

# 2019 SNAPSHOT

## ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS: INDONESIA, THE PHILIPPINES AND THAILAND

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### OVERVIEW

Accelerated Work Achievement and Readiness for Employment 2 (AWARE2),<sup>1</sup> a program designed by Education Development Center (EDC),<sup>2</sup> aims to help young people in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) gain the technical and employability skills that regional employers are demanding in the digital economy. The program was developed following a year-long study, conducted by Singapore Management University (SMU) in association with JPMorgan Chase & Co., of the challenges faced by the ASEAN economies of Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.<sup>3</sup> The study found a shortage of workers with relevant technical skills, particularly in the high-demand information and communications technology (ICT) sector, due in part to curriculum and training not keeping pace with industry demands.<sup>4</sup> The study also identified youth unemployment as an emerging challenge for ASEAN countries.<sup>5</sup> For example, when the study was released, youth (ages 15-24) unemployment in the Philippines was 14 percent, while youth under-employment was 20 percent — despite an historic low overall unemployment rate of 6 percent.<sup>6</sup>

With funding support from the JPMorgan Chase New Skills for Youth initiative, EDC launched AWARE2 in 2016 in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand to bolster technical and soft skills training for youth targeted to the ICT sector. AWARE2 partners with secondary schools and technical colleges from one or more communities in each country to train teachers in Work Ready Now! (WRN!), adaptable curriculum modules developed by EDC that provide students with a hands-on bootcamp experience run by local ICT industry partners, as well as work-based learning experiences.

### JPMORGAN CHASE NEW SKILLS FOR YOUTH INITIATIVE

Launched in 2016, New Skills for Youth<sup>7</sup> is a \$75 million, five-year global initiative aimed at transforming how cities and states ensure that young people are career ready. The overarching goals of the initiative are to:

- Dramatically increase the number of students who successfully complete career pathways that begin in secondary school and culminate in postsecondary degrees or credentials tied to high-wage, high-demand jobs; and
- Catalyze transformational approaches to the design and delivery of programs and policies to increase students' career readiness and disseminate lessons learned around the world.

This snapshot is part of a series documenting the progress of the local investments from across the globe that aim to identify and implement the most promising ideas in career education, with a special focus on communities with the greatest needs.

# THE AWARE2 INITIATIVE

The New Skills for Youth investment has provided EDC with an opportunity to offer effective, easy-to-adopt models and tools that bridge the gap between the relatively static and industry-specific programs in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) schools and the labor market demands arising from the dynamic ASEAN economy. AWARE2 prepares youths for lifelong careers in the digital economy in sites in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand with a focus on:

- Training teachers in WRN!, an active learning approach to delivering effective technical training specific to the ICT sector and soft skills curricula;
- Training students in digital skills, such as email etiquette, maintaining an online presence, animation, graphic design and programming, through digital bootcamps run by local ICT industry partners;
- Facilitating student participation in work-based learning opportunities with local ICT businesses or remotely through virtual work-based learning assignments; and
- Convening AWARE2 stakeholders to align curricula with stakeholder needs.

## WRN!

EDC's work readiness program, WRN!, is a curriculum paired with a set of hands-on activities that are flexible and adaptable to the local economy and context. First developed in 2007 in the United States, the program now includes:

- Eight customizable, standards-based content modules;
- Hands-on activities, including work-based learning experiences, bootcamps and business innovation challenges, virtual learning to practice technical skills, and programs that guide youths through a process to start, build and grow their own business;
- An implementation toolkit to guide staff in creating, adapting and assessing work readiness programs; and
- Assessment tools, including a work readiness credential test and a digital badge that demonstrates workplace preparedness.

The program is designed to align with local systems already in place. As part of the implementation, EDC builds relationships with thousands of small and medium-sized businesses that engage with and host youths for a range of activities. EDC also builds the capacity of local organizations and government agencies to sustain and scale the program.

WRN! has been implemented in 25 countries and translated into 19 languages, reaching more than 500,000 youths. A study conducted in 2015 in Rwanda, where WRN! has been adopted as the national work readiness curriculum, found that youths who passed the WRN! test had higher rates of full-time employment than their peers who failed the assessment.

