

# HESB



## Partnerships in Higher Education

## Editor's Message

In partnership with SEAMEO RIHED and the EU Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE), this twelfth edition of *Higher Education in Southeast Asia and Beyond* (HESB) looks at regional cooperation and its importance in enhancing the quality, competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education institutions and students, thereby contributing to an ASEAN community.

**Romyen Kosaikanont** calls for the Southeast Asian region and its partners to recognise their uniqueness, strengths, similarities and differences, as well as to redefine a common space in higher education towards the shared goal of co-creating a sustainable future for people, the planet, peace and prosperity. Meanwhile, **Darren McDermott** charts the significant progress that has been made towards realising the vision of a common space for higher education in the region, in spite of the turbulent times.

**Supachai Yavaprabhas** tells his story of SEAMEO RIHED, describing the conception of the proposal for the harmonisation of higher education in Southeast Asia to create a common space for higher education in the region. **Reka Tozsa** argues that while competition among higher education institutions is inevitable, they must first become the best collaborators. She offers three ways for them to excel in global competition by forging stronger partnerships. **Roger Y. Chao Jr.** discusses how the establishment of a common space with the inclusive participation of key stakeholders in governing and directing programmes and initiatives, may be the exact approach that is needed in the Southeast Asian region. **Choltis Dhirathiti** shares how the ASEAN University Network (AUN) has been working as the gateway to ASEAN's higher education sector, where current and new initiatives are always being translated into many types of collaborative cross-border activities and projects.

**Keiko Ikeda** and **Abdul Latiff Ahmad** discuss how the collaborative online international learning/virtual exchange (COIL/VE) approach is much more affordable, accessible and scalable in comparison with physical study abroad, allowing a wider range of students to take part in this endeavour and experience internationalisation without leaving their home countries. **Paulina Pannen** and **Basuki Hardjojo** discuss the success factors and the constraints behind the Indonesia Cyber Education Institute (ICE Institute or ICE-I), which was designed to be a marketplace for online courses in Indonesia.

**Somkiat Kamolpun** discusses the impact of regional education cooperation in enhancing the quality, accessibility, internationalisation and harmonisation of higher education systems and institutions. Meanwhile, **Andy Gibbs** and **Philip Masterson** show how Community of Practice development is an opportunity for participants in higher education institutions to collaboratively develop, collect and share knowledge and strategies aimed at building capacity to better support students.

Finally, **Libing Wang** calls for collective and concerted actions from higher education actors and stakeholders to address the interconnected nature of the current challenges facing humanity and the planet. **Yazrina Yahya** and **Lily Freida** call for partnerships in higher education to be agile and responsive, so that higher education institutions can remain relevant and transformational as they adapt to change while expanding their engagement with governments, ministries, communities, industries and regional organisations,

We hope you enjoy this issue, and we invite you to consider contributing to future issues and being part of the conversation on higher education in Southeast Asia and beyond.

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# Partnerships are at the core of The HEAD Foundation

This Special Issue of HESB is a testimony to partnership. SHARE-EU and SEAMEO RIHED, two organisations infused with a strong spirit of transnational cooperation, have joined forces with The HEAD Foundation to publish this edition of HESB. It is through this tripartite partnership that we are able to offer stories and accounts of initiatives enabling partnerships in higher education across Southeast Asia and beyond.

‘No man is an island’ is a classic aphorism that illustrates the importance of partnership, and this is especially true in higher education. The COVID pandemic forced the campuses of higher education institutions to close and halted all forms of physical mobility, but learning, education and engagement needed to continue despite the restrictions. These difficult circumstances put the authenticity of partnerships to the test; how did institutions, stakeholders, educators and learners partner to ensure higher education was able to continue? More essentially, are there new and valuable lessons about partnerships that we, as a part of the higher education ecosystem in the region, can learn from this challenging episode?

We are certain that the articles in this Special Issue of HESB will offer new insights into partnerships in higher education across Southeast Asia and beyond. Indeed, HESB is itself a product of a partnership. HESB was an idea conceived by The HEAD Foundation to document developments in higher education across the region. However, instead of pursuing this publication alone, The HEAD Foundation embarked on a partnership with Professor Philip G. Altbach and the Center for International Higher Education, Boston College. This fruitful collaboration has enabled HESB and the International Higher Education publication by the CIHE to share and co-publish articles of common interest and reach a much wider readership.

As a modest philanthropic organisation with the vision to improve lives through quality education and effective healthcare, The HEAD Foundation strongly advocates partnership and collaboration in our work. On the education front, the Foundation has developed capacity-building programmes for higher education institutions and school leaders, as well as educators, through partnership and collaboration. Over the years we have partnered with the Asian Development Bank, SEAMEO SEARCA, ASEAN Foundation, the New Generation Pedagogical Research Center in Cambodia and others, as well as individual experts, to develop, support and carry out these programmes.

In addition, through partnerships and collaboration the Foundation also strives to disseminate knowledge to the wider public. We take this seriously as a form of public education. For us to do this more effectively through THF Dialogues – a series of public lectures and talks, both in person and virtual – we are embarking on partnerships with universities, polytechnics, publishers and all the knowledge institutions in our societal learning ecosystem.

Borrowing wisdom from our African friends, two proverbs remind us of the importance of partnerships for the sake of education: ‘It takes a village to raise a child’, and ‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together’. The endeavour to educate and strengthen education both regionally and globally requires our collective effort, and we must do it together.

**Wan Chang Da and Vignesh Naidu**

The HEAD Foundation

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# Partnership in Higher Education: Key to a Common Space and Sustainable Development of the Southeast Asian Region

ROMYEN KOSAIKANONT

2022 is witnessing a period of enhanced regional cooperation and partnership to co-create a shared vision of an inclusive space of collective intelligence in higher education, with the aim to facilitate sustainable learning and living in Southeast Asia. Through both SEAMEO RIHED and SEAMEO Member Countries as well as the ASEAN Secretariat's Education, Youth and Sports Division (EYSD) and ASEAN Member States and regional stakeholders, this process of co-creation is responding to the current challenges we face, but in order to succeed it will demand more regional cooperation and partnership than ever before.

Against the backdrop of the ongoing global pandemic, we have also been challenged further by the climate crisis, economic crises and unsustainable consumption and production, as well as rising social inequalities. One critical question regards the relevance of the higher education sector for society. Higher education has long been framed as a driving force for economic growth and social development, with universities viewed as competing

entities in producing knowledge and graduates for employability. Today's crises and uncertainties are positively forcing higher education to stay relevant by transforming itself and joining forces with stakeholders in related ecosystem(s), to synergise their activities towards a more sustainable future for the planet and its people.

## Initiatives

The question of relevance is not new. As far back as 2008 Professor Dr. Supachai Yavaprabhas, Centre Director of SEAMEO RIHED at the time, brought together SEAMEO Member Countries and partners in higher education to address the question of how to build an ASEAN Community. This initiative stressed that a common space for Southeast Asian higher education must be introduced with a crucial role to play in the ASEAN integration process. It should offer a structured regional framework to facilitate academic projects and activities between higher education institutions as well as training and employment with the private sector. This initial

common space required joint intergovernmental and industrial efforts in combination with the regional higher education sector.<sup>1</sup> The importance of the region working together in partnership was highlighted, along with the need for greater knowledge dissemination for regional development and lifelong learning.

