The six-nation education research project

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The Six-Nation Education Research Project

Report by Toh Kok Aun & S Gopinathan, NIECER

Educational scholars, policy makers and administrators from six countries, viz. P.R. China, Germany, Japan, Singapore, Switzerland and the U.S.A., joined forces in 1993 to be united in the common goal of pursuing excellence in education. Under the broad theme Education and Economic Growth, six projects were planned with each country being responsible for leading the planning and co-ordinating of a specific project. In addition each country attempts to take part in as many projects as possible for those led by a different country. The six projects and the lead countries are:

- China: National Education India
- Germany: Education and Economic Growth
- Japan: Higher Education
- Singapore: Language Education and Literacy
- Switzerland: Vocational Training and Education
- U.S.A.: Mathematics and Science Education

The Language Education and Literacy project is being undertaken by NIE. The present PI is Rita Skuja-Steele. The project explores language teaching in the fourth year of learning English in each of the participating countries. The original 4 countries taking part in the study are Singapore, Germany, Switzerland and the U.S.A. The P.R. China and Japan have indicated interest in joining the project since the last Steering Committee Meeting held in Shanghai in June 1999.

NIE is also involved in a second project, on Mathematics and Science Education. The PI for the project is Toh Kok Aun. The study in Singapore focuses on analysing a rich amount of data embedded within the TIMSS database in an attempt to learn more concerning how students perform in mathematics and science, and the factors affecting achievement in each country. The study will also augment the scope of the performance assessment tasks in the TIMSS database to study how students are performing in the fundamental components making up these tasks. The other countries involved in the Mathematics and Science Education project are P.R. China, Germany, Switzerland and the U.S.A.

The lead agency for the National Education Indicators project in Singapore is the Planning Division of MOE. The development of indicators to monitor Singapore’s education systems serves to provide information for policy review and decision making options by senior management and legislators. Indicators developed can be classified into four broad categories, namely participation in education, human and financial resources, educational outcomes, and contexts of education. To keep up with the demands for accountability, school and teacher effectiveness indicators are also being developed.

In Singapore the lead agency for the Vocational Training and Education (VTE) project is ITE and led by its Director & CEO, Dr Law Song Seng. The other participating countries are Switzerland, Japan and the U.S.A. The project aims to understand the differences and similarities of each other’s VTE system; to transfer results of analysis to each country; and to develop core elements of a common VTE model where it is feasible.

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