Source: Education Development Center<sup>8</sup>

AWARE2 builds from an earlier two-year pilot program, AWARE1, also funded by the JPMorgan Chase Foundation.<sup>9</sup> AWARE1 implemented WRN! and work-based learning in 12 school sites in Indonesia and the Philippines (six schools in Jakarta, three in Manila and three in Cebu). AWARE1 trained 135 teachers and more than 4,300 students, of whom 2,000 graduates became employed following the training.<sup>10</sup> AWARE1 also established relationships among TVET schools, 65 local businesses and government officials to better align learning to industry demands, which included training more than 200 ministry officials on the AWARE1 program.<sup>11</sup>

For AWARE2, EDC expanded from Indonesia and the Philippines to Thailand and added the bootcamps on the ICT sector to align with recommendations from the yearlong study by SMU. EDC is partnering with national and local government entities including the local Departments of Education in Region 7 and the National Capital Region in the Philippines, the Jakarta Provincial Department of Education in Indonesia and the Ministry of Education in Thailand.<sup>12</sup> Industry partners include a host of employers connected to the ICT sector, as well as workforce-related organizations, such as chambers of commerce.

EDC is wrapping up the final year of a three-year implementation timeline for its New Skills for Youth initiative and has made significant progress in terms of expanding access to training for teachers and students, engaging new businesses and fostering government support for the program. In the first year of implementation alone, the AWARE2 team trained more than 90 teachers and 2,000 students and engaged more than 100 businesses in work-based learning activities across the three countries.<sup>13</sup>




Three elements stand out among the AWARE2 initiative's efforts to bridge employability for youth: the adaptation of the program to meet national context and local need, the broader impact the program is having on teaching and learning, and the efforts to scale and sustain AWARE2 beyond the three communities in each country.

## ***Adapting AWARE2 to Reflect National Context and Local Need***

Each country adapts the program to reflect the education and workforce needs of the local community, as well as the specific needs of the population of students being served by the program. The ability to adapt is by design — it is built into the AWARE model from the outset, both in content and in delivery. For example, the countries have adapted:

- ***Hands-on activities based on in-demand jobs:*** The Philippines chose to focus on programming, animation and computer servicing, while Thailand chose to focus activities around business computing and electronics (e.g., computer networking and medical equipment), among others.
- ***Bootcamp content based on student skill gaps identified during WRN! classroom observations:*** In Thailand, although all bootcamps used design thinking as an underlying framework, some camps emphasized growth mindset and innovative thinking while others went further to foster entrepreneurial skills and business acumen.
- ***Based on appropriate age range:*** Indonesia focused programming on students in grade 11 to accommodate internships in grade 12. The Philippines shifted the age following the addition of grades 11 and 12 to the formal education system, which prior to 2016 ended after grade 10. Thailand chose 13th and 14th graders because most 12th graders continue to postsecondary education, instead of entering the job market.
- ***Curriculum based on in-demand workplace skills identified by industry partners:*** The most direct example is the development of customized technical curriculum (“industry classes”) that are co-designed with each industry partner in Indonesia.
- ***Requirements to align with national or local policy:*** In Thailand, policy requires students to complete 360 hours of work-based learning, whereas the Philippines requires at least 80 hours.

## AWARE2 Partners

Country	Government	Private Sector	Other
<p><b>Indonesia</b></p> 	<p>Jakarta Provincial Department of Education</p> <p>Governor's Office</p> <p>MKPI (TVET and Industry Partnership Assembly)</p>	<p>More than 100 firms engaged with schools and provided students with work-based learning opportunities from various business sectors and firm sizes.</p> <p>Industry partners – including Matata, Sinedu, Intel Indonesia, Widigital Tri Buana, PT Net Mediatama, Maiji Business School, Lingkaran, Komatsu – engaged in the industry classes during school hours.</p>	<p>American Chamber of Commerce/Workforce Development Committee</p> <p>BEKRAF (Badan Ekonomi Kreatif Republic of Indonesia Creative Economy Agency)</p>
<p><b>Philippines</b></p> 	<p>Department of Education – Region 7 (Cebu)</p> <p>Department of Education – National Capital Region</p> <p>Office of the Mayor of Malabon</p>	<p>More than 100 companies hosted AWARE2 students for work immersion. These companies included start-up businesses, international franchises, large business process outsourcing firms and local and international hotels.</p>	<p>Employers Confederation of the Philippines</p> <p>Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry</p> <p>Primary Structures Educational Foundation</p>
<p><b>Thailand</b></p> 	<p>Ministry of Education</p> <p>Northern TVET Career Center</p> <p>Chiang Mai Provincial Education Office</p>	<p>More than 200 firms participated as industry partners, including automotive companies, hotels, small businesses and start-ups.</p>	<p>Institute of Technology for People with Disabilities and the Elderly</p> <p>The Information Technology Foundation under the Initiative of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn</p>

Source: Education Development Center

Teachers and curriculum developers consistently point to the importance of ensuring that the program is student centered, staying laser focused on what each student needs to become future ready. Further, the three EDC country leads stress the importance of not being too rigid in implementation even at the program management level, instead promoting an approach that empathizes with users, pinpoints need and adapts.

