



Conference for African Ministers of Finance and Education
**Sustaining the Education and Economic Momentum
in Africa amidst the Current Global Financial Crisis**

Tunis, Tunisia, July 15-17, 2009

Conférence des ministres africains des Finances et de l'Education
**Soutenir la dynamique éducative et économique dans
le contexte de la crise financière mondiale**

Tunis, Tunisie, 15-17 juillet 2009

This presentation was prepared for the Conference of African Ministers of Finance and of Education on « Sustaining the Education and Economic Momentum Amidst the Current Global Financial Crisis », which took place in Tunis, July 15-17, 2009. The conference was jointly organized by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the African Development bank (AfDB) and the World Bank.

Cette présentation a été préparée pour la conférence des ministres de l'éducation et des finances sur "Soutenir la dynamique éducative et économique en Afrique dans le contexte de la crise financière mondiale". La conférence, qui a eu lieu à Tunis, du 15 au 17 juillet 2009, était organisée par l'Association pour le développement de l'éducation en Afrique (ADEA), la Banque africaine de développement (BAD) et la Banque mondiale

Building a Knowledge- Based Society – East Asia's Experience

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Building a Knowledge-Based Society

- **The East Asian Experience**
 - Creating a Virtuous Cycle Between Education & Economic Growth
- **The Singapore Experience**
 - Evolving Education For Changing National Goals
- **What We Have Learned**

East Asia's Experience

For Singapore, S Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong -

- By 1980, virtually universal primary education
- Over 95% complete 10 years of schooling
 - Compared to less than 60% in 1980
- Over 90% go on to post-secondary education
- Substantial improvement in quality of education
 - Student-teacher ratios dramatically reduced, but still high by OECD standards
- Average educational outcomes now above OECD standards
 - Top global rankings for math and science amongst school-age children

Virtuous Cycle Between Education & Economic Growth

Focus on basic skills and competency for industrialisation

Takeoff in economic growth in 1970s

Increased labour market demand for complex skills & tertiary graduates

Education to develop human capital for knowledge-based economies

Human capital creates new economic opportunities



The Singapore Experience Education's Role in Taking Us From Third World to First

1st Phase: Survival-driven (1959 - 1978)

- Building a national education system
- Priority - Mass Education for all
- Creating common identity and aspirations in a multiracial society
- Vocational and Technical Institutions

**Survival-Driven
(1959 – 1978)**

2nd Phase: Efficiency-driven (1979 – 1996)

- Different curricula for different abilities
– streaming introduced in schools
- First steps in school autonomy
- Building a comprehensive tertiary landscape
 - Setting-up Institute of Technical Education (ITE)
 - Expansion of polytechnic and university sector

**Efficiency-Driven
(1979 – 1996)**

**Survival-Driven
(1959 – 1978)**

3rd Phase: Innovation-driven (1997 – present)

**Innovation-driven
(1997 – present)**

**Efficiency-Driven
(1979 – 1996)**

**Survival-Driven
(1959 – 1978)**

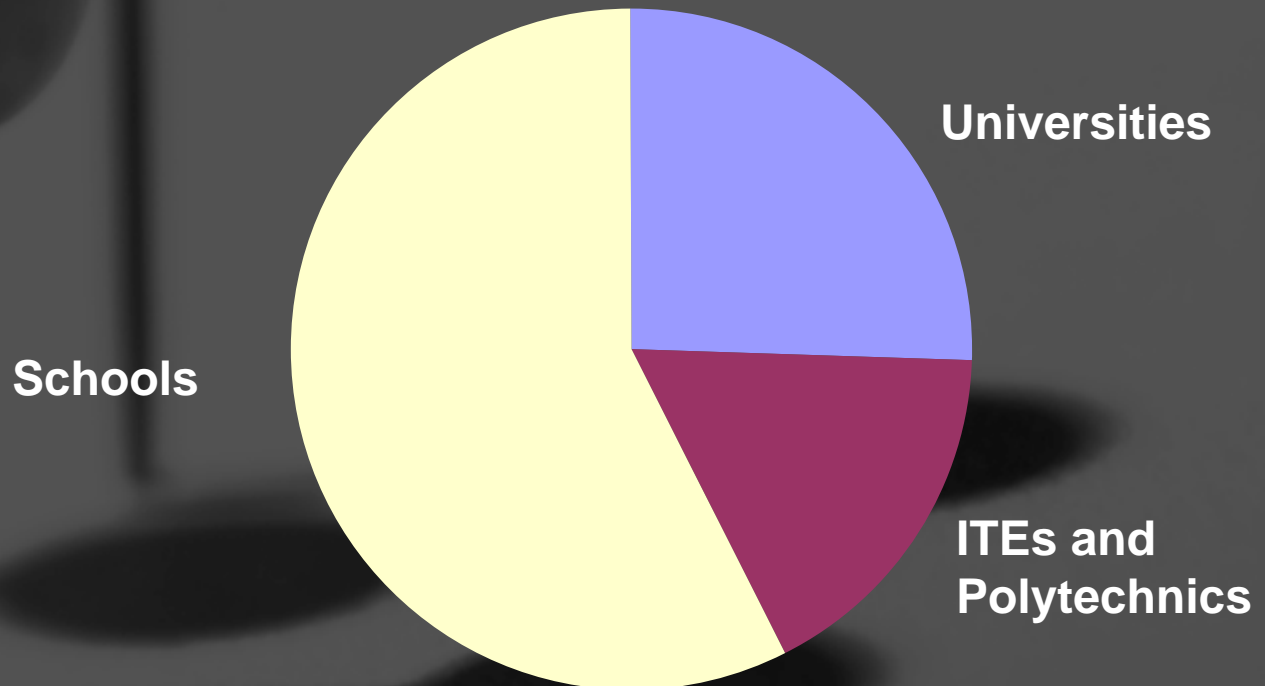
- Focus on Quality, more than Quantity
- Developing Peaks
 - Specialized independent schools
 - For exceptional talents in maths & science, sports and the arts
- Schools with enhanced vocational curriculum
- Niches of excellence within mainstream schools

