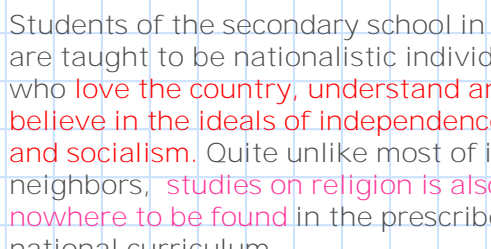


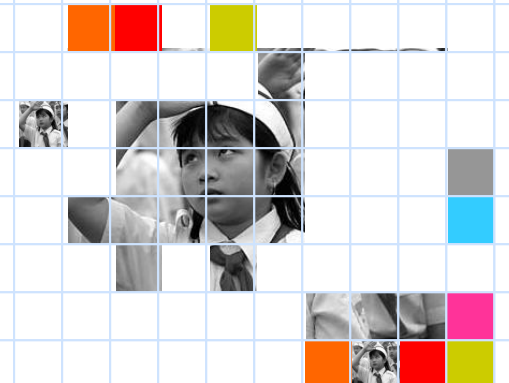
There is an important nexus between economic and education models and nowhere is this more evident than in the development of a national curriculum. The Southeast Asian experience in curriculum development reveals a striking difference between an intensely national and aggressively global direction, a strong articulation of each country's present economic, and to some extent political, orientation.



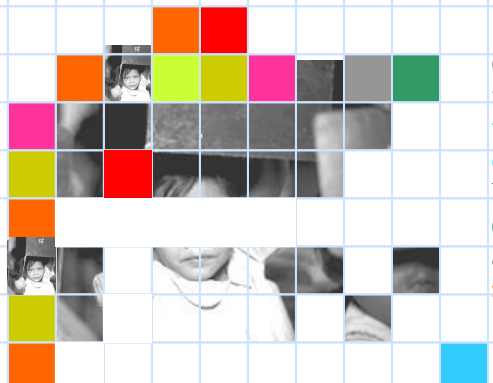
Malaysia and Singapore put greater stress on the advances in science and technology in information and communication technologies to produce a workforce that has competitive edge economically in the world market, and socially and otherwise in a global village. Lessons on cultural and international understanding are also starting to find a great deal of importance in primary and secondary schools in Malaysia.



Students of the secondary school in Vietnam are taught to be nationalistic individuals who love the country, understand and believe in the ideals of independence, nation and socialism. Quite unlike most of its neighbors, studies on religion is also nowhere to be found in the prescribed national curriculum.



Curricular content in Laos and Cambodia are generally geared towards producing the kinds of workers and citizens needed for reconstructing their relatively younger and less developed economies and inculcating national pride and identity. Teaching foreign language(s) in schools for instance only come on the latter part of the primary school. Taking off from a long and arduous history of armed conflict, lessons on the subject of tolerance, human rights and peace are also given important emphasis in the basic education curriculum.



In Thailand and Indonesia, authority over curricula is being decentralized to make education more responsive to local needs. Since the early 90's, the Indonesian government has allowed 20 percent of the basic education curriculum to be determined by local education units. This move seeks to address the geographically and ethnically diverse Indonesian population that may otherwise find the prescribed national curriculum to be too rigid and less responsive to the specific needs of each community.