

von  
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## Benefits and Challenges of Online-Education in Southeast Asia

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In Southeast Asia, Online-Education is a new channel for people to gain knowledge. It is used as an alternative to an offline education, a sustainable learning tool and a self-promotion medium. There are various online education platforms that are divided into two types, *Massive Open Online Course* (known as MOOC) and *Educational Technology* (Edtech) business. MOOC is the online course aiming at unlimited participation with open access and providing high quality lectures. At the same time, Edtech business provides E-learning programs as commercial behaviors. *Topica, FUNiX, Kyna, Tienganh123*, are for instance the famous ones in Southeast Asia.

Both MOOC and Edtech business provide their own E-learning programs as well as cooperated courses with universities. Also, they approach various demand groups, from kids to adults, to students and occupational staffs.

There is a huge developing potentiality of Online-Education in Southeast Asia, but it still has to face some challenges like the high cost of establishing a system, uneven teaching quality and unfairness problems.

### Break the space-time constraints

There are educational disparities and uneven educational resources distribution not only in urban and

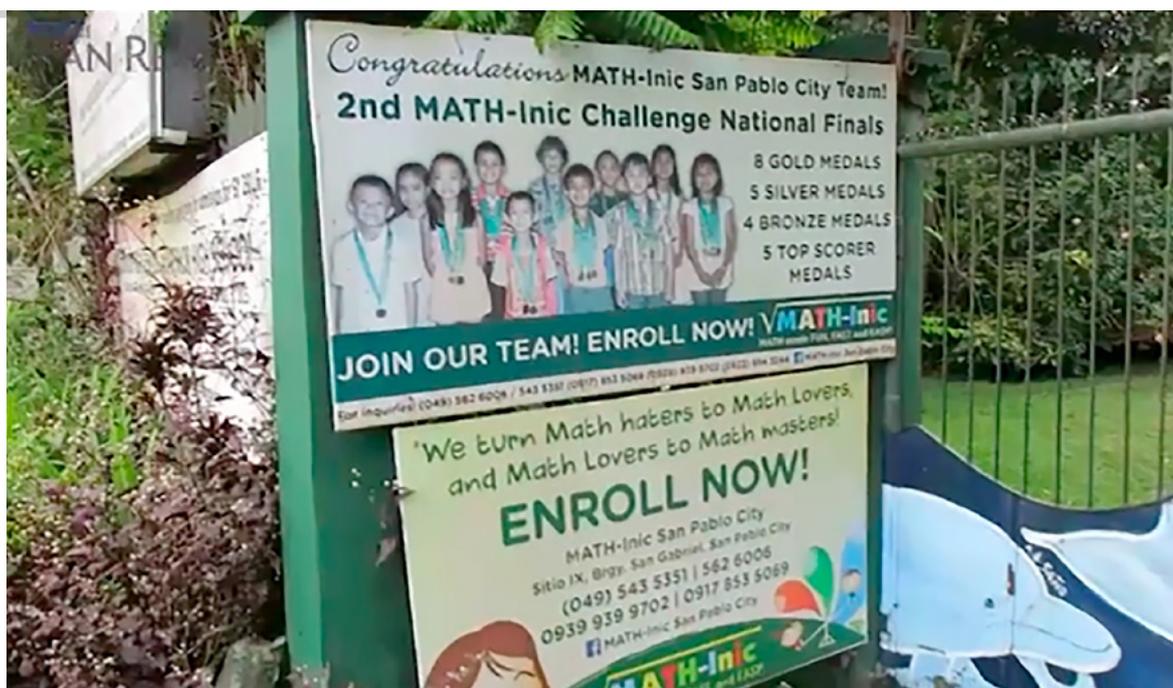
rural areas but also between countries in Southeast Asia. Due to the long distance between cities, it is impractical for students to move between cities to gain different knowledge. But with the new Edtech, the students can sit in the class, see the video online and learn.

And for the individuals, time and place are no more the impact factors. With the available online courses from E-Learning platforms, they can embrace worldwide knowledge resources, improve abilities without space-time constraints.

### Compensate the shortages of teachers and educational materials in offline education

According to the statistics website *NationMaster*, the pupil/teacher ratio in the Philippines in secondary school is 34.81–1, ranks seventh worst among 195 countries. And on the basis of the statistics from *UNESCO Institute for Statistics*, the average pupil/teacher ratio in primary school in Southeast Asia is 26.5–1, and in secondary school is 22.8–1, which is just after Southern Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Southeast Asia has a lack of teachers because of the uneven teaching quality and educational resource distribution. And because of the disparities of the teaching qualities among regions, in order to fill the gap of the educational differences, the demand of the supplemental learning materials after class is also strong as well as in class.

Advertisement of one E-learning Platform in the Philippines  
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*Discussion over Online-Education in Workshop Open Southeast Asia: Data, Networks, Civil Society, Southeast Asia*  
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The online shared courses between schools, with the help of the Edtech company *Quipper*, helps to relieve the shortage. For example, the Philippines has reformed a 10-years elementary curriculum system to a 12-years system in their high school last year. Some schools were not ready for the two expansionary Grades, but some are ready. With such a service, students can learn continuing from other schools via web without gap.