EDC aligns the program to meet stakeholder needs on a regular basis, though differently in each country. At the outset of each project, EDC conducts a curriculum adaptation during which private-sector and government partners are invited to review and rework curricula to meet local needs. Going into AWARE2, EDC had adapted versions of the WRN! curricula for the Philippines and Indonesia, so the most significant adaptation happened in Thailand with the Ministry of Education. EDC gathers input from partners and revises curricula accordingly on an ongoing basis. These feedback mechanisms are built into various aspects of the project; however, the most pronounced version is in Indonesia, where EDC works closely with industry partners to co-design industry classes that start with existing, but often outdated, content for a specific subject and then map that content against the needs industry has for new employees. In Indonesia, EDC has been working with a group of five to six industry partners to co-design the curriculum.

At the end of each year of implementation, EDC convenes key stakeholders to collectively reflect on what aspects of implementation worked well and how the design and/or implementation can be strengthened for the next year. Particularly in the Philippines, this approach has been instrumental in incorporating teacher, industry and local government input. In Malabon (one of the principal cities in the Manila National Capital Region), this stakeholder

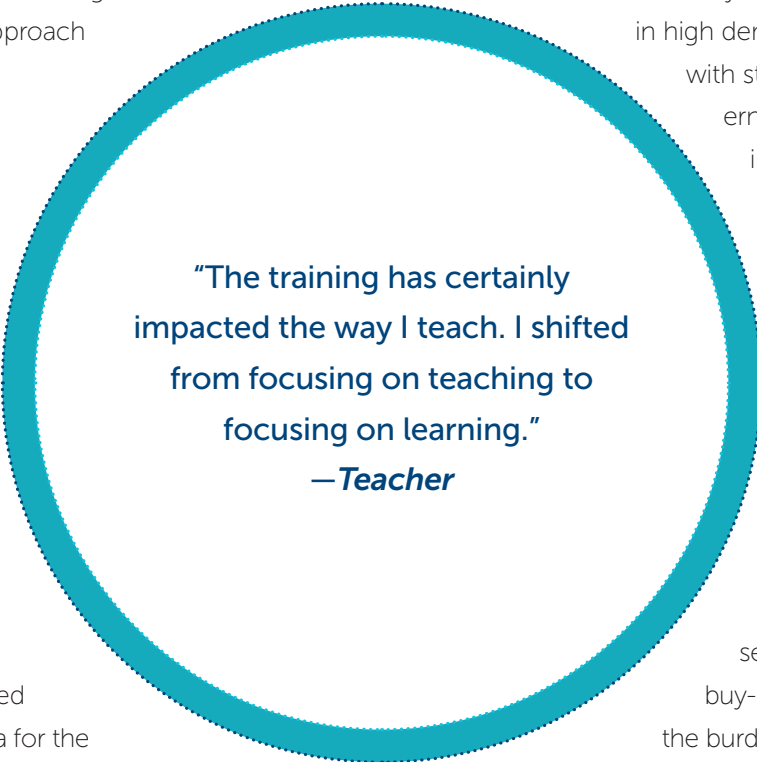
group has coalesced into the Malabon Youth Development Alliance. The mayor has now authorized funding to carry forward an expansion by training a new cadre of master trainers who can disseminate the approach throughout the city. Finally, EDC is developing and rolling

out an industry survey about what skills are in high demand, which will be shared with stakeholders, including government officials, schools and industry partners, as a means of strengthening alignment between how the education sector and industry assess performance.