3rd Phase: Innovation-driven (1997 – present)

- Strengthening Tertiary Education
 - Out of a typical age cohort, 90% gain admission to post-secondary education
 - Of which **two-thirds** do practice-oriented learning
 - Nearly 50% of cohort now obtain university degrees
 - Of which 25% enter publicly-funded universities (i.e. NUS, NTU, SMU)
 - By 2015 – 30% to enter the publicly-funded universities
- Foreign students add diversity: 20% of university intake

Financing Education

- Education takes up 25% of total Government expenditure
- Tertiary education comprises 40% of education spending



Financing Education

- We have achieved good outcomes (above OECD) with less spending on education
 - Education spending is 3.5% of GDP – lower than the OECD average (5.8%)
- Four main reasons
 - a. System-efficiency
 - Tailoring education to different abilities
 - Larger classes than OECD, but focus on teacher quality instead
 - b. Focus on teacher training and motivation

Financing Education

- c. Allow universities to charge realistic fees
 - So they can recruit best faculty
 - Instead, Government provides bursaries for low and middle income students
- d. Attract private funding for university endowments
 - Government provides dollar-for-dollar matching for donations



What We've Learned

Learning Pt #1: Stay Relevant to the Market

- Get basics right first
 - Meet the needs of the job market
- Keep and strengthen polytechnic and technical education
 - Practice-oriented learning is still central in a knowledge-based economy
 - Avoid mismatch of skills – as seen even in rapidly growing economies
- Universities: Keep strong focus on science & technology
 - 50% of graduates major in science & technology –related fields
 - Female participation in science & technology as high as male
- Maximize linkages between universities and polytechnics, research institutions and industry

Learning Pt #2: Meritocracy Helps The Poor, Not Hinders

- Meritocracy & competition breeds social mobility
- Selection into every secondary school and post-secondary course is based on performance
 - Gives the best opportunities to capable children from low-income families
 - Pre-condition: providing quality principals and teachers in every school, including those in poor neighbourhoods
 - Plus special funding to give poor students exposure outside the school (EduSave Opportunity Fund)

Learning Pt #2: Meritocracy Helps The Poor, Not Hinders

- Outcome: Top students at the end of primary school come from across all social neighborhoods
 - Top 1% come from 64% of the country's schools
 - Top 5% come from 97% of the country's schools

Learning Pt #3: System Only as Good as its Teachers

- Key focus of Singapore's strategy has been to train, develop and motivate teachers and principals
- Five key points:
 - a. Making teaching a profession of choice
 - Teachers carefully selected from top 30% of cohort
 - b. Training potential teachers for subject expertise, not just pedagogical skills

Learning Pt #3: System Only as Good as its Teachers

- c. Intensive continuous training and development
 - Work attachments in private sector
 - Sabbaticals for teachers and principals
 - Training for principals based on corporate leadership programmes
 - Scholarships for graduate studies

Learning Pt #3: System Only as Good as its Teachers

d. Pay market rates & pay for performance

- Teachers' salaries benchmarked annually against private sector
- Allows substantial mid-career recruitment into teaching service
- Annual appraisal: Every teacher's performance is evaluated within every school each year

e. Promotion by merit, not seniority

- Youngest principals appointed in mid-30s
- Oldest appointed around 50 years of age

Conclusion

- Three essential ingredients of best performing school systems globally (McKinsey, 2008)
 - Getting the right people to become teachers
 - Developing them into effective instructors
 - Ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction for every child

Conclusion

- Our experience supports these findings
 - Focus on developing competent, motivated teachers and innovative principals
 - Provide additional resources for schools to customise their programmes according to their students' needs
 - “Top-down support for bottom-up initiatives”
 - Shielding education from politics – a key responsibility of political leaders



Thank You