In our new context of disruption and crises, voices are raised ever louder in their demands for higher education to lead change in society. At this critical time the question of the relevance of higher education is even more serious with our sustainable future at stake. In March 2022 SEAMEO RIHED, EU SHARE and other regional partners in higher education, namely the UNESCO Asia Pacific Bureau for Education, ASEAN EYSD and the ASEAN University Network (AUN), co-organised the SHARE Policy Dialogue 14 on 'The Contribution of Higher Education Partnerships in Southeast Asia towards the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 2030'. The dialogue engaged all stakeholders in higher education including students, alumni, professors, researchers, industry, civil society, philanthropists, policy makers, higher education leaders and regional organisations. The dialogue was also open to the public online, with more than 600 participants joining in. The goal of the dialogue was to collectively identify how higher education could best contribute and stay relevant for the future. The results were shared at the World Higher Education Conference in May 2022, when the transformation of higher education for sustainable development was discussed.

*From the policy dialogue, participants concertedly shared their views that the challenges we face are non-discriminatory, complex in nature and interrelated. Therefore, it is not possible for a single field of study, a leading higher education institution or government, or a regional organisation or company to resolve the problems in isolation.*

1. SEAMEO RIHED. (2009). Project Background and Introduction. *Raising Awareness: Exploring the Ideas of Creating Higher Education Common Space in Southeast Asia: A Conference Proceeding*, 6-7 November 2008, Bangkok, Thailand.

## What Follows from this Scenario

To prove that the higher education sector continues to be vital to society, the 'how' has to be well understood. Learning needs to be made more accessible and more convenient, adapting to different learners' needs with the help of technology and different providers. Learners demand more flexible modes of learning at different stages of life, while local communities can also create valuable knowledge with their local wisdom and epistemology. Other sectors such as industries and independent organisations are also in a good position to generate their own research. Clearly the higher education sector is neither the sole knowledge creator nor the only player in preparing future workforces.

Through SEAMEO RIHED's actions and our 6th Five-Year Strategic Plan, in April 2022 the region approved efforts to redefine the common space in Southeast Asian higher education to drive learning across three areas: skills, competencies, and credentials; futuristic leadership; and regional collective intelligence. The biggest issue of our time is how we can co-create a sustainable future for people and the planet with peace and prosperity. For higher education, and for SEAMEO RIHED's efforts towards redefining the common space in higher education, leadership and partnership are key.

However, working in partnership in higher education requires a number of things: 1) more equitable and distributed power among higher education institutions and other stakeholders involved in knowledge generation; 2) more inclusive learning for all; 3) more accessible and massified internationalisation processes; and 4) transformed leadership for partnership.

In terms of equitable and distributed power for knowledge generation, the following five aspects must be considered. First, it must be recognised that the ultimate goal for knowledge generation through research is the betterment of people and the sustainability of the planet. Second, knowers or knowledge creators are not limited to those in

higher education systems. Third, the knowledge generation process is no longer exclusive to research and publication in high-impact journals. Fourth, knowledge generation must be inclusive and welcome ideas for social transformation from diverse sources. That is, partnerships must be cross-disciplinary, cross-generational, cross-geographical, and cross-sector to create a truly comprehensive solution for sustainable development. Finally, to maximise impacts from research the knowledge generated must be free, as well as openly and readily accessible. After all, the main objective of knowledge creation and dissemination is to tackle barriers and achieve a sustainable future.

As regards learning, the paradigm must be shifted from focusing on professional knowledge and skills for employment to prioritising humanised soft skills with empathy and life skills with a growth mindset. The current knowledge and skills taught will not be enough and will not stay relevant for the future world of work, and so the learning provided/shared must ensure the preparation of learners with growth mindsets, and professional and soft skills with values of empathy and a global outlook. The concept of learners should be broadened and expanded to be more inclusive, serving the various needs of people from diverse backgrounds and age groups. The best approach for this paradigm shift will be to work in partnership with learners, the private sector and industries as well as civil societies. Learning approaches must be varied and flexible to serve the different needs of lifelong learners. Most importantly, learners must be enabled to learn independently or in teams as necessary, tackling real cases or problems to collaboratively apply their knowledge to real-world challenges.

The internationalisation process of higher education must also be transformed to benefit the masses, not the minority. The true value of the internationalisation of higher education learning (in terms of intercultural understanding, global outlook etc.) must not be overlooked, and the technology used in the process must enhance

learning and ensure better accessibility and equity in benefits for all learners. With more creative and diverse internationalisation activities available through virtual and hybrid mobility, our learners and university communities will be able to enhance intercultural competencies and contribute to the high-priority task of developing truly global citizens.

In addition, higher education institutions need to further transform towards becoming learning organisations. Their leadership must change to be more distributed in power and inclusive in decision-making using knowledge-driven approaches. They must learn how to collaborate in partnership with other universities and stakeholders in higher education, including learners themselves, while providing a venue for collective intelligence and leading changes in society. With a commitment to common goals and values, collective intelligence built from collaboration and higher education partnerships can be meaningfully created, stored, shared and built upon.

### Conclusion

The Southeast Asian region and our partners must recognise our own uniqueness, as well as our strengths, similarities and differences. Working in partnership must involve principles of mutual trust and respect, including the equitable sharing of ideas and resources with the common shared goal of co-creating a sustainable future for people, the planet, peace and prosperity. This means that all partners in the common space of Southeast Asian higher education should work together, bringing their own commitments, mandates, resources, and expertise to facilitate the advancement of the collective vision. This work in partnership will ultimately serve as common intelligence for the transformation of higher education to build our sustainable future. 🏡

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## Catalysing Consensus on the Common Higher Education Space

DARREN McDERMOTT

### A Changed Landscape

The seven-year period since the adoption of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Higher Education on 21 November 2015 has seen the landscape of higher education in Southeast Asia change utterly. From the inexorable disruption of the sector by the digital transformation to the catastrophic blow to teaching, learning and student mobility dealt by COVID-19, there have been few if any certainties for higher education practitioners to cling to.

Yet despite these turbulent times, it is worth noting the significant progress that has been made towards realising the vision of a common space for higher education in the region. This has been the result of partnerships among and concerted efforts by Southeast Asia's member states, regional organisations, higher education institutions, students and international partners.

A key guiding principle of the KL Declaration was the acknowledgement of *'higher education as one of the catalysts in accelerating ASEAN's economic, political and sociocultural development agenda'*. This recognition of higher education's centrality to the region's development has been transformative in the expansion of the breadth and depth of higher education policy development, and its inclusion in the context of wider societal development.

“ Yet despite these turbulent times, it is worth noting the significant progress that has been made towards realising the vision of a common space for higher education in the region. ”



## The SHARE Programme

2015 also saw the launch of the EU's flagship higher education initiative with ASEAN in the form of the Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) Programme, which furthered the objective *'to strengthen regional co-operation and enhance the quality, regional competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education institutions and students'*. The inaugural SHARE Policy Dialogue held at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta in August of that year would be the first of fifteen such dialogues up to the end of 2022.

