innovator's Dilemma*, and we've seen many examples since. Microsoft was so good at desktop operating systems that neither the company, nor its clients, seemed particularly interested in developing a decent mobile version. Apple Inc., on the other hand, pounced and today makes more money from handsets than PCs. Microsoft saved itself by jumping on

enterprise and cloud computing.

For Chegg and other online education providers such as Pearson Plc and TPR Education LLC, tackling ChatGPT's entry will come down to how they view their own competitive advantage. Thankfully, Chegg is small enough to be able to adapt without worrying about protecting massive existing revenue streams. If management believe that a well-designed interface and convenient delivery platform are distinguishing features, then an easy-to-use chatbot could have them beat.

If, however, they realize that their edge comes from decades of experience and a growing corpus of proprietary educational materials developed by humans, then they'll probably be just fine. Chegg does, at least, recognize this fact.

While investors are focused on the competition that comes from ChatGPT, they'd be wise to also note that Chegg plans to integrate OpenAI's latest model, GPT-4, into its CheggMate automated tutor interface. This strategy pairs the power of OpenAI's systems with the education provider's billions of items of content, and it keeps that all within Chegg's walled garden that customers will pay to access.

Other companies are likely to take a similar approach. Chinese peer New Oriental Education & Technology Group last month said it plans to apply ChatGPT-like features in its own offerings, while TAL Education Group is also adopting AI to improve content.

When viewing the role of generative AI, such as ChatGPT and its visual counterpart DALL-E, it's worth remembering that what we're wowed by today is a cute and gimmicky front-end: Chatty bots and expressive artists. In reality, the real magic is in its ability to collate vast amounts of information and present it in a human-friendly form. For that to happen, the true value comes from the content that trains them, which means education providers may well be sitting on a pot of gold.

Bloomberg

Education startup TEKY raises \$5M from foreign investors



Education startup TEKY Alpha has raised US\$5 million from Singaporean investment firm Sweef Capital to expand its operations.

TEKY plans to expand its educational services at public schools and after-school programmes for children aged five to 18, Sweef Capital said in a statement.

The startup, founded by Dao Lan Huong in 2016, delivers science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics (STEAM) education.

It operates 16 STEAM coaching academies in five cities and partners with more than 45 schools to deliver STEAM courses to more than 25,000 children.

"I'm excited about our expansion plan to open more STEAM centers across the country in the next two years and the prospects of a partnership with public schools to integrate the STEAM curriculum and increase accessibility," Huong said.

The International Labour Organization has forecast that 137 million workers in Southeast Asia, or a fifth of the region's population, will lose their jobs because of automation, robots and artificial intelligence in the next two decades.

Workers around the world are likely to need to switch jobs and learn new skills, but many of the new jobs created by 2030 by technology would not have existed before.

Vietnamese education must keep pace with these big shifts so that the future workforce could seize the opportunities of the industry 4.0 era, Huong said.

This is Sweef Capital's first investment from its Southeast Asia Women's Economic Empowerment Fund.

Existing investor Hong Kong-based Strategic Year Holdings also participated in the round.

Retail News Asia

New UK funding to boost education opportunities for women and girls in Southeast Asia



International Development Minister Andrew Mitchell speaking at the Education World Forum (EWF) conference in London.

At the 2023 Education World Forum the International Development Minister launched a Girls' Education and Skills Programme following the UK-ASEAN Plan of Action.

- new support will provide around 100,000 women and girls with access to education and training in Southeast Asia
- the programme will boost female employment in sectors such as data analysis and technology
- this comes as the UK hosts the world's largest gathering of education ministers in London at the Education World Forum

A new UK funded programme will offer some of the most marginalised women and girls in Southeast Asia a better future by boosting access to a quality education.

Funding will go towards improving the quality of education for women and girls by prioritising teaching basic reading and maths skills to unlock their full potential.

The programme will expand women and girls' access to digital and technical education – focusing on what skills are needed to gain employment in high-skill sectors such as technology and manufacturing.

It will also promote the inclusion of remote and minority communities, urban poor and children with disabilities by setting up disability assessments to identify additional needs and medical referrals for eye tests.

International Development Minister Andrew Mitchell will announce the funding at the [Education World Forum \(EWF\)](#) conference in London on May 9, the largest international gathering of education ministers.