Another critical strategy for adapting to local need is the array of templates developed by EDC, which can be customized. The templates serve to accelerate local buy-in and adoption by reducing the burden needed to implement systemic change. The tools span the full

spectrum of the work-based learning component of the AWARE2 program and include items such as a sample letter and FAQs for prospective host employers; a letter, a consent form and FAQs for parents/guardians; a school-employer letter of agreement; a letter to employers about accident procedures; a work experience monitoring report; a student work experience logbook; and guidelines for post-placement activities with employers.

Stakeholders point to the student work experience logbook as a particularly helpful resource. The logbook is a comprehensive tool for students that includes resources such as contact information, orientation checklists, daily journals and employer evaluations. EDC found across all three countries that the student logbook helped to distinguish AWARE2 students from non-AWARE2 students due to the level of pragmatic details that enable students to shift their mindset from student to worker and better demonstrate soft skills, such as time management.



**“The training has certainly impacted the way I teach. I shifted from focusing on teaching to focusing on learning.”**  
—*Teacher*

# WORK-BASED LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION TEMPLATES

EDC developed a guide that includes tools and supporting documents to help teachers implement work-based learning. Below is a sample taken from one of the 50-plus pages of resources included in the guide.

## 1. Preparation Checklist for Teachers

The following checklist outlines the preparation needed for teachers in work experience implementation.

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Experience Preparation Checklist for Teachers			
BEFORE PLACEMENT			
Preparing host employers	Done	Preparing students	Done
Send out Letter to Employers and FAQ to all potential host employers		Provide students work experience application questionnaire	
Set up meetings with potential host employers via phone/email. When meeting face-to-face for the first time, use the Agenda for meeting potential employers guidelines		Provide students with Letter to parent: Consent form and FAQ and the Letter to parent requesting potential employer	
Shortlist potential host employers and input information in Employer database		Select and match students with host employers to take part in work experience and input information in Employer database	
Complete School-employer letter of agreement		Conduct orientation with selected students on work experience placement using the Agenda for the student orientation to WBL as guidelines	
Send Letter to employers about accident procedures		Provide students with <i>Employer contact information</i> (1.2 in Student Work Experience logbook)	

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As with other components of WRN!, the work-based learning component of the AWARE2 program has a core structure — templates/tools, minimum 40-hour requirement for work-based learning experiences, etc. — that can be adapted based on local need. For example, the timing of the AWARE2 work-based learning component was moved to earlier in the program in all three countries to provide schools with an opportunity to better prepare students for national work immersion requirements, including giving students opportunities to observe tasks before performing them so students enter their work immersion already understanding some of the skills required in the workplace.

Finally, a key to successfully adapting the program to local need is the steps EDC has taken to standardize its program management infrastructure to encourage collaboration and communication, both across countries and within each respective country. As the backbone organization, EDC has established common metrics and facilitates regular forms of communication for team members to use. For example, the AWARE2 country leads connect with U.S.-based EDC staff virtually for weekly meetings, despite nearly 12-hour time differences. The three program leads for each country also connect with each other virtually on a weekly basis to share updates and

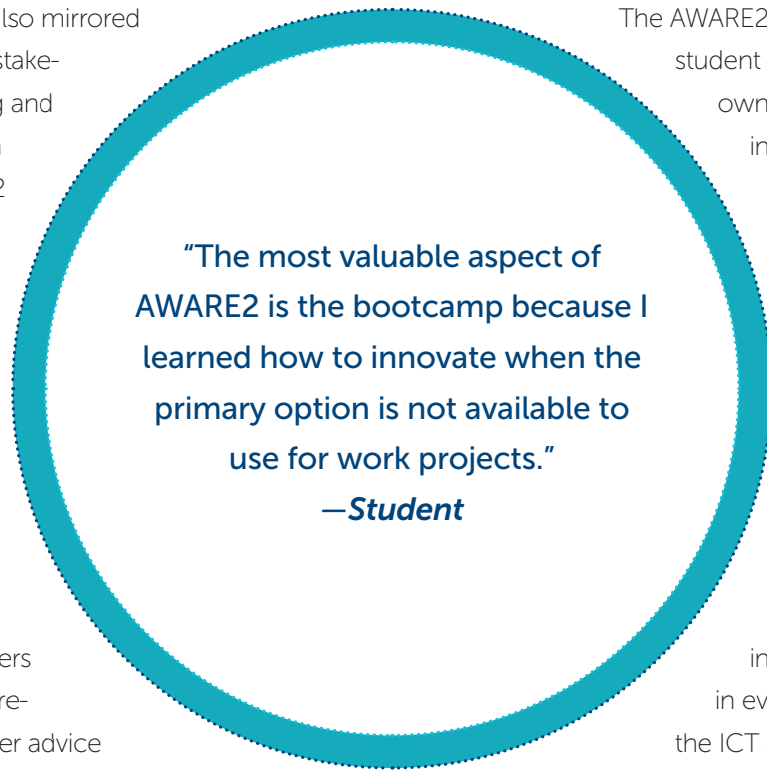
best practices and to strategize about implementation challenges and potential adjustments. These channels of communication allow for rapid dissemination of best practices and rapid responses to common challenges.