From its inception the SHARE Programme has sought to convene regional fora to catalyse consensus on the way forward for a common higher education space in the region. In its first phase between 2015 and 2020 the programme engaged with more than 2,000 policymakers, member state ministry officials, higher education practitioners and students.

SHARE has worked with the higher education community in the region to establish frameworks and structures to allow great comparability and compatibility, and therefore exchange, between higher education systems and their institutions across the region. This has included the accreditation of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network as an ASEAN entity, the development of the ASEAN-Europe Credit Transfer System, and the implementation of the SHARE Scholarship scheme for Southeast Asian institutions and their students.

The Programme's contributions to the region's higher education development were recognised in the Chairman's Statement at the 31st ASEAN Summit on the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN in Manila on 13 November 2017, which *'encouraged the development of higher education through internationalisation and quality assurance including the further testing of the ASEAN Credit Transfer System with support of the EU-SHARE Programme to allow all universities in the region to benefit from the evolving regional higher education space'*. Following the endorsement

of the 12th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOM-ED) in Bangkok on 30 November and 1 December 2017, the EU and the ASEAN Secretariat signalled their intent to extend the first phase of the SHARE Programme.

## Adaptation and Transformation

In early 2020, as the SHARE Consortium engaged with regional partners to develop the strategy for its extension phase, the world was waking up to news of a pandemic and a level of disruption that would upend the work of international higher education for much of the following two years.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic forced the SHARE Programme to adapt its strategy and implementation plans. SHARE sought to implement the digital transformation of its initiatives by working concertedly with regional partners and experts to build capacity and resources for Virtual Exchange and Collaborative Online International Learning (VE/COIL) Programmes and a new Digital Credit Transfer System. This would enable the continued internationalised exchange between SHARE Partner Universities across Southeast Asia.

If there was any positive outcome of the pandemic for the programme, it was the opportunity to further explore digital modalities of higher education, not as a temporary solution or a silver bullet but as an adaptive approach allowing higher education to keep pace with the developments and needs of society at large.

## Growing Regional Cohesion

Following a short hiatus, the SHARE Programme resumed its work with regional stakeholders on 27 February 2021 through an agreement between the EU and ASEAN, which extended the programme up to the end of 2022. This was in the context of the now 45-year-old dialogue partnership between the EU and ASEAN, which was elevated to the status of a strategic partnership in December 2020.

Coinciding with the resumption of SHARE was the adoption by the region's Ministers of Education of the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021–2025, to which SHARE contributed as part of a regional consultation process. In line with this new education work plan, SHARE held its 12th Policy Dialogue under the theme of 'Creating a Resilient and Sustainable ASEAN Higher Education Space' between 27 and 29 July 2021.

The ASEAN Working Group on Higher Education Mobility 2025 (AWGHEM 2025) was launched on the first day of the policy dialogue. The primary mandate of the group is to lead the development and implementation of a cohesive roadmap to realise a common higher education space for the region, fostering greater people-to-people connectivity and knowledge transfer within the framework of the Work Plan on Education 2021–2025. Composed of senior officials from the region's ministries of education and regional organisations, it is the most representative group of the region's higher education policymakers. The SHARE Programme serves as a technical and operational advisor to the working group.


In addition to increased participation by practitioners and students in SHARE dialogues, the programme was mindful of the need for their wider representation at policy level. To that end, SHARE established the Higher Education Harmonisation Community of Practice (CoP) in 2021, and more recently the Southeast Asia Student and Alumni Network (SEASAN). These practitioner-led platforms will address the opportunities and challenges brought by the harmonisation and internationalisation of the region's higher education.

The 14th SHARE Policy Dialogue on 'The Contribution of Higher Education Partnerships in Southeast Asia towards the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030' saw the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (RIHED), the ASEAN Secretariat's Education Youth Sports Division, the UNESCO

Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, the ASEAN University Network, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and other members of the working group partner during a three-day hybrid dialogue in Bangkok.

## Regional Ownership and Sustainability

The work towards the regional ownership and sustainability of a common higher education space in Southeast Asia took a big step forward with the launch of the Roadmap on the ASEAN Higher Education Space 2025 and its implementation plan at the 15th SHARE Policy Dialogue in Hanoi on 27 July 2022. The document was formulated by the ASEAN Working Group on Higher Education Mobility, the most inclusive, diverse and representative membership of regional higher education organisations ever to work on such an initiative. It establishes the context for further work on decisions towards the establishment of a collective vision and a cohesive Joint Declaration on a Common Higher Education Space for Southeast Asia.

The EU Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region Programme is proud to have contributed to the process of bringing regional organisations in Southeast Asia closer together, coalescing around the shared goal of developing an inclusive and diverse common space for higher education in the region. 

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## My Story of SEAMEO RIHED's Harmonisation of Higher Education in Southeast Asia

SUPACHAI YAVAPRABHAS

The story of SEAMEO RIHED and the conception of the proposal for the harmonisation of higher education in Southeast Asia to create a common space for higher education in the region started almost 17 years ago. In 2005 I was appointed as a director of SEAMEO RIHED, and before joining SEAMEO RIHED I had served as the first executive director of the ASEAN University Network from 1997 to 2005. During my term at the AUN, the most challenging task was to promote collaboration among member universities in the network and between the member universities and others. This task included a consideration of student exchange, staff exchange, collaborative research, quality assurance, and other areas.

When institutions are engaged with these collaborative actions, one critical factor has always played an important role, namely the infrastructures within which higher education institutions in each country must operate and conform. The attention and authority of the ministers responsible for higher education and beyond were necessary to adjust these infrastructures. While the governing board of the AUN was comprised mainly of university presidents representing each member country, the governing

board of SEAMEO RIHED was mainly made up of chief government officers representing the higher education sector of each member country. Therefore, the decisions made by the governing board of SEAMEO RIHED have more binding effects on the higher education sectors in each member country, and may be tabled at meetings of the ministers responsible for education in the member countries. Recognising the important role of SEAMEO RIHED, the pain point at the university network level was revisited and a proposal for creating a common space in higher education was gradually prepared.

After joining SEAMEO RIHED and learning about how the SEAMEO family worked, I realised there were at least two things to be done. The first was to create a governing body like a SEAMEO Higher Officials Meeting (HOM) or ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting to focus mainly on the higher education sector, and the second was to prepare a concept paper to be tabled at the SEAMEO Ministerial Meeting held once a year. With good support from the chief higher education officers of the SEAMEO member countries, especially Dr. Sumet Yamnoon from Thailand and Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Hassan Said from Malaysia, a HOM for higher

education was created for the first time, and through this HOM the conceptual idea of creating a higher education infrastructure to support inter-regional collaboration was initiated around 2007.

As far as I can recall, when we first initiated this conceptual idea the first word we coined was an 'integration' of the higher education systems. The word 'integration' was probably borrowed from the political science discipline, which uses the term 'regional integration' to refer to efforts to strengthen regional collaboration. We therefore simply applied the phrase 'higher education integration' without a full awareness of its meaning.

