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Visit of H.E. Dr. Teerakiat Jareonsettasin, Minister of Education of Thailand cum SEAMEO Council President and the Delegation



On March 06, 2017, H.E. Dr. Teerakiat Jareonsettasin, Minister of Education of Thailand cum SEAMEO Council President paid an official visit to SEAMEO Regional Training Center (SEAMEO RETRAC). Joining the visit were high officials from the Ministry of Education of Thailand and Dr. Gatot Hari Priowirjanto, Director of SEAMEO Secretariat. The welcome ceremony also had the presence of the representatives from the Royal Consulate General of Thailand, the Ministry of Education and Training, Vietnam, the Center's leadership, teaching faculty, all staff members and the media. The delegation was briefed on the Center's past activities and plans for the coming years, in which emphasis would continue to be placed on such major activities and services as educational management and

leadership, ICT, English language teaching and learning, English teacher training, and quality assurance and accreditation in education.

At the meeting, H.E. Dr. Teerakiat Jareonsettasin had a keynote speech on the Center's future operations. The President congratulated on the Center's achievements, especially its efforts in the international cooperation with Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, as well as collaboration with other SEAMEO Regional Centers. The President suggested that the Center continue to strengthen its international collaboration, including cooperative joint ventures with institutions and organizations galore in order to become one of the leading training centers in the region.



Training activities

Activity 2 of the BUILD-IT (Building University-Industry Learning and Development through Innovation and Technology) Project

Activity #2 of the BUILD-IT (Building University-Industry Learning and Development through Innovation and Technology) Project calls for a series of Policy and Leadership seminars for executives of partner science and technology universities across Vietnam. Arizona State University (ASU) directs the BUILD-IT Project in collaboration with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Vietnamese government, U.S. universities and industry partners. ASU engaged the services of Portland State University (PSU) in Oregon to design and carry out Activity #2 of the Project.

In collaboration with Portland State University, USA, SEAMEO RETRAC

successfully conducted the Kickoff Session in 2016, whereas a series of training seminars on "Leading policy innovation" will be conducted in 2017. The first seminar of leading policy innovation, focusing on policy identification was held on January 9-11, 2017, at SEAMEO RETRAC's premises in Ho Chi Minh City. Thirty two executives from different STEM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Math) university partners in Vietnam attended this event. During the three days of training, the participants were familiarized with and practiced essential tools related to the identification of policies at their universities. The second seminar on leading policy innovation will focus on the policy formulation at universities and will be conducted on May 9-11, 2017 in Nha Trang; followed by Seminar III to be conducted on September 5-7, 2017, at SEAMEO RETRAC's premises in Ho Chi Minh City. The theme of Seminar III will focus on the realization of policy at universities.



Training Workshops on Innovative Methods in English Language Teaching at universities and colleges in Vietnam

SEAMEO RETRAC in collaboration with Regional English Language Office (RELO) successfully conducted two training workshops on Innovative Methods in English Language Teaching (ELT) at universities and colleges in Vietnam for 56 lecturers specializing in ELT teacher training from February 21st to 25th, 2017. The workshops, delivered by Dr. Dilin Liu, Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English from University of Alabama, the USA, covered such interesting topics as (1) effective ways of teaching English involving the use of corpora; (2) the teaching of pragmatics/culture; and (3) innovative ways of



English grammar/vocabulary assessment. The participants highly appreciated the practical and applicable contents of the workshop, the expertise of the facilitator, and the professionalism of SEAMEO RETRAC in organizing academic events. Organizing training workshops is one of the strengths of SEAMEO RETRAC in teacher professional development activities,

which enable ELT teachers and lecturers to update their knowledge, to share their good practices and experiences, and to do networking with colleagues from different institutions. Through these activities, SEAMEO RETRAC also develops its collaboration with various international organizations and universities to bring prominent experts and scholars to Vietnam.

Training Workshop on ICT Application in Course Management and Teaching



March 28-30, 2017, SEAMEO RETRAC in collaboration with Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) organized the training workshop on "ICT Application in

Course Management and Teaching" at its premises.

The training was facilitated by Prof. Dr. Kazuo Nagata (Kumamoto National College of Technology, Japan) on the annual expert dispatch program supported by MEXT. The workshop focused on the course management and teaching by employing and applying Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The workshop involved the participation of 30 lecturers and staff from colleges and universities in Ho Chi Minh City and other provinces in Southern Vietnam.