This collaborative culture is also mirrored in each country among the stakeholders involved in designing and delivering the program. Each respective country's AWARE2 team of curriculum developers, trainers and industry representatives met face to face for five days to co-design the bootcamp workshops to align with student and industry needs. AWARE2 country leads also meet regularly with government officials and other relevant stakeholders to build knowledge and awareness of the program, to gather advice on program design and delivery and to share impact.

### ***Bringing About Broader Systemic Change in Teaching and Learning***

Across all three countries, the AWARE2 approach is having an impact far beyond the lessons by building the capacity of teachers. At the outset of the program, school leaders and teachers were not overwhelmingly supportive of AWARE2, particularly given time constraints and competing programs and priorities. However, once they began to see positive outcomes, the program was embraced. Stakeholders in all three countries point to a shift away from rote teaching as a key success in the delivery of the AWARE2 program, moving teachers toward a facilitator role that allows students to design their own learning. Teachers also pointed to this shift in instructional practice as the most challenging aspect of the program, as it often upended their philosophy of their role in the learning process as well as deep-rooted instructional habits in the classroom. A number of teachers in all three countries reported applying the active learning model

used in WRN! to other courses and grade levels and sharing active learning strategies with their peers. School leaders in some sites also plan to expand access to components of the program to students beyond a single grade level.



The AWARE2 approach is also building student confidence and giving them ownership over their own learning, particularly the bootcamp experience, according to the AWARE2 country leads and teachers. A major goal of the bootcamp is to shift the mindset of students who have often struggled to perform well in other academic settings by challenging them to go beyond merely following instructions to applying innovation and problem solving in everyday work-related tasks in the ICT sector. The bootcamp also is designed to encourage students to take

chances, work together and see mistakes as learning opportunities rather than failures. The program provides students with perhaps their first experience in an active learning setting — teachers have become facilitators instead of lecturers.

In Indonesia, students who participated in the bootcamp reported that it transformed the way they learn: A project focused on making a movie did not start with a discussion about how to make a movie; it started with learning how to make a storyboard and using cross-cutting technology to do so. Students also point to the digital portfolio aspect of the training as a highlight. The portfolio is a digital resume of sorts for students to use in obtaining employment, which they can share directly with employers and add to as they gain experience. Teachers also report a difference in how students behave, noting positive values such as honesty, responsibility, ethics and caring after completing the training, in addition to the development of soft skills — most notably, communication.



## Fostering Efforts to Scale and Sustain AWARE2

EDC views the adaptability of the program and flexibility of team leaders charged with implementation as a key to scaling the program. National and regional governments, as well as participating schools in all three countries, are enthusiastic about the promise of AWARE2 as a valuable strategy for improving employment outcomes for youth and are supporting the efforts in various ways. For example, in Thailand the government is partnering with EDC to support the next Training of Trainers workshop for teachers.

In the Philippines, the regional governments are releasing teachers to participate in the Training of Master Trainers workshops. In Indonesia, the Jakarta Department of Education provided funding for industry classes, with in-kind support from global companies, such as Intel, and local companies, such as Matata, Sinedu and PT Net Mediatama. In Thailand, Chom Thong Community College used the government budget to provide lunches to students participating in the program.