Minister for Development Andrew Mitchell said:

- Greater gender equality brings freedom, boosts prosperity and strengthens global security. Countries can't develop if half the population are held back from fulfilling their full potential.
- This means working in partnership with countries to provide a quality education for all with a focus on girls to address the barriers they face including violence, poverty, harmful gender norms and climate change.
- We're working with partners across Southeast Asia to tackle the learning crisis and improve education and future employment opportunities of women and girls to ensure a prosperous future.

Around 140 million children in Southeast Asia

experienced loss of education due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is made worse by low quality schooling, learning poverty, limited access to schools in rural areas, education that fails to equip students with workplace skills and girls dropping out of school because of early marriage.

In the ASEAN region, girls make up a larger proportion of out of-school children at primary level. This limits opportunities in later life and increases the risks of facing early marriage, young pregnancy and poverty.

The new UK funding of £30 million will address these barriers to education for the 1.2 million girls threatened with permanent school drop-out through cost-effective measures such as merit-based scholarships, girls clubs and catch up classes to ensure children stay in school.

UK expertise will help schools improve the quality of teaching through lesson planning and in-class support so more children are able to read and understand a short story by the age of 10 years old. This means the programme will directly support progress towards the UK's commitments for 40 million more girls in school and 20 million more girls reading.

The 5-year programme is the first in a series of new ASEAN-UK programmes designed to deliver on UK commitments as a dialogue partner and is further evidence of the UK's renewed effort to prioritise educating girls as set out in the [Women and Girls Strategy](#).

It is part of the UK's effort to improve effectiveness of education and follows the recently announced Scaling Access and Learning in Education programme to help get an additional 6 million girls around the world into school.

The UK also launched a new report with the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel and World Bank on 'Cost Effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning', which builds on the importance of early childhood education and provides recommendations covering health, nutrition and socio-emotional development.

Gov.UK

3 branch campuses in the APAC region radiating the quality of their home universities

In recent years, many universities from around the world have established branch campuses in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region. These branch campuses offer the same programmes and degrees as their main campuses, but are located in different countries, providing students with greater accessibility and diversity of educational opportunities.

There are many benefits to this approach. For instance, a student looking for an Australian business degree in Singapore may never need to leave the life they know behind. Similarly, if a Chinese student is looking to complete their last year of study at a campus in Korea, there's no reason why they cannot accomplish this.

Of course, students open to the idea of studying



James Cook University, Singapore

abroad but are hesitant to break the bank in certain countries are also welcome to relish the APAC region's rich history and cultural heritage. After all, the cheapest Asian countries enable international students to receive a great education and experience — for as low as US\$2,900 a year. But to ensure that you're picking the best of the best, read on.

James Cook University, Singapore

[James Cook University \(JCU\) Australia](#) ranks among the world's top 20% of universities for its exemplary education. When it comes to addressing critical global challenges, it ranks among the world's top 2%. By internationalising its excellence in 2003 through the establishment of a Singapore campus, the university was able to broaden access to its quality education. This impressive branch campus, [JCU in Singapore](#), achieved "university" status in 2016, and became the only Australian institution in the country to carry such a distinction.



The Singapore campus of James Cook University has the highest level of quality assurance in Singapore for Private Education Institutions.

Source: James Cook University, Singapore

Esteemed accolades eventually followed. The Singapore campus was awarded the EduTrust Star, a symbol of recognition for outstanding achievement and the Singapore Quality Class STAR (SQC STAR), which recognises organisations that made further improvements in their business excellence journey. It has even achieved an R&D grant from the Singaporean government. The success of the Singapore campus of James Cook University comes as no surprise, as its wide-ranging research spans areas such as aquaculture and marine science, business, education, psychology and tourism; proving its status as an important contributor of impact to Singapore and the immediate region.

The theme of excellence persists throughout its expansive lineup of academic offerings, which cover the areas

of information technology (IT), psychology, education, science, commerce, accounting, aquaculture, environmental science, games design, tourism and hospitality, and, of course, business. In fact, studying [business at JCU Singapore](#) means working towards your aspirations at one of only four AACSB-accredited business schools in Singapore.