We first organised a meeting of the director generals/ secretary generals responsible for higher education in Southeast Asia, or HOM for higher education, to meet and discuss the possibility of an integration of higher education in the region. The outcome was quite positive, and we therefore planned to submit our proposal on higher education integration in Southeast Asia for the consideration of the education ministers of the SEA countries. Before submitting the proposal, however, we had the opportunity to receive feedback from our SEAMEO chair, Professor Bambang Sudibyo, Indonesian Minister of Education at that time, when he paid a visit to our centre and listened to our presentation. Professor Sudibyo was a former chair of the Master of Economics programme at Gadjadara University before joining the Indonesian political arena, and he was a true champion of fostering academic networking while he was at Gadjadara University.

Professor Sudibyo was pleased with the proposed concept, but he commented that the word 'integration' might carry a negative connotation. Integration implies that those who enter the process must lose at least part of their own identity and must accept a new proposed identity. In the ASEAN region where each country has its own history, culture, traditions, national administrative and political system, as well as educational system, it might be 'too much' for a country to accept this process, and therefore 'integration' might not be the best word in this context. Professor Sudibyo asked us to consider

other words that carried a more positive meaning. After this meeting we recognised that choosing the right word was critical to gain acceptance, especially from our political leaders. Without the leaders' endorsement, it would be an uphill battle to start this new concept.

SEAMEO RIHED later submitted our proposal, 'The structured framework for regional integration in higher education in SEA: The road towards a common space', to the respective bodies and to the SEAMEO Council in 2007. The main objectives outlined in the proposal were to raise awareness among policymakers and high-ranking officials in the SEAMEO Member Countries of the the significance of an inter-governmental process leading to a regional framework for higher education integration and harmonisation, and to help facilitate the possible development and future establishment of a common space for higher education in Southeast Asia by 2015. We had started this journey by borrowing the word 'integration' from the political science discipline, but after advice from Professor Sudibyo we came up with the word 'harmonisation' and used the two words together in our proposal. We later dropped the word 'integration' and used only the word 'harmonisation'.

From 2007 until I left SEAMEO RIHED in 2010, our efforts were focused on creating essential infrastructure including a quality assurance network, a credit transfer system, research collaboration and others. All these we learned about and adapted mainly from the experience of the European higher education common space. While pushing these initiatives we always echoed, again as in Europe, that the creation of a common space or higher education arena did not mean the creation of a uniform or standard higher education system; rather, the intention was to create general guidelines in areas such as quality assurance, credit transfer and so on. These general guidelines would help to enable student and staff mobility and facilitate a better flow of employability movement around the region, which would strengthen the regional economy in the long run.

“The most important factor contributing to the success of the process of harmonisation in higher education has been participation and consensus-building at the level of national agencies, the public and key stakeholders.

As we proceeded we discovered that the national education systems in the region were quite diverse, and higher education was diverse as well. For example, while universities were under the Ministry of Education in most countries, in Thailand universities came under the Ministry of University Affairs, and in Myanmar some universities were under the Ministry of Education while others were under other ministries. In addition, in Vietnam most universities were under the Ministry of Education but the two premier universities, the Vietnam National University at Hanoi and the Vietnam National University at Ho Chi Minh city, were quite independent of the Ministry of Education. A clear understanding of the university system in each country was a prerequisite for understanding the landscape of higher education, as well as for moving the common space agenda forward. Also in terms of another important mechanism for the common space, the quality assurance system, when we started to create a platform for sharing information on quality assurance we noticed that while Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand had a national government body responsible for quality assurance, the Philippines' QA system was modified from the US system with no respective body, while other countries were still in the process of creating their national body.

As time went by, persons responsible for higher education in the region came to know each other through a series of meetings and conferences. Sharing and learning gradually took place. The M-I-T student exchange project was a kind of sandbox project created not only to promote student exchanges but also to identify obstacles and find ways to facilitate the student mobility project. Obstacles and hindrances emerged through the after-action review activities, and there were some issues beyond the purview of the ministry responsible for higher education that needed the attention of national leaders.

After I left SEAMEO RIHED the story has continued up to the present day, and we are still discussing how to make this process more successful. In the early years of the harmonisation process, I was warned by our European colleagues that harmonisation would be a long complex process requiring the involvement of different key players at both the international and domestic levels, ranging from national governments, HEIs, and stakeholders such as the employment sector, students, regional organisations or industrial companies. However, the most important factor contributing to the success of the process of harmonisation in higher education has been participation and consensus-building at the level of national agencies, the public and key stakeholders.

At the time of writing in 2022 the process is still moving forward. However, I serve as a member of the university board of a few universities in Thailand, and I have noticed that the harmonisation process does not always receive significant attention on university agendas. SEAMEO RIHED and others concerned may have to be more aggressive in moving forward with this important agenda.

One final word: one must not commit the folly of Type II error which is to equate 'integration' with 'harmonisation', since to harmonise is not to integrate. 📖

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## The Name of the Game in Southeast Asian Higher Education: Competition or Collaboration?

REKA TOZSA

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“The name of the game is competition,” said a speaker at the recent SHARE Policy Dialogue<sup>1</sup> when discussing the state of higher education in Southeast Asia. This is the kind of bold statement that we need to hear more often at conferences, as it instantly triggers the question: why can it not be collaboration? Especially when we increasingly talk about redirecting partnerships to address the SDGs, which is only possible by enhanced collaboration?

This piece argues that competition among higher education institutions is inevitable, but to become stronger competitors they first must become the best collaborators. While sometimes it is difficult to see the return on collaboration beyond economic benefits, this article offers three ways to excel in global competition by forging stronger partnerships.

Before we look at three leverage points, let's discuss competition and collaboration.

Universities are embedded in their local context, and are expected to contribute to the development of the economy and society of their regions or countries. In other words, they are expected to be locally engaged and partner with businesses to match their skills demand, partner with communities to improve livelihoods, partner with governments to strengthen the science-policy interface, and partner with each other for exchange of knowledge. Universities collaborate widely to promote sustainable development; according to the Higher Education for Sustainable Development Survey (IAU, 2019), around 70% of universities in Asia and the Pacific engage with each other and societal partners to contribute to global goals.

1. SHARE Policy Dialogue 15 titled 'Envisioning the Future of a Common Higher Education Space in Southeast Asia', 27-28 June 2022, Ha Noi, Vietnam.



At the same time, universities are part of a global ecosystem, which is dominated by the Westernised paradigm of competition (GUNi, 2022). Universities compete globally for the brightest student minds, for research faculty, and often for grants and funding. Competition is integrated into universities' narrative as a positive, and is unavoidable in the pursuit of quality. Universities and governments subscribe to a great variety of rankings and benchmarking systems on different dimensions, measuring reputation, research excellence, internationalisation, green approaches and so on.

But how does this global competition fit together with local engagement? Competition is measured by rankings, which incentivises a zero-sum game rather than collaboration and the sharing of resources, and being highly ranked is still often among the policy goals of both universities and governments since a 'rank' is an easy way of understanding perceived quality. However, ranking indicators are limited in capturing the quality and impact of partnerships, so we need to find new ways of rewarding the best collaborators. It has been scientifically proven that diverse partnerships bring more innovative solutions to real-world problems.