Training the Trainer Course on Capacity Building in Educational Leadership and Management



April 19-22, 2017, SEAMEO RETRAC in cooperation with the Institute for Educational Administration Development (IFEAD), Lao Ministry of Education and Sports conducted the in-country training course in educational leadership and management for trainers in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Attending the training workshop were 31 managers and lecturers in basic

education who currently are or will be master trainers in educational leadership and management. In addition to the IFEAD staff, the participants came from various locations and provinces in Lao PDR. The training course was facilitated by SEAMEO RETRAC's educational trainers with the focus on providing and updating the knowledge, skills and practices crucial to improving the training capacity for basic education trainers in such topics as Assessment of Student Learning, Innovative Educational Leadership in the 21st Century, Human Resource Management, ICT Integration in Day-to-day Education Management.



International Training Workshop in Enhancing Capacity in Leadership and Management in Higher Education



June 6-9, 2017, SEAMEO RETRAC conducted its annual international training course in Enhancing Capacity in Leadership and Management in Higher Education for 31 educational leaders and administrators from ministries, colleges and universities in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam.

The objectives of the course were to enhance the leaders' and administrators' educational leadership and management skills in higher education as well as to provide the participants with practical knowledge

and experience in educational leadership and management in these three countries. The topics facilitated at the workshop included Innovative Leadership in Higher Education in the 21st Century, Organizational Culture and Crisis Management in Higher Education, Assessing Student Learning in Higher Education, Human Resource Management and Staff Development. During the course of the training, the participants also visited Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Vietnam to learn more about how an international institution operated in Vietnam.

In addition, the participants had also the chance to share their experience as well as challenges facing their institutions. This workshop is also a starting point for participating institutions to develop and expand their linkages and future cooperation.

STEMCON (Science – Technology – Engineering – Math) Conference 2017

On March 1-2, 2017, Dr. Ho Thanh My Phuong, SEAMEO RETRAC Director, and Dr. Do Thi Hoai Thu, Dean of Division of Education, attended the 5th Annual Conference of STEMCON 2017 convened at the InterContinental Hanoi Westlake, Vietnam. The Conference, with the theme of “Advancing the future of Vietnam: Inspiring students, makers, educators and entrepreneurs to innovate”, was conducted by Arizona State University, the Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program (HEEAP) and its partners. During two days of the conference, the participants, who were faculty and university, industry and government leaders, were actively engaged in interactive plenary and technical sessions, panel discussions, exhibits and seminars. These activities helped paving paths for new ventures and partnerships via the HEEAP (Higher

Engineering Education Alliance Program) and Arizona State University extended network.

At the conference, Dr. Ho Thanh My Phuong, on behalf of SEAMEO RETRAC and the core partner of the BUILD-IT Project (Building University-Industry Learning and Development through Innovation and Technology), and Dr. Marcus Ingle from Portland University, Oregon, USA conducted an interactive workshop on “Leading policy innovation in Vietnam’s STEM universities: From practical policy identification to successful realization”. The workshop demonstrated how selected “policy leadership” teams from Vietnamese universities are learning about how to identify, formulate and successfully realize practice policies aligned with improvements in the quality of workforce ready graduates.

Seminar II “Leading University Policy Formulation”, BUILD-IT Project



Under the sponsorship of USAID, SEAMEO RETRAC in its partnership with Portland State University, and Arizona State University, USA, carried out Seminar II of the seminar series on “Building university-industry learning and development through innovation and technology” (BUILD-IT) from May 9 to 11, 2017. The Seminar II concentrated on the Leading University Policy Formulation. Participating in the Seminar were 25 administrators, managers from STEM universities in Vietnam. During the 3 days of intense training, participants familiarized themselves with such the contents as Policy Formulation, Policy Briefs, EMERGE Leadership Framework, Persuasion Skills in the Context of Policy Formulation. Besides, they were also given opportunity to present cases in their own institutions and contexts with regards to policy formulation. Seminar III on Leading University Policy Realization will be conducted in September, 2017.

The First Vietnam Language Assessment Symposium



SEAMEO Regional Training Center (SEAMEO RETRAC) in collaboration with the British Council and National Foreign Languages 2020 Project have successfully organized the 1st Vietnam Language Assessment Symposium on the 23rd of May 2017. The theme of the symposium was "Classroom-based assessment and the assessment of learning". The Symposium attracted more than 200 educational professionals, teachers, lecturers and assessment practitioners in Vietnam. The highlights focused on several aspects such as Classroom-based

assessments to inform learning, Classroom-based assessments to inform teaching, Assessment literacy for teachers, Alternative assessments, Properties of classroom-based assessments vs. standardized assessments, Validity and reliability of classroom-based assessments, Issues and challenges in classroom-based assessments, and Classroom-based assessments and meeting needs of diverse learners. These themes address new trends, challenges as well as innovative solutions in the language testing and assessment in Vietnam. Moreover, several practical testing and assessment models were presented at the symposium, aiming to provide applicable testing and assessment tools in the context of Vietnam.