Budding 21st-century learners might be more intrigued by the branch campus's science and technology degrees, such as the Bachelor of Cybersecurity, which offers a solid foundation in all things IT. Career changers hoping to gain a better understanding of behaviour and mental processes — a competency that can be leveraged across a range of sectors — can dive into one of the university's psychology courses instead. The Master of Psychology (Clinical) offered at the Singapore campus of JCU, one of the two programmes recommended by NCSS Singapore, remains a popular choice.

JCU Singapore recognises excellence and the importance of hard work, which is precisely why it offers exclusive [Merit Scholarships](#) for high-calibre individuals. This offers opportunities to exemplary students to broaden their horizons and emerge as impactful leaders of the future.

Mason Korea

Founded in 1972, George Mason University is known for producing some of Virginia's highest earners. In 2014, it expanded to Korea. Located just 25 miles from Seoul, [Mason, Korea](#), is now well on its way to becoming the best global education hub in Northeast Asia — perhaps for its unique ability to offer students the best of both worlds.



George Mason Korea currently offers US degrees in six undergraduate disciplines Source: George Mason Korea Facebook

Mason Korea currently offers US degrees in six undergraduate disciplines — business, computer game design, computational and data sciences, conflict analysis and resolution, economics, and global affairs. Fully taught in English, all programmes lead to the same top-tier qualification George Mason University's graduates achieve solely in the US.

Furthermore, each qualification affords students the rare opportunity to spend three years at GMU Korea in Songdo and one year in the US at Mason in Fairfax, Virginia. Of course, networking opportunities abound within Korea as well, thanks to Mason's strong ties with the Incheon Global Campus and other neighbouring schools in Songdo.

Plenty of connections are formed within Mason Korea as well. Students here enjoy a 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio that ensures individualised attention and unlimited interaction from and with world-class faculty members, comprising renowned global leaders, experts, former executives, and more.

University of Southampton Malaysia

The University of Southampton

offers a truly unique and innovative approach to higher education. With seven campuses worldwide, including [one in Malaysia](#), students can experience the renowned ‘Southampton education’ while studying in Southeast Asia for their first two years. After this, they can complete their degree at a world-class research-centred university in the UK.

Since its establishment in 2012, the University of Southampton Malaysia has expanded its undergraduate programme portfolio to include Business, Computer Science and Economics, and a range of Foundation Year courses. Programmes cover accounting and finance, business analytics, business entrepreneurship, business management, computer science, economics, actuarial science, finance, financial technology, marketing, mechanical engineering,



The University of Southampton Malaysia offers innovative programmes students can explore in Malaysia and the UK.

Source: University of Southampton Malaysia Facebook

electrical and electronic engineering, as well as aeronautics and astronautics.

All programmes are taught by

impressive educators, who are dedicated to ensuring students have access to the best possible research opportunities, both within and beyond the classroom. PhD students and research assistants are actively encouraged to participate in these projects, providing an invaluable experience for those looking to further their education.

What truly sets the University of Southampton Malaysia apart is its commitment to customisation. Students here have the opportunity to tailor their academics to their individual interests and career aspirations, with many programmes offering interdisciplinary modules that allow them to study subjects from different fields. By learning alongside students with diverse perspectives, they can broaden their horizons and develop a unique skill set that sets them apart in today's job market.

Study International

Nepal seeking to become int'l education hub

Nepal is vying to become a hub for international education, according to its minister for education, science and technology.

Speaking at an event convened by the Higher Institutions and Secondary Schools' Association Nepal, Shishir Khanal suggested the landlocked country could increase the number of international students it attracts significantly.

“Let us make Nepal a country where we can bring in the same number of students as we send abroad,” he said, according to [local media](#) reports.

Khanal acknowledged that the quality of education from primary to basic school level can be improved but indicated that “but by taking advantage of the geographical location of Nepal”, the country can “become an international education hub”.

“With the vision of building that hub, it is necessary to create an environment that can bring in foreign students instead of sending students abroad,” he said.

It is not clear how many international students are currently in Nepal. UNESCO does not collect data for inbound mobility to the country.

Bigyan Shrestha, chairman at [SoftEd Group](#), said the organisation is working on plans to promote Nepal as an education hub in Asia.

He pointed to UK TNE partnerships as being particularly attractive for prospective students, in addition to the “excellent weather, great tourism places and Himalayas students can explore while studying”.

