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**Reflective Quote** ~“*Teachers-like children and everyone else-feel the need to grow in their competencies; they want to transform experiences into thoughts, thoughts into reflections and elections into new actions.*” ~*Loris Malaguzzi, The Hundred Languages of Children*

### **~Presentation Abstract~**

**Title:** “*Using teacher self-efficacy strategies and case studies as transformative tools in creating culturally responsive inclusive classrooms while building capacity in Southeast Asia*”

**Presentation and Panel Discussion Objectives:** Participants will be able to participate in discussions and hands-on activities related to inclusionary practices; teacher self-efficacy strategies; and building culturally responsive classrooms.

**Summary Statement** ~ The socio-political, historically rooted issues of inclusion and human rights for persons with disabilities have been sources of contention for policy-makers, researchers, academicians, community stakeholders and self-advocates, worldwide. The ‘Right to Education’ movement for every individual as established within the 1948 United Nations’ Declaration of Human Rights, exclaiming that ‘all human beings are born free and equal in rights and dignity’ has been repeatedly called to attention within the educational context within the United States litigative cases such as the ground breaking court case of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education (1954)*, which determined ‘separate was not equal’ as well as on the international arena, in the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (which addressed the educational rights of all, irrespective of individual differences); and the historic educational summit in Salamanca Spain (1994), where representatives from 92 countries (inclusive of many of the large and smaller countries of Asia, Africa, and South America) agreed to adopt the tenets, of arguably one of the most significant human rights internationally driven documents that have hereto since impacted the field of special education, namely the Salamanca Statement. The Salamanca Statement, in addition to the Millennium Development Goals, is the foremost document that addressed effective principles, policies, and practices that would lead to inclusive practices and protocols for children with disabilities to be included; and have access to the general education curriculum, worldwide. And yet despite these grand international efforts, the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education settings is still a problematic, wide-ranging, and recurrent challenge. Many world communities still struggle with the concept of inclusion of persons with disabilities into the mainstream society ~many of the countries in Asia and Africa still struggle with this basic ‘human rights principle’.

As we navigate the continuing socio-cultural and geopolitical challenges of the 21st century, many national and local education systems are considering how best to meet the changing needs and demands they face, as it relates to inclusion. One vehicle for doing this is to focus on teachers and teacher prep faculty -since they are the ones who will eventually implement any societal changes being considered. Understanding who teachers are, and how they see themselves, becomes increasingly important as educators, policy makers, and communities consider what they want their educational systems to look like. This seems especially important at this time, when many teacher training programs, such as those in Southeast Asia, namely Vietnam, are facing major reforms and restructuring. Educational research and literature often recognize that teacher self-efficacy is a key factor that influences teachers' sense of purpose, motivation, attitude, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness; and that teacher self-efficacy is shaped by the broader social, cultural, geopolitical, and economic conditions in which they live and work. The Government of Vietnam has shown its commitment to a more inclusive education approach by clearly indicating its desire to provide educational opportunities for children with disabilities in its Education Law (National Assembly, 2005) and particularly in the development and approval of the Education For All National Action Plan 2003–2015. To expand inclusive education into all preschool, primary and secondary schools in Vietnam where an estimated 944,410 teachers require up-skilling/retooling (Statistical Source Office, 2008), appropriate teacher education is required.

In 2008, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in collaboration with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and an external consultant, developed a national core curriculum and pedagogical framework on inclusive education for ensuring that all teachers in training at all universities and teacher colleges received quality and equitable training. There was, however, a difficulty in implementing this due to the relatively few faculty members who themselves had sufficient knowledge to teach the program. Thus measures had to be taken to provide appropriate training for the teacher educators in the universities and colleges, considered key institutions for delivering and disseminating inclusive education approaches throughout the country (Retrieved from <http://www.inclusive-education-in-action.org/iea/index.php?menuid=25&reporeid=140>).

Inclusive education is defined by UNESCO as a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education. This means that all children have the right to a quality education, that caters to the extent possible to their specific needs. Some countries have been successful in promoting inclusive education practices and policies that remove barriers and create conditions which enable all children to learn. However, in poorer developing countries, the process of creating an inclusive system is more difficult. Factors such as lack of available funding, administrative and policy level support, and trained personnel pose challenges that can slow down progress. In Vietnam, for example, the inclusive education movement targets children with disabilities, a group that has traditionally been excluded from educational opportunities. In Vietnam, as well as in other developing countries, the government has recognized the importance of inclusive education in promoting social justice and equity. One major difficulty that Vietnam and other countries face is ensuring that human resource development can support these important initiatives (Retrieved from [http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/edhowto\\_vietnam2.pdf](http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/edhowto_vietnam2.pdf)).