

Evidence for Development: What Works Global Summit 2021
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Rebuilding from the Impacts of COVID-19: Experience and Perspectives from Southeast Asia/East Asia

Panel session organized by the East Asian Development Network (EADN)

20 October 2021, 8:00am-9:00am (CET) via Hopin

Background

The COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 has had unprecedented impacts all over the world. For instance, a COVID-19 baseline forecast suggested that about 88 million people globally have been pushed to extreme poverty in 2020.² Businesses, especially micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and jobs were gravely affected – with companies pressed to reduce workers, working hours and/or wages, and even close up shop. In the area of education, no less than 1.5 billion students are estimated to be out of school at the peak of the pandemic. The learning losses and dropout rates are expected to have an effect on economic opportunities (e.g. potential earnings) of these students in the future.³

Being one of the first regions affected by the outbreak in 2020, Southeast Asia/East Asia was not spared from the impacts of the pandemic. The restrictions imposed by the governments to contain the disease have affected the economy, prompting the ministries and international organizations to downgrade their initial growth projections by second quarter of 2020. In ASEAN, all countries had reduced forecasts, with Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand having negative growth rates.⁴

On the second year of the pandemic, countries in Southeast Asia/East Asia are continuously facing its impacts on the economy and society. Economies are recuperating as restrictions are gradually being relaxed and government support is continuously being given. However, the impact remains as transmission of the virus is unceasing, especially as new variants are emerging and have most recently been causing an increase in number of infected cases. Hence, the return of lockdowns, travel and mobility restrictions, and other containment and preventive measures.

¹ Conference page: <https://www.gdn.int/evidence4dev>.

² Blake, P. and D. Wadhwa (2020). 2020 Year in Review: The impact of COVID-19 in 12 charts. Voices: Perspectives on Development. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/2020-year-review-impact-covid-19-12-charts>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ OECD (2020). COVID-19 crisis response in ASEAN Member States. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=129_129949-ehsuoqs87y&title=COVID-19-Crisis-Response-in-ASEAN-Member-States&_ga=2.190138856.298892756.1629011354-158385805.1629011349.

Efforts to contain the disease and minimize its impact have been quite successful in some countries and still a struggle in others. For instance, some countries in Southeast Asia/East Asia, especially those that have devised strategies after previous outbreaks⁵ such as South Korea and Viet Nam, were able to act fast in containing the virus and minimizing the impact. While, countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines had registered high confirmed cases, and have been relatively slow-paced in derestricting economic activities. Ultimately, there have been lessons learned and successful measures implemented; but there is more to learn and do as the pandemic continues.

Objectives

The panel session aims to share the experience, challenges and perspectives of Southeast Asian/East Asian countries regarding the impact of COVID-19, and best practices that are so far favoring the attainment of post-pandemic recovery and building resilience. It aims to discuss strategies and measures that have worked in containing the disease and minimizing its impacts, and transformations (e.g. digital) that have occurred in response to the pandemic. The discussions will be at the country and regional perspectives.

Program

- I. Opening/Welcome remarks, and Introduction of panelists:

Session Chair: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Andrew Kam Jia Yi, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)

- II. Presentations:

Speaker 1: Dr. Connie B. Dacuycuy, Senior Research Fellow, Philippine Institute for Development Studies

Speaker 2: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bui Quang Tuan, Director General, Vietnam Institute of Economics

Speaker 3: Dr. Lee Jaehyon, Senior Fellow and Director of External Relations Department, Asan Institute for Policy Studies, South Korea

- III. Q&A: moderated by Session Chair

- IV. Closing and acknowledgements

Profile of Panelists



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Andrew Kam Jia Yi graduated with first class in Economics at the National University of Malaysia (UKM) in 2002. He received the Chevening scholarship in 2006 to pursue his Msc. in Economics at the University of Warwick, UK. He was later awarded the Endeavour Scholarship to pursue his PhD at the Australian National University in 2008 and a Fulbright Scholarship in University of California Santa Barbara (2015/2016). He is currently is a senior research Fellow at the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS, UKM) and Associate Professor in Economics. He is a consultant to many national and international organizations including the Economic

⁵ Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Viet Nam in 2003 and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in South Korea in 2015.

Planning Unit, the Prime Ministers' Department, UNCTAD and UNESCO. His research areas are international trade, FDI, GVCs, and development economics.



Dr. Connie B. Dacuycuy is a development economist with a focus on issues related to the labor market, gender and the family, poverty and social protection, and structural transformation. She is currently a senior research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS). Prior to joining PIDS, she was an assistant professor at the Economics Department of the Ateneo De Manila University and a consultant at the Asian Development Bank. She obtained her Ph.D. in Economics at Kyoto University.



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bui Quang Tuan is Director of Vietnam Institute of Economics, a 60-year-old governmental research institute of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences under the Vietnamese Government. He received Bachelor Degree from Lomonosov Moscow National University, Russia, and Master and PhD Degrees from the Australian National University, Australia.

He is, at the same time, the Dean of Faculty of Economics, Graduate School of Social Sciences.

His main research interests include development economics, trade, investment, economic integration, regional cooperation and sustainable development. He has a number of published works on the various issues of investment, regional cooperation and sustainable development. He has been involved in drafting a number of strategies of national and regional development.



Dr. Lee Jaehyon is a senior fellow and the Director of External Relations Department at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies. He is also a member advisory groups for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for the Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy. Previously, Dr. Lee was a visiting professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS), Korean National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA). Dr. Lee's research focuses on Southeast Asian politics and international relations, East Asian regional cooperation, and non-traditional and human security issues. Dr. Lee received a B.A. and M.A. from Yonsei University and his Ph.D. in politics from Murdoch University, Australia.