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SINGAPORE'S NEW EDUCATION SYSTEM

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SINGAPORE'S NEW EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education Reform for National Development

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National University of Singapore



INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

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Preface

The driving force . . . [of a country's development] . . . lies in factors such as the education level of the population . . .

Report of the Economic Committee, p. 5.

THE role of education in nation-building and economic development is generally well understood and accepted. For a small nation such as Singapore without a lot of natural resources, the importance of investing in human resource development cannot be over-emphasized. It is not surprising, therefore, for Singapore to place such high priority on education.

The major education reforms initiated as a result of Dr Goh Keng Swee's *Report on the Ministry of Education* marked an important phase in the development of Singapore's education system. As the first few cohorts of pupils affected by these reforms have now passed through the system, it is timely to present an objective and evaluative account of these reforms and their impact on educational attainment. In doing so, I hope to contribute my little bit towards a better understanding of the education system.

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to my former colleagues in the Ministry of Education, particularly Mr Tan Yap Kwang, Deputy Director, Monitoring & Evaluation Branch, without whose help the writing of this monograph would not have been possible. I would also like to state that while I have gained much insight during my service at the

Ministry of Education, the opinions and views expressed are my own and should not be attributed to the Ministry.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this book to my son, Qingyao, who has only just entered the education system. It is my hope that he, too, will have a meaningful educational experience throughout his years at school.

Soon Teck Wong