[The Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) was the first inter-country project in the world focused on educational innovation related to development needs in the participating countries, including the needs of educational development. It has been in operation now for twenty years in a setting of co-operative action among countries in varying stages of economic and social development. There are two points that need to be clarified at the outset. First, educational innovation is very much wider than “the use of educational technology”, and the two are not necessarily interchangeable. Second, the network of participating institutions is not only a device for the flow of information; the “network” is basically one means of changing information into an educational experience.]

ORIGIN

The Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) dates back to 1970 when the Fifth Regional Meeting of the Asian National Commissions for UNESCO, held in Tehran, requested the Director-General of UNESCO to review Asia’s emerging educational needs for the 1970s and beyond, and to initiate a study of new patterns of regional co-operation in education that would be tuned to such emerging needs. The Director-General set up a study seminar which held its concluding meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in February 1971. The study seminar identified the prime focus of regional co-operation as “educational innovation for development”.

The thoughtful report of the study seminar was considered by the Third Regional Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in Asia (Singapore, 1971), which endorsed the study seminar’s report and recommended the setting up of the Asian Centre of Educational Innovation for Development at the UNESCO Regional Office in order to promote the Innovation Programme. The General Conference of UNESCO at its seventeenth session (Paris, 1972) approved the Programme and in resolution 1.211 authorized the Director-General to create an Asian Centre of Educational Innovation for Development to facilitate the implementation of the Programme.

HOW THE PROGRAMME EVOLVED

The Asian Centre became operational in late 1973. With the active involvement of specialists from the participating member countries, the work plans were developed for a four-year period (1974-1977) by the First Regional Consultation Meeting (Bangkok, February-March 1974). This set the model for joint programming by the participating member countries which has governed all subsequent evolutions; it is of the essence of inter-country co-operation in education, at whatever level it may take place. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) extended its effective support to the Programme’s first cycle.
The time-frame of the Programme has remained in four-year cycles: the first cycle (1974-1977), the second cycle (1978-1981), the third cycle (1982-1986), the fourth cycle (1987-1990), and the fifth cycle (1992-1996). There was an evaluation towards the end of each cycle and before the beginning of the next cycle.

The cyclic time-frame for the Programme made it possible to add new areas of development needs and/or move out of areas in which needs did not call for Programme inputs. Some areas have, however, remained continuing priorities, (e.g. universalization of basic education).

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF APEID

APEID is a co-operative endeavour of member countries sharing a commonality of outlook towards education and its role in broader national development. APEID is designed and developed jointly by the member countries associated with APEID. The relationship between the participating member countries is based on reciprocity, mutual learning and willingness to share.

APEID aims to promote awareness of the need for innovation in educational endeavours and the possibilities for change that such awareness offers. It promotes the inter-country transfer and assimilation of experiences and technical co-operation.

PARTICIPATION OF THE MEMBER COUNTRIES

The member countries in the Asian region who wish to be participating members of APEID signify their interest in this regard and offer appropriate institutions/organizations to be associated with the Programme. When APEID first became operational in 1974, sixteen Member States joined the Programme. The variety and diversity of membership has been a constant source of innovative ideas and experiences for the Programme. To date, 29 countries are members of APEID in the Asia-Pacific region.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

APEID is a programme of action, a mode of co-operation and not an institution or organization. The institutional framework for the Programme consists of:

I) Associated Centres: These are institutions which the member countries have designated for association with the Programme. Almost all programme activities are carried out and implemented through the associated centres. As of now there are 194 centres in 29 member countries which form the network of APEID.

II) National Development Groups: These are groups set up by several participating countries with a view to identifying and stimulating, at the national level, educational innovations and emerging trends. They work closely with the associated centres in the country concerned.

III) Regional consultation process: Representatives of the countries meet periodically at a consultation meeting to evaluate on-going activities and develop new initiatives.

IV) Asian Centre of Educational Innovation for Development: ACEID is an integral part of the UNESCO Regional Office for Education and at the same time has its specific mission goals. It was established by UNESCO's General Conference as a facilitator, a catalytic agent and co-ordinator of the activities that serve inter-country cooperation and stimulate innovations in education, identifying gaps and growth points, and promoting constructive exchanges. It provides or organizes technical support, whenever needed, to the associated centres serving in this regard as a resource base. One of its notable activities
is the development and dissemination of information and materials on new educational developments and innovations not only in the countries of the region but also in other regions.

**METHODS OF WORK**

The methods of work of ACEID and the Programme (APEID) have evolved so as to express concretely and in action the basic goal of the APEID as a co-operative endeavour of the Member States.