This Symposium was an initiative of British Council. SEAMEO RETRAC had the honor of being an organizing partner, collaboratively creating a forum for exchanges in language testing and assessment in Vietnam.

Other activities

Administering Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency for English Language Teachers

On March 04-05, 2017, SEAMEO RETRAC in collaboration with the Department of Education and Training in Binh Duong Province administered the Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP) for 235 English language teachers of primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary schools in Binh Dương Province.



The VSTEP was also administered at SEAMEO RETRAC on March 17 and June 9, 2017 for 225 English language teachers, and university students and lecturers, and others working in various fields.

SEAMEO RETRAC is one of the institutions authorized by the Ministry of Education and Training to assess and upgrade the levels of English proficiency, especially for in-service English teachers, and university students. Periodical tests are available at SEAMEO RETRAC for English teachers.

Guest Speaker's presentation on "English Language Learning and Teaching in a Mobile World: Challenges and Possibilities"

Dr. Doan Ba Ngoc, lecturer and course coordinator in TESOL and language & literacy at the School of Education, University of South Australia, paid a visit to SEAMEO RETRAC and delivered a talk to ELT teachers and lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City on "English Language Learning and Teaching in a Mobile World: Challenges and Possibilities" on March 9, 2017, at the Center's premise.

The talk pointed out various challenges and possibilities in learning and teaching English in the current globalized, mobile

world. It also highlighted the framework, called the 3x3 Toolkit, designed to help non-native students studying in Australia cope with the difficulties in thesis writing. Working effectively through 1) developing the students' critical reading capacity, 2) guiding their critical writing, and 3) providing feedback on their writing, the framework is an example for what language educators can do to meet learners' language needs in the new situation.



MOU Signing Ceremony with the University of Victoria, Canada

On 24 March 2017, SEAMEO RETRAC and the University of Victoria, Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will pave the way for collaborative training and research activities, scholarly exchange, internship programs and participation in international conferences. Within the shared vision stated in this memorandum, SEAMEO RETRAC hopes to not only facilitate student and faculty exchange from Vietnam to Canada, but also encourage Canadian students and faculty to come to the SEAMEO center for internships, short-term study visits, and work-integrated learning opportunities. With international attention turning towards Vietnam, SEAMEO RETRAC hopes to offer international students first-hand opportunities to learn about Vietnamese education, culture, and society.



Sharing session with a British Trade Delegation

On May 18, 2017 a British trade delegation specialized in education and training services visited SEAMEO RETRAC as a part of their tour of Thailand and Vietnam. The delegation was led by the British Business Group Vietnam, the British Consulate General, and the Training Gateway. A sharing session on RETRAC's goals as a development agency was hosted by the Center's managers. The partnership between the British Council and RETRAC was highlighted during the session. The attending university and business ventures were eager to learn how RETRAC and the British Council worked together over the past decades to improve the quality of educational training and leadership across Vietnam and Southeast Asia.



Staff Retreat to Phu Quoc Island



SEAMEO RETRAC Trade Union organized a staff retreat to Phu Quoc Island - one of Asia's premier vacation destinations from May 30 - June 2, 2017 . During the trip, the Center's staff enjoyed the natural coastline's beauty and the island's unique cuisine. The annual Center retreat rewards all the staff for their hard work over the year and reinforces understanding and cooperation across departments and management levels.

UP COMING EVENTS

- Workshop in ICT Application in Work Organization and Academic Management, July 13-14, 2017
- 49th SEAMEO Council Conference and Center Director Meeting 2017, July 24-28, 2017
- Workshop in Crisis Leadership in Higher Education in the 21st Century, July 26, 2017
- International Conference in Leadership and Management in Higher Education: Challenges, Opportunities and Ways Forward, July 27-28, 2017
- Recruitment Events with Kaplan International and Canadian Express Study Program in July, 2017
- Training Workshop on Backward Curriculum Design in English Language Teaching to University and College Lecturers of English, August 7-9, 2017
- Graduation Ceremony of the Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics Program Intake 15 (2015-2017), August 09, 2017
- International Conference on TESOL "ELT in the 21st Century: Challenges & Opportunities", August 10-11, 2017
- Administering Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency for English Language Teachers at SEAMEO RETRAC, August 17-18, 2017
- Workshop in Grant Proposal Writing, August 21-24, 2017
- Sharing session on teaching writing skill to young learners, August 27, 2017
- Trainer-Training Workshop on Soft Skills Teaching - Module 3, August 28-31, 2017
- Seminar III of BUILD-IT Project, September 6-8, 2017
- Educational Forum on Leadership and Management, September 21, 2017
- SEAMEO RETRAC 20th Governing Board Meeting, September 21-22, 2017



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