

SEAMEO Workshop on Information 27-30 April 1998, Chiang Mai, Thailand

The SEAMEO Secretariat conducted a workshop on information between 27-30 April 1998. It brought together, in Chiang Mai, representatives from the various SEAMEO centres to discuss issues and matters related to **publication and information service, budgetary constraints, personnel, and improvement of the organisation's image.**

Some of the possible solutions proposed for coping with financial difficulties are the reduction of production cost (by using less expensive print paper, minimising use of colour, changing the frequency of regular publications, finding sponsors, and carrying advertisements); and exploiting the advantages of operating a website.

With regard to strengthening the centre's publication and information units, suggestions were made on **providing mutual assistance among centres, partners or agencies** in joint training, and installing/upgrading technical resources (hardware and software).

The participants, mostly Information and Publication officers, made interesting contributions which helped to produce a lively meeting. SEAMEO Secretariat staff's informal and innovative style of organising and structuring the workshop was instrumental in setting a friendly and relaxed tone.

SEAMEO flagship publication

Discussions also focussed on the possibility of a new **SEAMEO flagship publication**, aimed at potential partners in SEAMEO programmes, including Ministries of Education from Member Countries, Associate Member Countries and Non-Member Countries, Other Ministries (Labour, Foreign Affairs etc), the private sector, international organisations (UN, ASEAN, WHO etc), Research institutes, Banks such as World Bank, ADB, etc., academic institutions and foundations, and NGOs.

The publication will offer the following information: upcoming seminars, training, scholarships, publi-

cations, etc., expertise of the Centres, research facilities, awards/achievements, fellowships, and grants etc..

Calls were also made for SEAMES to produce new publications for specific target readership.

Visibility and Publicity

Participants shared the need for **public relations** in their centres, and endorsed the idea of collaborative media development (Centres helping to disseminate other centres' news through their connection with the local media). It became clear that the Centres are expected to include more future-oriented (as opposed to past news and events) contents in their publications.

Most of the participants agreed that the image of SEAMEO and its centres need to be enhanced, with many individuals expressing the idea that there should be some **changes to the SEAMEO logo** to make it more prominent, and recognisable.

In line with efforts to publicise SEAMEO, an annual **SEAMEO Southeast Asian Award** (for outstanding individuals and organisations) was recommended as part of the campaign to make SEAMEO and its centres more visible.

SEAMES to be replaced by SEAMEO Secretariat

There was consensus on eliminating the tediousness of many abbreviations, and to begin with, the workshop group recommended changing "SEAMEC" to "SEAMEO Council"; "SEAMES" to "SEAMEO Secretariat"; and also to consistently use SEAMEO before the name of each Centre.

Websites

Many centres encounter problems in the development of websites/homepages. Some of these problems were due to improperly briefed or assigned staff, and lack of budget. Centres which were still without a site were urged to make the creation of a homepage a top priority.

Marketing Roles of SEAMEO Secretariat

As an important part of its efforts to market SEAMEO centres' expertise and facilities, SEAMEO Secretariat would establish a **SEAMEO HomePage** as a gateway.