Let's consider three examples that could help Southeast Asian universities to use collaboration to become better in competition.

### **1. COLLABORATE TO CREATE A UNIQUE SELLING POINT**

Asia and the Pacific is home to 60% of the young people in the world; there are more than 1.1 billion young people aged 15 to 29 living in the region (ADB, 2019). The Boston Consulting Group and McKinsey & Company predicted that by 2020 there would be 100 million people with middle-class spending patterns across the ASEAN region. Their children will look into enrolling in reputable universities, but with the majority of highly-ranked universities being in other regions, why would they choose to study in the ASEAN region? What is the unique selling point of Southeast Asia in the global competition for students?

One such unique selling point could relate to the concept of sustainable development, which is becoming a dominant theme when discussing solutions to the social, environmental and economic challenges of our world. Some of the biggest of these challenges are located in Southeast Asia, so why not create a powerhouse of sustainable solutions in the region?

According to the initial findings of the Asia-Europe breakout report in the Higher Education for Sustainable Development Survey 2022,<sup>2</sup> about 28% of the responding institutions from Asia look at external rankings as a form of monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development action at their institutions. One such ranking is the Times Higher Education Impact ranking, which has been measuring higher education institutions' contributions to the SDGs since 2019; Malaysian, Thai and Indonesian institutions are excelling in this new benchmarking system. However, climbing this new type of ranking could be a lonely journey, since 36% of the responding institutions from Asia in the same survey said they were not involved with any specific network to advance the SDGs. It seems there is plenty of room for universities to collaborate more.

Southeast Asia should aim to become the region where universities excel in partnering each other to tackle global challenges and offer unique opportunities to students and academics from all over the world to explore and take action to solve our global problems.

### **2. COLLABORATE TO HARMONISE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS**

The 'Roadmap on the ASEAN Higher Education Space 2025 and its Implementation Plan' was launched officially in June 2022. It aims at strengthening people-to-people connectivity by improved access to and recognition of higher education in the region. This includes harmonising

2. To be presented at the General Conference of the International Association of Universities (IAU) in October 2022, and published in early 2023.

approaches to quality assurance, credit recognition and qualification recognition in order to make the region more competitive. These harmonisation efforts are top-down and driven by policymakers, but they are only feasible through strong partnerships with students and academics to bring benefits to all.

This roadmap could be supported with bottom-up networks and centres of excellence on specialised topics where institutions share resources and knowledge, similar to the European Universities initiative. Would creating an 'ASEAN Universities Initiative' be too ambitious to start with? Perhaps, but in the meantime institutions should leverage on initiatives such as the ASEAN Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) initiative facilitated by the SHARE Programme, which brought together universities from Southeast Asia to jointly create over 30 e-learning courses that have already been taken by thousands of students – a great example of sharing knowledge and resources. Another example is the ASEAN University Network Technology-enhanced Personalised Learning Thematic Network (AUN-TEPL) spearheaded by the Singapore Management University (SMU), where member universities have created a platform to exchange educational tools and content, thereby tapping each other's resources to improve student success in their own institutions. More occasional capacity-building and networking opportunities should also be seen as excellent starting points for creating communities of practice, such as the Capacity Building Training Series to Enhance Inclusion in Higher Education in ASEAN organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF, 2021a).

Collaborating to create a harmonised higher education area in Southeast Asia through top-down and bottom-up initiatives will result in sharing knowledge and resources, and will make institutions stronger in the global competition.

### **3. COLLABORATE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS**

According to the ASEAN Youth Development Index, 77% of eligible students were enrolled in secondary education, but only 17% of young adults had a tertiary-level degree in 2021. Keeping in mind the growing middle class across the region, it is safe to predict that the number of students will also grow organically over the next decade, and universities will compete for these students. However, this organically growing pool of potential students could be further enhanced by also engaging

“ While immediate gains might come from direct competition among universities in a local region, their real long-term impact and social purpose can only be achieved by regional collaboration and sharing of resources.

those who are left behind by traditional HE systems. In other words, instead of competing for a 'bigger slice' of the existing students, universities should collaborate to increase the size of the pie.

According to a study conducted by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF, 2021b), all the ten ASEAN countries have identified equity groups where participation in higher education could be increased. These include students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and students with disabilities, but there are at least seven other groups of students across the region that are less well represented. There is plenty

of room for HEIs to do their part and increase the number of students on their campuses by offering wider access and more inclusive programmes.

Institutions might not need to compete globally for the brightest students or for the ones who will achieve the biggest impact, because these individuals might actually be in their neighbourhood already. Institutions could collaborate to jointly set up support and counselling services to ensure the success of these underrepresented groups, instead of putting resources into global competition for fee-paying students.

### Equity Target Groups in ASEAN Higher Education Policies

Equity Target Groups at Policy Level	Brunei	Cambodia	Indonesia	Laos	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam	Total
Low-income socio-economic background	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10
Students with disabilities	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10
Students from rural backgrounds		x	x	x	x				x	x	6
Indigenous populations		x	x				x		x	x	5
Gender groups	x	x		x					x		4
Older or mature students					x		x	x	x		4
Refugees of all kinds			x			x					2
Students with care experience			x								1
Victims of sexual and gender violence							x				1
Children of people affected by historical violence										x	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	

### Make collaboration everybody's business

Above are three examples for how creative collaboration can intensify Southeast Asian universities' contributions to their local communities and at the same time strengthen their position in the global competition.

While immediate gains might come from direct competition among universities in a local region, their real long-term impact and social purpose can only be achieved by regional collaboration and sharing of resources. 🎓

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# Common Space for Southeast Asian Higher Education: An Inclusive Complementary Higher Education Partnership for the Region

ROGER Y. CHAO JR.

## Higher Education in ASEAN: An Overview

Since the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, human resource development has been one of the key areas for collaboration. Especially with the expansion of ASEAN Member States in the 1990s and the increased focus on regional integration related to the establishment of the ASEAN Community, the renewed focus on higher education is clear. The ASEAN higher education agenda has shifted from cooperation to collaboration, and ultimately to regional integration and in support of the ASEAN community-building project.

In my chapter ‘Changing Higher Education Discourse in the Making of the ASEAN Region’, I have traced key developments in ASEAN and argued that since as early as 1977 ASEAN’s role in higher education has included supporting regional economic integration and community-building, initially framed within manpower planning and development objectives and eventually by economic regionalism with the establishment of the ASEAN

Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) in the 1990s. AFTA and AFAS facilitated regional economic integration and mobility of goods and services, with the latter addressing issues of recognition of qualifications and mobility of professionals, labour and services in the region.

Human resource development, including higher education, is clearly one of ASEAN’s key strategies supporting regional economic integration and development. It addresses key challenges including employment generation, poverty alleviation, narrowing socio-economic disparities and ensuring equitable growth through investment in education, training and development in science and technology. ASEAN reached a consensus on the benefits of and necessity for higher education cooperation, including the need to produce highly qualified graduates, to ensure competitiveness and the sustainable development of the region, and to develop a regional knowledge-based economy.

“The ASEAN higher education agenda has shifted from cooperation to collaboration, and ultimately to regional integration and in support of the ASEAN community-building project.”