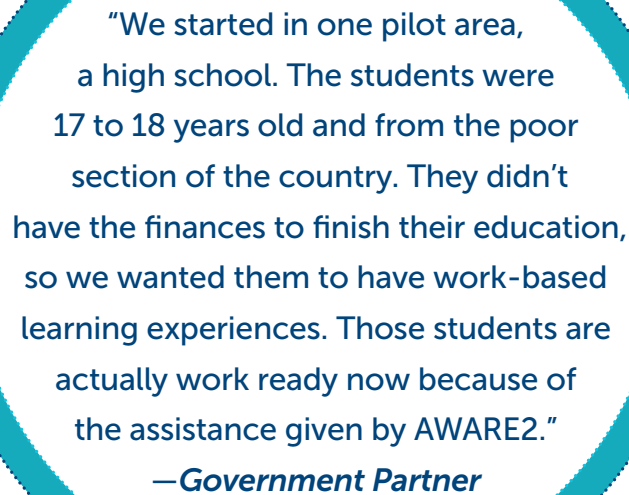
The initiative is also bringing much-needed resources to the countries, particularly from global digital companies that are providing training and access to technology. IBM facilitated the first innovation bootcamp in the Philippines for AWARE2, which included funding to implement the program. Microsoft and Google also provided direct training to teachers. Most notably, the Jakarta Provincial Department of Education has invited a proposal to fund a fivefold expansion of AWARE2 over the next three years and has appointed AWARE2's Indonesia country manager to serve as the secretary general of the newly formed TVET-Industry engagement governing board, MKPI. MKPI will be a standalone organization led by a committee of 17 decisionmakers, including policymakers and industry

leaders, charged with fostering more collaboration between industry and schools.

The three participating countries are leveraging lessons learned during the three-year grant period to fine-tune their strategies to foster interest in scaling and sustainability. In Indonesia, there is a deliberate effort to make sure that stakeholders have an understanding of the program and are aware of the benefits of the program to ensure appropriate support going forward. Specifically, leaders in Indonesia are presenting industry success stories to

government officials to demonstrate impact and build the case for sustainability.

Building government knowledge and understanding of the digital economy has been important in the Philippines, where in-depth government knowledge of the ICT sector was limited primarily to e-commerce. And in Thailand, a strategy moving forward is to be more deliberate about engaging additional stakeholders in future iterations, in particular engaging the Ministry of Labor in the design and delivery of the program.



**"We started in one pilot area, a high school. The students were 17 to 18 years old and from the poor section of the country. They didn't have the finances to finish their education, so we wanted them to have work-based learning experiences. Those students are actually work ready now because of the assistance given by AWARE2."**  
**—Government Partner**

All three countries are also working to connect directly — and with intentionality — to stakeholders to build more mutually beneficial relationships that align needs and interests and allow for shared impact. In Indonesia, connecting with stakeholders and engaging them in the program means asking industry partners about the costs associated with running their business or about challenges they are facing in the next two to three years. In Thailand, it means engaging directly with school leaders to get buy-in for the program, instead of the government selecting schools to participate, and keeping an eye on changes in school leadership to ensure that implementation continues to move forward.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Efforts are underway to formally evaluate AWARE2. As the investment closes out, all three countries are interested in sustaining and expanding the program. The initiative is already being institutionalized in individual schools throughout the communities, and efforts are underway to more broadly incorporate AWARE2 across each of the countries to ensure that programming is not a one-time, standalone project. In the Philippines, for example, institutionalization is underway for the WRN! program: An alliance of stakehold-

ers has been formed to better align workforce development strategies as the program is scaled beyond Malabon to 31 cities across two regions. In Indonesia, efforts are underway to develop a proposal to fund a fivefold expansion of AWARE2 through the newly formed TVET-Industry engagement governing board, MKPI. The proposal will be presented to the Jakarta governor in August, with work projected to begin in January 2020. And finally, Thailand is exploring expansion of the bootcamp to 50 additional schools.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For more information about AWARE2, see <https://www.edc.org/AWARE2>.
- <sup>2</sup> For more information about EDC, see <https://www.edc.org>.
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.jpmorganchase.com/corporate/news/pr/workforce-readiness-program-asean.htm>
- <sup>4</sup> Summary findings provided by EDC.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> For more information about New Skills for Youth, see <https://www.jpmorganchase.com/corporate/news/stories/newskillsforyouth.htm>.
- <sup>8</sup> <https://www.edc.org/work-ready-now-wrn>; <https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/Work-Ready-Now.pdf>;  
<https://www.edc.org/study-wrn-credential's-relationship-youth-jobs-and-employer-satisfaction>; EDC's Work Readiness Program
- <sup>9</sup> For more information on AWARE1, see <https://www.edc.org/accelerating-work-achievement-and-readiness-employment-aware>.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>12</sup> EDC
- <sup>13</sup> <https://www.edc.org/AWARE2>