

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: MKSS

TA No. and Name RETA 6083: ICT and HIV/AIDS Preventive Education in the Cross-Border Areas of the Greater Mekong Subregion			Amount Approved: \$1,000,000		
			Revised Amount: n/a		
Executing Agencies: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)		Source of Funding: TASF	TA Amount Undisbursed -	TA Amount Utilized \$1,000,000	
Date			Completion Date		
Approval 19 Dec 2002	Signing UNESCO – 28 March 2003	Fielding of Consultants n/a	Original 30 June 2004		Actual 31 December 2004
			Closing Date		
			Original 30 September 2004		Actual 9 August 2005
Description					
<p>The regional technical assistance (RETA) was approved by ADB on 19 December 2002. The RETA was financed under the ADB TA funded program for \$1.0 million, and cofinanced by UNESCO (\$431,000) and SEAMEO (\$432,000) with contribution in the amount of \$100,000 from participating government (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Yunnan Province of People's Republic of China [PRC], Thailand and Viet Nam). The RETA aimed to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS infection among vulnerable age groups and poor and marginalized population groups, and expand the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and other multimedia technologies in HIV/AIDS preventive education. It planned to support an estimated 36 secondary schools and 2 schools, and population groups (e.g., school children, out of school youth, special populations such as mobile groups and ethnic minorities, and origin communities) in cross-border areas.</p> <p>About 21 million people from ethnic groups live among the 240 million people in the GMS. Many live in remote mountainous areas, with relatively poor social and physical infrastructure. Ethnic minorities, especially women, are at risk because of lack of access to education and health care, poverty, lack of culturally appropriate information in their own languages, cultural and social breakdown within some communities, nontraditional drug use, human trafficking, and involvement in the sex trade. Use of ICT in education and health for HIV/AIDS prevention was limited due to a lack of infrastructure, hardware and software, trained personnel, and limited financial resources.</p>					
Objectives and Scope					
<p>The objectives of the RETA were to: (i) develop ICT learning materials for HIV/AIDS preventive education in local languages; (ii) build the capacities of teachers, health workers, multimedia providers, and other stakeholders for HIV/AIDS preventive education; (iii) expand the use of ICT interventions in HIV/AIDS preventive education; and (iv) deliver ICT-based interventions to isolated, marginalized, and vulnerable populations. Specifically, the RETA targeted around 8,000 in-school youth (ages 13-24) through interventions in schools in high-risk cross border areas with high prevalence of HIV/AIDS; out-of-school youth and other special risk groups (truck drivers, sex workers, and interstitial population); and source communities through educational radio-based programming, community-based information programs, community learning centers and peer education support for ICT programs.</p> <p>The RETA sought to achieve increased awareness and build skills on HIV/AIDS prevention among vulnerable groups in the cross-border areas by: (i) training teachers in using ICT-based learning materials and preventive education efforts in schools; (ii) using a strategy of decentralized development of materials down to the provincial/district level; (iii) developing and disseminating educational radio programs and audio tapes; (iv) systematically collecting, storing, and repackaging innovative education materials in an expanded clearinghouse of information and materials support; (v) establishing a geographic information system (GIS); and (vi) targeting interventions at special and interstitial populations, in collaboration with community-based organizations and nongovernment organizations (NGOs). The design of the RETA was satisfactory and the terms of references for SEAMEO and UNESCO were clear and comprehensive.</p>					
Evaluation of Inputs					
<p>No significant modifications were made during implementation. The RETA had two executing agencies (EAs)—UNESCO and SEAMEO, and the implementing agencies were selected partners of UNESCO and three SEAMEO regional centers. County-level support was provided through (i) UNESCO offices in Bangkok, Phnom Penh, and Hanoi; (ii) SEAMEO country teams; and (iii) ministries of education and health in each developing member country. UNESCO and SEAMEO closely supervised and guided the RETA. Participating government ministries provided an adequate number of counterpart staff to support the TA. Such inputs highlighted the continued need and importance of mobilizing country-specific and regional resources in addressing HIV/AIDS. The RETA was also supervised by ADB through regular meetings, discussions with both EAs, and review missions. A final RETA workshop was held on 16-17 December 2004. The performance of ADB and of the EAs was each satisfactory.</p>					

Evaluation of Outputs

Project was implemented in 9 border areas. The RETA had a number of expected outputs, including (i) situation and needs analyses for preventive education in each of the cross-border areas; (ii) an operational plan for project implementation for formal and non-formal education; (iii) education multimedia and ICT learning materials for HIV/AIDS; (iv) training program for teachers and trainers in multimedia and ICT use; (v) action plan for establishing and operationalizing management information system (MIS) and impact monitoring; (vi) improved system of stakeholder evaluation and feedback, including government ministries, NGOs, and other agencies; and (vii) use of a regional approach that includes enhance programs, social mobilization and community-based activities.