The developments leading to the establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015 also influenced the role of higher education in ASEAN. The influence of the ASEAN Vision 2020, the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 shifted the role of higher education to contribute to the ASEAN Community’s three pillars (ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN Socio-cultural Community, and ASEAN Political-Security Community); this is clearly presented in the 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on higher education. Starting with the ASEAN Workplan on Education 2011-2015 there has been a focus on promoting ASEAN awareness, increasing the quality of education performance, standards, lifelong learning and professional development, cross-border mobility and the internationalisation of education, and supporting other sectoral bodies with an interest in education. The ASEAN Workplan on Education 2021-2025’s outcome for higher education is stated as “Enhanced regional capacity in higher education as part of lifelong learning provision, including the harmonization of ASEAN higher education”, which leads us to ask what sort of higher education partnership should be pursued in the Southeast Asian region.

## The Need for Inclusive Complementary Higher Education Partnership

Discussions of the regionalisation of higher education in Southeast Asia started with SEAMEO RIHED developing and implementing the ‘Harmonizing Credit Transfer in GMS and Beyond’ project in 2008, and subsequently the Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) programme and the Academic Credit Transfer Framework for Asia, to name only a few. ASEAN’s key momentum in higher education regionalisation started with the 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Higher Education, which involved the European Union establishing the European Union Support for Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (EU-SHARE) programme in 2015 to enhance the capacity and development of ASEAN higher education guided by the development and experience of the European Higher Education Area. The establishment of the ASEAN University Network and their ongoing initiatives on higher education cooperation also contribute to higher education regionalisation in Southeast Asia.

The establishment of the ASEAN Working Group on Higher Education Mobility in July 2021, through the support of the SHARE programme, and the development and launch of the Roadmap on the ASEAN Higher Education Space 2025 and its implementation plan, are important steps to advance higher education regionalisation in ASEAN. However, it should be noted that SEAMEO and SEAMEO RIHED have also been undertaking initiatives to harmonise Southeast Asian higher education. Furthermore, there is a need to ensure the inclusive participation of various international and regional organisations working on higher education in Southeast Asia, and key stakeholders including higher education institutions, their management and students in the establishment of a common higher education space in Southeast Asia.

The launch of the Roadmap on the ASEAN Higher Education Space 2025 in Hanoi provided the opportunity for representatives of the ASEAN Working Group on Higher Education Mobility,



the ASEAN Secretariat, SEAMEO RIHED, and various international and regional organisations (e.g. the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, the Asia-Europe Foundation, The HEAD Foundation) and key stakeholders (e.g. the SHARE Community of Practice on Higher Education, Students and Alumni) to discuss their communal vision, and work out how to implement a Common Higher Education Space in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the ASEAN and SEAMEO Secretariats and SEAMEO RIHED also discussed the possibility of developing a joint declaration on a Common Space for Higher Education in Southeast Asia with a mandate from our Ministers of Education, in order to enhance collaboration between ASEAN and SEAMEO. The development of this Joint Declaration and eventually a strategic plan of action should ensure the complementarity of ASEAN and SEAMEO higher education initiatives as the region develops a Common Space for Southeast Asian Higher Education.

However, the need to ensure the inclusiveness and complementarity of higher education initiatives, particularly the development of the Common Space for Southeast Asian Higher Education, should go beyond ASEAN and SEAMEO. There is a need to include international and regional organisations who are working within the field of Southeast Asian higher education, and also to include the voices of key higher education stakeholders, particularly higher education management, faculty, researchers, and students and alumni, since the development of a Common Space for Southeast Asian Higher Education directly affects them as well as the entire Southeast Asian region and its population.

## Transforming Higher Education Through Higher Education Partnerships

Framing this article within recent education dialogues, the Transforming Education Summit held in New York in September 2022 highlighted the need for education systems, including higher education, to adapt to the shifting skills needed professionally, making learning more student-centred, connected, dynamic, inclusive and collaborative, and reaffirmed the important role of teachers in transforming education. The UNESCO World Higher Education Conference in May 2022 urgently called for substantive changes requiring the involvement of all higher education stakeholders. These changes focus on enhancing inclusiveness and equity, adopting a lifelong learning perspective within higher education, and offering pedagogically informed and technologically enriched higher education learning experiences.

Both of these fora clearly articulated their acknowledgement of the learning crisis and the need to utilise digital technology to transform education (and higher education) systems, along with a recognition that business as usual is not enough. Innovative and creative approaches need to be initiated and inclusive, equitable and complementary higher education partnerships are necessary, involving all the key higher education stakeholders in Southeast Asian higher education. The establishment of a Common Space for Southeast Asian Higher Education, with the inclusive participation of key stakeholders in governing and directing programmes and initiatives including regional quality assurance, recognition and mobility mechanisms, may be the exact approach that is needed in the Southeast Asian region. 📖

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# The ASEAN University Network

CHOLTIS DHIRATHITI

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Since 2017, the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and its Secretariat have been fully operating on the principles of clear project-activity design and effective delivery in order to maximise every bit of resources. Our members, partners, and the Secretariat have pooled together in each and every cross-border activity organised under the AUN brand. With our intelligent implementation approach and outcome-oriented mindset, the AUN is currently the busiest university association in the ASEAN region, counted by the number of public activities produced or co-produced per week for a wide variety of our beneficiaries. But the AUN, in its single entity, can be many things to different people.

Officially, the AUN is one of the sectoral bodies within the structure of ASEAN functioning in the ASEAN processes of regionalisation. In this sense, the AUN has been delivering results for ASEAN for over 25 years in the area of higher education cooperation. Nowadays, many of the AUN high-impact programs and projects are organised by the Thematic Networks of the AUN hosted by some of the core AUN Member Universities. The core Members together with the AUN Secretariat also formulate and pilot new actions for the advancement of higher education in ASEAN. Thus, the AUN is seen as the hub of subnetworks and the regional pioneer of education development.

Today, the AUN has been working as the gateway to ASEAN's higher education sector where current and new initiatives are continuously being translated into many forms of cross-border collaborative activities and projects.

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The ASEAN University Network came into being in 1995 when the AUN Charter was signed by Ministers responsible for Higher Education from ASEAN countries, the Agreement on the Establishment of the AUN, which was signed by the presidents, rectors, and vice chancellors of participating universities, and the formation of the AUN Board of Trustees.

The AUN was formed to address the need for the region to quickly develop a regional identity and solidarity while promoting the fostering of ASEAN talents by creating a platform to allow the region’s leading higher education institutions to collaborate. From 1995 until now, the AUN has remained firmly committed to the mission set out in the preamble to its charter.

The AUN is widely recognised as a vital mechanism for the build-up of an active and renowned ASEAN community in higher education. Given such importance, the AUN was highly commended by the Meeting of Ministers for Education in ASEAN Countries for its achievements in upgrading the capacity of ASEAN human resources and enhancing the quality of education of the AUN member universities. With the strengths and expertise of our members, the AUN can play a major role in broadening the integration of the ten ASEAN countries into one cohesive ASEAN Community and narrowing the development gap among them, which are the ultimate goals of ASEAN. 📖

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## COIL/Virtual Exchange as a Driver for High-Performance International Partnership Building Beyond the Response to COVID-19

KEIKO IKEDA & ABDUL LATIFF AHMAD

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COIL, or collaborative online international learning, is a pedagogy allowing learners to connect with overseas universities online and provide an interactive and collaborative learning environment in and outside class. COIL/virtual exchange (VE) is an innovative pedagogy involving collaborative teaching and learning in two or more countries/universities facilitated by online communication.