“Nepal has also become a centre for some world ranked UK universities who are working with private colleges on TNE partnership. Students from Asia can come to Nepal to study one or two years of bachelor programs and transfer to the UK or to some ASEAN countries offering UK university programs in the final year,” he added.

“It is good time for Nepal to look on this dimension

and attract students from South Asian countries, such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, etc.”

However, others have questioned the aims of the country which is traditionally a source market for students rather than a destination.

Speaking to [University World News](#) earlier this year following the 2022 election, retired Tribhuvan University professor and former education specialist for UNESCO in the Asia Pacific region, called for a “complete restructuring” of the country's higher education.

UWN noted that some 112,528 students – close to a fourth of the total number of university students in Nepal – had sought No Objection Certificates to study across 80 countries in 2021/22. According to the Education Consultancy Association of Nepal, around 40% of those receiving the NOC tend to go abroad.

Australia has become the top destination for Nepalese students, The Katmandu Post reported in September 2022. Between January and November 2022, the 56,847 Nepalese students in Australia made up some 9% of international students studying courses in the country. This is compared to the 4,920 Nepalese students enrolled in UK universities in 2021/22.

US numbers increased by 5.6% in 2021/22 to reach 11,779 students, making it the 11th source country for international students, while Canada approved over 2,200 Nepali students to study in the country in 2021.

But Shrestha continued to say that quality of life and safety and security for international students in Nepal has improved in recent years.

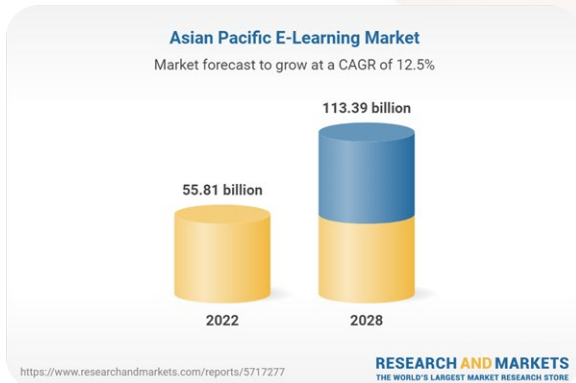
As secretary of International Education Providers Association of Nepal, Shrestha is working closely with the government to this vision, he concluded.

The News

Asia Pacific E-Learning Market Report 2023

The “[Asia Pacific E-Learning Market Forecast to 2028](#), COVID-19 Impact and Regional Analysis By Delivery Mode, Learning Mode, and End User” report has been added to [ResearchAndMarkets.com](#)’s offering.

The APAC e-learning market is expected to grow from US\$ 55.81 billion in 2022 to US\$ 113.39 billion by 2028; it is estimated to register at a CAGR of 12.5% during 2022-2028.



A learning management system (LMS) is a software application for administering, documenting, tracking, reporting, automating, and delivering educational, training, or learning and development programs. The LMS concept has emerged from e-learning, and it manages all types of content - including video, course, and documentation. LMS used in the education sector have functionalities similar to those used in the corporate sector, but with features such as rubrics, education LMS facilitate teaching and tutoring by teachers and instructors, along with providing users with access to a discussion board.

LMS platforms were initially designed to be hosted locally (on-site), and organizations buy a license to a software version, followed by installing it on their servers and network. Many LMS are now being offered as software-as-a-service (SaaS), with vendors providing hosting that allows the communication of learning objectives and organizes learning timelines.

In June 2021, Huawei held the Asia-Pacific Higher Education Innovation Forum through live streaming. The theme of the forum was “Embracing the New Era of Intelligent Education.” It focused on topics such as smart campus, online education, and smart classroom, and discussed the development trend of education ICT, and challenges and opportunities associated with the adoption of e-learning platforms in APAC.

Moreover, the education sector in the region is being shaped by several digital technologies, namely, AR; personalized hybrid learning; gamification; AI; and IoT and mobile learning; micro-learning; social learning; and corporate massive open online course (MOOC), which are the emerging trends propelling the APAC e-learning market growth.