Furthermore, in Southeast Asia, there are only two top universities according to *World University Ranking*. The Southeast Asians have less opportunities than for example the Westerns to approach a high quality education. But now, since many of the world's top universities have embraced the MOOC, the access to high quality education for the masses in Southeast Asia improved. And most MOOCs provide a certification after finishing the learning plan, although not for free, so it may be an alternative to traditional education. Besides, because of the non-profit service from MOOC, it provides opportunities to Southeast Asians who have no comfortable financial conditions.

From the aspect of Edtech business, ability-training is also supplied besides scientific knowledge. "*Kyna*" is one of the most famous Online-Education platforms in Vietnam. It provides different groups with various courses, for example, the "sense inspiring" for children, and professional advertisement designing for staffs. Although the Online-Education has strong points, it also has some embarrassing situations.

### High cost

A public Online-Education system includes many processes. First of all, all the processes need a mas-

sive input of manpower and material resources. And then, from government's side, in order to let students learn online, the learning medium like computers, tablets should be provided to students. All the inputs are a heavy load for the national finance. As the report from UNESCO from 1999 to 2013 shows, the education spending of GDP in percentage in Indonesia, Lao PRD, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam is less than four per cent, and the expenses are mostly on the offline public education. With such a national education spending, the Online-Education can just get a little support from national finance plan.

On the other hand, the cost of certification is high, too. Even if there are many platforms like MOOC, on which people can freely gain knowledge, people must pay a lot to get the certification if there is a demand of ability-proving after finishing the learning program on commercial E-learning platforms.

Otherwise, a personal computer is unaffordable for poor families in Southeast Asia. In the schools in the Philippines, annual fees for study materials via electronic products are 72 US-Dollars per student. According to the data from *World Bank* of the gross national income (GNI) in 2016, the GNI per head of Singapore is 53,224.27 US-Dollars, of Malaysia it is 10,071.17 US-Dollars, of Indonesia it is 3,415.83 US-Dollars, and of Cambodia it is 1,139.69 US-Dollars. An "Acer" laptop in the USA for example costs at least 700 US-Dollars, almost the one-fifth of the GNI of Indonesia. It seems that children and their families don't need to pay anything for the learning online. But actually, the charge of using Edtech or buying one computer is already a big problem for them.

An online course  
supplied from  
the E-Learning  
platform "Kyna"  
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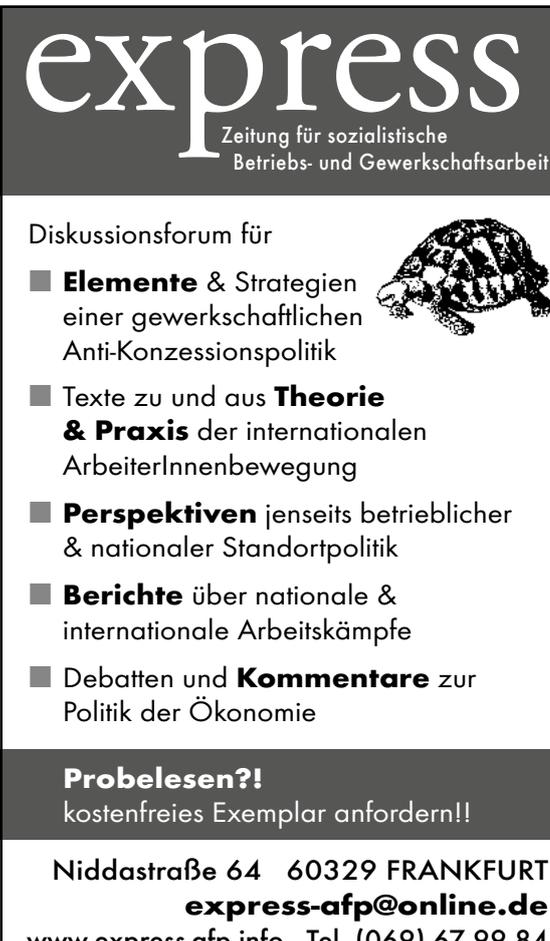


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## Uneven qualities and educational unfairness

There is still no standard or regulatory system for the Online-Education. Owing to the disparities of the teaching qualities and economic strength between countries, people will be taught in different quality levels online and offline but get equally authentication.

What's more, for instance, face to face communication is an important process during the acceptance of knowledge, but online education lacks it. The online-learners receive knowledge only via computers. Ideas, thoughts and questions aren't being expressed immediately, feedback from both sides cannot be received right away, an experience the online educationers should have like offline educationers. It influences the online educational quality seriously.

## Conclusion

Maybe to make the situation better, the southeastern Asian governments could improve the government subsidies on the online education or give subsidies to students, schools or PC companies. Establishing a regulatory system of Online-Education and setting up an occupation standard to Edtech business to promote quality of teaching and teachers may also help to relieve the issues.

The Online-Education develops fast and strongly in Southeast Asia. It does not only provide an open access to new knowledge without time and space limits but also a supplementation to the offline education. Even though its tough issues are waiting to be solved, there is a huge potentiality of Online-Education to develop in the future.

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