I) **Co-operative programme development**

All programme activities are developed by participating countries, meeting in study groups, training courses and project-based meetings.

II) **Inter-country exchange of experiences and experts**

These activities cover a wide range of national personnel (high-level administrators as well as project staff) and take the form of inter-country study visits, field operational seminars, as well as training courses.

III) **Joint innovative projects**

This method of work evolved in the late 1970s and attracted immediate support of the member countries. It is based on joint efforts of the countries in regard to an educational problem that they have in common; for example:

a) Raising the achievement level of children in primary education: This is a persistent problem accounting for high dropout rates and “lapses”. Nine countries of the region are participating in a joint innovative project targeting this problem.

b) Integrating subject areas in the primary education curriculum is another joint project in which seven countries are at work.

c) The problem of access to education in remote sparsely populated areas is a difficult and frustrating one. The Institute of Educational Research of Gansu Province (China) and the Gansu Education Commission fielded a research-development project which aimed at universalizing access to primary education in sparse and difficult geographical areas and at the same time raising their achievement level. The project authorities, with UNESCO’s support, shared the results with five neighbouring countries with similar problems, thus making the project a joint innovative programme which has expanded greatly over the last twelve years.

IV) **Personnel development and transfer of training experiences**

Mobile training teams, attachment for a period of time to an innovative project in another country, and inter-project visits have provided “hands-on” experience of innovation in action to the personnel of the participating countries.

V) **Information flow**

APEID activities have generated, and ACEID and the work of associated centres have disseminated, more information and materials than ever before in a regional programme in Asia or elsewhere. The following data are illustrative:
For the period 1973-1992

Participants in APEID activities at the regional level, and national level activities were = 15,000
Number of publications (titles) = 336
Number of copies distributed = 330,000

APEID - PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

The plans of action of APEID are generally developed for a four-year programming cycle and centre on selected priority programme areas. A listing of the priority programme areas by programming cycle conveys the overall picture of APEID’s outreach.

First Cycle of APEID (1975-1977): Priority areas of innovation
1. New orientations and structures in education
2. Management of educational innovation
3. Curriculum development
4. Educational technology
5. Innovations in teacher-training
6. Science education

Second Cycle of APEID (1978-1981): Priority areas of innovation
1. Non-formal and alternative structures in education
2. Management of educational innovation
3. Curriculum development
4. Educational technology
5. Teacher-training - innovation
6. Science and technology education
7. Vocational and technical education

Third Cycle of APEID (1982-1986): Priority areas of innovation
1. Universalization of education at basic level
2. Science and technology education
3. Education and work
4. Education and rural development
5. Educational technology
6. Professional support services and training of educational personnel
7. Co-operative studies and joint innovative projects

Fourth Cycle of APEID (1987-1990): included the following areas
1. Universalization of primary education
2. Science and technology education
3. Continuing education
4. Education and work
5. Educational technology
6. Training of educational personnel
7. Reform and reorganization of secondary education 
8. Co-operative studies and joint innovative projects (continuing) 

**Fifth Cycle of APEID** (1992-1996) 
1. Universal primary education 
2. Science and technology education 
3. Qualitative improvement of secondary education 
4. Vocational and technical education 
5. Higher education (distance education and “open” systems) 

**A CONCLUDING NOTE** 

APEID has been in operation twenty years plus. From a small beginning it has developed a wide and diversified range of co-operative links among member countries, national institutions and educational workers, bound together by commonality of resolve for mutual help. It has been able to contribute to the regional co-operative networks which have developed in other regions of the world, namely, Africa – Network of Educational Innovation for Development (NEIDA); Arab States – Educational Innovation Programme for Development in the Arab States (EIPDAS); and the Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation for Development (CARNEID). 

The educational innovation networking, of which APEID is exemplar, is based on the concepts of “decentralization” and “participation”. They cannot exist in separation. 

**ANNEX APEID** 

Some historical documents relating to the Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID). 


BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

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Dr Raja Roy Singh has had extensive and varied experience in education, first at the national level as a State Director of Education and subsequently as an Educational Adviser at the Federal Ministry of Education. Joining UNESCO in 1964, he was based in Bangkok where for the next twenty years until his retirement he was deeply involved in international co-operation for the promotion of education in the region of Asia and the Pacific as Regional Director of Education and later as Assistant Director-General of UNESCO in Asia and the Pacific. He has written extensively on educational problems in the developing countries.