Delivering global learning and intercultural experiences to greater numbers of domestic and international students is a priority of this pedagogy, enabling global learning for all students in spite of various obstacles which may hinder them from studying abroad. Because the COIL/VE approach is much more affordable, accessible and scalable in comparison with physical study abroad, a wider range of students has been able to take part in this endeavour and experience internationalisation without leaving their home country.

In practice, COIL/VE involves faculty from local and international universities collaborating with counterparts in their partner institutions to develop a joint syllabus. Students in the two countries then work together to complete assignments and tasks that meet their shared learning objectives. This practice naturally strengthens the partnership between two or more institutions. At times new international partnerships can even emerge from COIL/VE activities between two international faculty members, in the form of memoranda of understanding, research collaborations, joint seminars and so on.

## International Partnerships

International partnerships (IPs) are formal connections among institutions representing different countries, with at least one being a higher education institution (HEI) (Sutton, 2018). In contrast to the limited scope and purpose of partnerships in the early days, more recently institutions' goals for international collaboration can relate to any of the elements of academic enterprise, such as teaching, research, service or institutional development (Sutton & Obst, 2011). IPs are, by definition, institutional affiliations rather than informal, one-on-one links among faculty members.

Engaging in a COIL/VE practice can be achieved simply through an individual faculty member's own initiative, if needs be. If a faculty member knows someone overseas and they decide to arrange for their classes to meet online and learn together, then all the key pieces for a COIL course activity are in place. However, in terms of strengthening wider IPs, this is not sufficient. International collaboration enabled by COIL/VE must be recognised formally at an institutional level. Generally, this implies that the faculty members' institutions must have a formal partnership agreement between them, although the processes by which such a recognition or agreement is realised can be diverse. It may be in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding, a Memorandum of Agreement, a Letter of Intent or similar. For example, in the SHARE programme a total of 32 universities were selected to form a consortium-like membership, and they are referred to as "SHARE Partner Universities". There are specifically assigned International Relations Officers at each partner university to co-ordinate this initiative, and the network recognises COIL collaborations taking place among the universities. International partnerships are thus re-emphasised and further strengthened by the engagement.

In September 2021, while the COVID-19 pandemic was raging and causing volatile, uncertain and adverse effects in international education, the European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) programme launched a new initiative to introduce COIL/VE in the ASEAN region as a part of their digital transformation action in the ASEAN Higher Education Space Roadmap. This constituted a rapid response to a very dynamic situation, as higher education institutions were still negotiating their way forward. Most parts of the world have taken action to adopt virtual student exchange, virtual mobility and COIL/VE to sustain the internationalisation of higher education. Even today, when many parts of the world have reached

“ Because the COIL/VE approach is much more affordable, accessible and scalable in comparison with physical study abroad, a wider range of students has been able to take part in this endeavour and experience internationalisation without leaving their home country.

a more stable phase of the pandemic and physical movement can take place, integration of the online modality within the international education arena has not decelerated.

The SHARE programme began with an initial exploratory study conducted by one of the authors, which can be viewed in a report entitled Mapping and Identification Study of Virtual Exchange Schemes in ASEAN (Ikeda & Ahmad, 2022) published in February 2022. The objective of the study was to identify obstacles to organising virtual exchange, understand the programmes currently offered, and explore the support provided in developing and executing virtual exchange. A survey was distributed to students and university representatives, and interviews were carried out with selected university representatives. The study identified a need to clarify understanding of the concept and terminology of COIL/VE, and that further support in terms of capacity-building workshops was required for the ASEAN region specifically among the SHARE partner university members.

Three rounds of capacity-building workshops were conducted, the first in October 2021, the second in March 2022 and the third in August 2022. The first was an introductory workshop to arrive at a common understanding of the basic concepts and terminologies related to COIL/VE, learn about COIL/VE model design and learning impacts, understand evaluation and assessment methods, and provide a place for potential facilitators to meet one another. The second workshop concentrated on community building and learning from examples of COIL/VE across the world, and included more focused tasks – the academics learned about task design and problem-based learning, while the international relations team learned about internationalisation at home, marketing and networking. The third workshop focused on introducing the AVEC (ASEAN Virtual Exchange/COIL) Portal and the use of Google Workspace. The AVEC portal acts as a one-stop centre that provide facilitators with a directory of COIL/VE courses offered, video support on how to develop COIL/VE programmes, suggested templates and

ideas for a successful COIL/VE programme, reports on the best practices of past COIL/VE organisers and so on.

Attendance at the capacity-building workshops was a pre-requisite for university representatives to initiate the development of COIL/VE programmes at their ASEAN universities. Four batches of COIL/VE programmes were conducted, called Batch Six, Batch Seven, Batch Eight and Batch Nine.

Batch Six included five collaborations involving six universities from the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Cambodia. Among the areas or COIL/VE courses offered were Probing Food and Biomolecules, Introduction to Asian Culture, Family Economics Planning and Diversity, Economics, and Operating Systems. Through this kickstart programme, 281 ASEAN university students participated in the collaborations.

Batch Seven comprised twelve collaborations involving ten universities from Cambodia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Laos, Indonesia and Vietnam. Among the areas or COIL/VE courses offered were Disaster Nursing, Pattern Recognition/Data Mining, International Economics, and Entrepreneurship. A total of 681 ASEAN university students participated in the programme.

Batch Eight included eleven collaborations involving eight universities from Cambodia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam. Among the areas or COIL/VE courses offered were Human Resource Management, Web Design, and Principles of Management. A total of 514 ASEAN university students participated in the programme. At the time of writing Batch Nine is currently in the selection process, with results expected soon.

Overall, 1,476 students in ASEAN universities have so far been able to experience COIL/VE in their virtual classrooms. Nine of the ten ASEAN countries have participated in the activities, and thirteen universities within the region have actively collaborated to bring students and academics together. The SHARE platform has provided an



avenue where partnerships between universities were able to be strengthened and sustained during a challenging time when physical exchange was restricted. This success of a COIL/VE programme within the region proves that strong partnerships, proper planning and strategy and the willingness to think and react outside the box may open the door to greater opportunities.

### Benefits of International Partnerships through the Online Modality

COIL/VE practices, when they are a part of institutional international partnership endeavours, can bring many benefits. International collaboration accomplishes more through a consortium-like membership than through relationships between single institutions. The benefits may be in terms of enriched access to unique human resources, laboratories, research subjects and environments, academics or other experts, and student networks. While an individual university may be able to send a student to just one or two destinations during their campus life, COIL/VE will enable them to experience ten or twelve countries, allowing them to encounter new peers and cultures. An online pedagogy like COIL/VE places emphasis on collaborative learning, in which students will naturally engage well in cross-cultural encounters. While a university may have international students on its campus as exchange students, many local students may not even realise that international students are present on their campus due to large physical spaces or not being in the same faculty.