The instructor-led e-learning segment dominated the APAC e-learning market with a larger share in 2021. Instructor-led learning is a learning process where one person (teacher) takes a lead role by providing guidance to learners. In addition, instructor-led training is traditionally used by employers to arrange the training of their employees. The use of e-learning can simplify various aspects of instructor-led training in organizations. It is comparatively expensive to conduct instructor-led training sessions in physical classrooms or workshops, and the number of learners that get access to this

type of education at a time remains limited, thereby driving the APAC e-learning market growth.

Several corporate organizations follow the instructor-led training process to train their employees, whereby experienced employees usually take the role of an instructor, while less skilled employees take the role of a learner. However, the self-paced segment is expected to maintain its dominance in the APAC e-learning market during the forecast period. Growing preference for the continuous process of learning and scaling up of new employee career opportunities are among the factors driving corporations to adopt self-paced e-learning platforms. Furthermore, with self-paced learning, participants can take the time they need and set their own schedules, rather than working within a structure set by an instructor.

The APAC e-learning market, by delivery mode, is segmented into online, LMS, mobile, and others. Based on learning mode, the market is bifurcated into self-paced and instructor-led. Based on end user, the market is divided into academic (K-12 and higher institutions) and corporate. By country, the APAC e-learning market is segmented into Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, and the Rest of APAC.

Governments in these countries are taking initiatives for integrating e-learning solutions into their education systems. In addition, continuous developments in internet infrastructure are creating a conducive environment for the launch of e-learning courses. In June 2021, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) launched an e-learning course to help reduce the impact of plastic pollution.

The course entitled Cities and Marine Plastic Pollution is available as an open-source knowledge product that is accessible to anyone who wants to learn more about taking measures to ensure clear waters for future generations, becoming major factors boosting the APAC e-learning market growth. Thus, the growing number of universities and schools, an increase in the launch of e-learning courses, surging adoption and reach of smartphones, and a rising number of collaborations between regional universities and foreign institutes (to deliver online courses) are among the major factors contributing to the APAC e-learning market growth during the forecast period.

Due to the rapid acceptance of remote working models during the COVID-19 pandemic, since 2020, corporate organizations began using digital methods for the training and induction of their employees. The demand for new skills and competencies has increased among corporate and education sectors, resulting in candidates and employees seeking innovative ways to continue learning and promote knowledge-sharing.

Governments and several associations in APAC are increasingly introducing e-learning platforms and schemes for balancing the education sector. For instance, in April 2020, the APAC Accreditation Cooperation developed an e-learning platform to broaden access to training by allowing delegates to learn from their desks. In addition, the platform offers free online courses, particularly for assessors and staff of accreditation bodies, thereby accelerated the APAC e-learning market growth.

Market Dynamics

Market Drivers

- Ease of Tracking Student Performance and Maintaining Centralized Student Database

- Emergence of Digital Learning
- Growing Number of Cost-Effective E-Learning Models

Market Restraints

- High Cost of Producing and Maintaining E-Learning Content
- Need for Designing E-learning Courses for Different Generations

Market Opportunities

- Increasing Spending on Education Sector
- Transformation and Enrichment of Education Experience via AI-Powered E-Learning

Future Trends

- Mobile Learning Technologies
- Video-Based Learning

GlobeNewswire

About CACCI

The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) is a regional grouping of apex national chambers of commerce and industry, business associations and business enterprises in Asia and the Western Pacific.

It is a non-governmental organization serving as a forum for promoting the vital role of businessmen in the region, increasing regional business interaction, and enhancing regional economic growth. Since its establishment in 1966, CACCI has grown into a network of national chamber of commerce with a total now of 27 primary Members from 25 Asian countries and independent economies. It cuts across national boundaries to link businessmen and promote economic growth throughout the Asia-Pacific region. CACCI is a non-governmental organization (NGO) granted consultative status, Roster category, under the United Nations.

It is a member of the Conference on NGOs (CoNGO), an association of NGOs with UN consultative status.

Among the benefits of membership in CACCI are the following:

1. Policy Advocacy - CACCI aims to play a strong policy advocacy role in order to establish a business environment conducive to creating better opportunities for CACCI members.

2. Wide scope for networking - Participation in the various projects of CACCI will provide members the opportunity to expand their reach in Asia-Pacific by establishing contacts with the business communities of the region.

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 international organizations and member chambers.

4. Interaction in Products 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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