SEAMEO key accomplishments included: (i) regional training curriculum for HIV/AIDS prevention and 5 national training curricula developed in local languages; (ii) 10 national teacher trainers trained; (iii) 25,000 secondary school students (exceeding original target of 8,000 students) in 36 border schools reached; (iv) 434 classroom teachers (exceeding original target of 200 teachers) trained; (v) ICT capability of 5 national teams strengthened and basic ICT hardware provided to 30 schools; (vi) teaching-learning materials developed in local languages; (vii) manual on basic computer training and teacher guides for HIV/AIDS preventive education developed; and (viii) web-based project database developed.

UNESCO key accomplishments included: (i) development and broadcasting of educational radio programs and audio tapes in Thailand (Lahu), in PRC (Jingpo), and in Lao PDR (Hmong); (ii) online clearing house on HIV/AIDS preventive education in the GMS with online documents and web links; (iii) HIV/AIDS teaching and learning materials database with educational materials used either in formal or non-formal education sectors; (iv) support to an HIV/AIDS bibliographic database and a database of e-documents with full-text; (v) publication of the GMS HIV/AIDS Prevention Bulletin (2000 copies) distributed at the XV International AIDS Conference in July 2004; (vi) completion of a needs assessment survey among development partners on information needs and methods used in programs and projects (August to November 2003); (vii) expansion of GIS to connect databases with information related to HIV incidence, interventions and their coverage, and risk population distribution; (viii) establishment of a GIS unit at the Technical Promotion and Support Office Zone 10 under the Department of Social Development and Welfare in Thailand; (ix) training workshops on GIS, geo-coding methodology and problem-solving techniques; (x) animated maps of HIV/AIDS infection rate in Thailand for the period 1989-2002; (xi) GIS-linked map production on issues related to ethnic minorities, migration, trafficking, and HIV/AIDS; and (xii) situational analysis on interstitial populations.

Based on the expected outcomes and the key accomplishments made by each EA, the RETA has been highly regarded by all participating governments. The outputs produced under this RETA have been shared in various forums, where governments have expressed their satisfaction with the key outputs. In a joint ADB/UNESCO workshop (June 2004), governments expressed interest in expanding activities under RETA 6083. At the Sixth GMS Working Group on Human Resource Development (WGHRD, April 2005), participants reviewed the accomplishments made, and further expressed demand in expanding the activities. The success of the project and strong commitment of the partners to continue the work started under the RETA affirms their determination to continue supporting activities.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The RETA was *successful*. The RETA was timely in supporting educational and non-educational initiatives in HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness in the region. It has laid the foundation for an effective advocate, catalyst and facilitator in preventive education for HIV/AIDS using basic ICT. Innovative approaches to disseminating information on HIV/AIDS were developed and implemented. These approaches adopted community-based research and were culturally and linguistically appropriate, for example through the popular medium of radio soap operas. The Project increased commitment of the local administrative officials in the border areas, strengthened partnership between health and education sectors, increased participation by parents and the community, improved cross-border activities and bilateral cooperation between countries, supported a higher level of student participation and teacher satisfaction. These activities were effective in initiating regional cooperation and dialogue among governments in the GMS, as outputs of the RETA are extensively shared with governments in the regional.

Major Lessons Learned

The following key lessons are learned: (i) a multi-sectoral approach is effective in responding to the transmission of HIV/AIDS; (ii) education plays a critical role in providing information, changing attitudes, and altering practices; (iii) use of supplementary forms of communication for disseminating messages from radio programs; (iv) broader target population beyond young women; (v) local government ownership in data audits and cleaning for GIS mapping; and (vi) need for ADB to have greater involvement in the implementation of the RETA.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

Phase II had been planned under RETA 6083. However, ADB financing for the planned phase II of the RETA will not be possible due to funding and staff constraints. SEAMEO has elected to continue supporting its part of the project using its own funds. UNESCO will expand its activities through a newly approved RETA grant financed by the Poverty Reduction Cooperation Fund. Significant milestones will be reported in subsequent meetings of the GMS WGHRD, particularly those that support subregional cooperation strategies against the spread of the disease.