In the authors' view, the most valuable benefit from international partnerships through COIL/VE is to realise global learning for HEIs. In the AAC&U Global Learning rubric, global learning is defined as "the critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people's lives and the earth's sustainability)". Through global learning, students should: 1) become informed, open-minded, and responsible people

who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences; 2) seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities; and 3) address the world's most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably.

The interdisciplinary nature of COIL/VE practices provide students with a significant opportunity to tackle today's global challenges. Such opportunities will help to prepare a new generation of students as global citizens. Built on solid cohesion, communication and trust, strong and active international partnerships achieved through COIL/VE are dedicated to making the world a better place. 📖

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## Online and Virtual Learning Collaboration: The Case of the Indonesia Cyber Education Institution

PAULINA PANNEN & BASUKI HARDJOJO

The Indonesia Cyber Education Institute (ICE Institute or ICE-I) was designed to be a marketplace for online courses in Indonesia. It was established as part of a digital transformation of higher education in Indonesia based on Industry 4.0 (MORTHE 2019c) under the auspices of MORTHE. It was officially launched by the Director General of Higher Education, Research and Technology (DGHERT) on 28 July, 2021 and managed by Universitas Terbuka.

The establishment of the ICE Institute was very timely, since there has been growing interest in online education in public and private HEIs in Indonesia, as well as foreign HEIs coming to Indonesia virtually. This interest was reinforced by the pandemic, which forced higher education institutions globally to close their premises and practice online education in the form of 'online emergency remote learning'. In April 2020 Belawati and Nizam noted that Indonesian HEIs had undergone a digital transformation through the adoption of 'online learning' only a month after Indonesia enforced limited social movement.<sup>1</sup> As such, the ICE Institute plays a significant role in providing quality online courses from both top-tier national universities and international education institutes to the higher education community in Indonesia.

“ Indonesian HEIs had undergone a digital transformation through the adoption of 'online learning' only a month after Indonesia enforced limited social movement.

1. Belawati, T. & Nizam (Eds.) (2020) *Potret Pendidikan Tinggi di Masa COVID-19*. Jakarta: Ministry of Education and Culture, Directorate General of Higher Education.

The ICE Institute is seen as one of the strategies for the Government of Indonesia to open up access and improve the affordability of quality education through flexible learning, especially under the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM; Freedom Campus, Freedom Learning) policy from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (MOECRT)<sup>2</sup> which allows undergraduate students to undertake three semesters of independent study to conduct activities for credit transfer, including two semesters off-campus and one semester earning cross-credit from other study programmes and/or faculties within their HEI.

Responding to the rapidly growing demand for tertiary education, the provision of unbundled university-level online courses for anybody, anywhere and in a flexible manner is one of the functions of the ICE Institute. The online courses are made available through the practice of sharing courses from a number of universities and institutes, to be offered to the higher education community in Indonesia. As such, the ICE Institute is part of the DGHERT's effort to increase access to and the quality, affordability and relevance of higher education in Indonesia.

At the time of writing the ICE Institute functions as follows:

1. *Curating, verifying and registering online courses* in Indonesia, specifically courses from Indonesian universities as well as online courses from international universities and global MOOC platforms. As online courses enter the education market, quality assurance is mandatory. The ICE Institute carries out a curation process and supervises compliance based on ICE-I standards. In this process, curation involves verifying the validity of course content and reviewing the design of the online learning experience, as well as verifying the interoperability of each course within the ICE Institute's marketplace system.

After curation and verification, each course is assigned a registration number as its unique identifier in the ICE Institute marketplace.

2. *Managing the marketplace* of online education is the second function of the ICE Institute. The ICE-I gallery consists of a number of online course providers – higher education institutions, associations and so on. Online courses which are shown in the gallery have been curated and are accessible by users (students, lecturers etc.). It is anticipated that the quality assurance of online courses in the ICE-I marketplace will facilitate the transfer and recognition of the courses across institutions.
3. Aiming at continuously improving its system and services, the ICE Institute also conducts several *collaborative research projects* under the umbrella topic of online learning in Indonesia. This research is extended to collaborating partner universities to improve the ICE Institute system, as well as to disseminate research results that are applicable to the wider online learning context in Indonesia.
4. The operation of the ICE Institute as a marketplace for online courses in Indonesia depends critically on the *availability of online courses from providers*. The ICE Institute establishes partnerships with various universities and institutions as online course providers; by 15 July, 2020, 14 university partners of the ICE Institute were officially established as the Consortium of the ICE Institute (by decree of the DGHERT). The Consortium members are online course providers as well as users. In addition to partnership, the ICE Institute also provides certification for each course contributed as an unbundled course. Thus, students who pass courses will receive a completion certificate from the ICE Institute.

2. Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi (2020) Buku Panduan Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka. Jakarta Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.

5. The completion of courses and other student transactions through the ICE Institute are *recorded as digital credentials using blockchain technology*. Blockchain technology allows the ICE Institute to provide a general ledger containing students' records for each of their individual transactions in the online education mode. This will later be linked to the job market.

To date there are around 350 courses for each semester available in the ICE-I Consortium marketplace, as well as 60 courses from XuetangX and 1,520 EdX courses. The Consortium courses are curated by the ICE Institute, bear a credit load, and are transferrable among HEIs. Some other partner institutions are joining to provide services through ICE-I; the use of ICE-I services to offer free unbundled courses has been recognised by DGHERT within the framework of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka programme, particularly in relation to independent study and/or student exchanges.

At the time of writing the ICE Institute is serving more than 10,000 students enrolled in ICE-I Consortium courses and more than 6,000 students in EdX Online Campus Collection courses. Students come from the 14 universities/institutions in the ICE-I Consortium, as well as 341 universities outside the Consortium. The institute's operation has facilitated increased access to and equity in quality education in Indonesia for a massive number of participants.

The services of the ICE Institute have been free of charge for all parties involved during its establishment period of 2021–2023, meaning that the Government and the partner universities are sharing freely in return for their involvement in the ICE Institute. In 2024 it is expected that the ICE Institute will be directed as an independent corporate unit.

## Collaboration in the ICE Institute

The operational process of the ICE Institute can only take place if there are vendors offering merchandise and users who will use/buy the merchandise. The vendors are mostly higher education institutions, the merchandise is online courses, and the users are students of higher education institutions. The categories of vendors and users of the ICE Institute are as follows.

1. The first vendors of the ICE Institute have been 14 higher education institutions and associations in Indonesia, who were the *founders* of the ICE Institute and who also formed the ICE Institute Consortium by Decree of the DGHERT. These 14 higher education institutions and associations are: Universitas Indonesia, Universitas Katolik Atmajaya, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Universitas Terbuka, Institut Pertanian Bogor, Universitas Bina Nusantara, Universitas Pelita Harapan, Universitas Pradita, Universitas Telkom, Universitas Diponegoro, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Universitas Negeri Sebelas Maret, Institute Teknologi Sepuluh November Surabaya, and the Association of Economic and Business Schools Indonesia. The universities and institutes are top-tier universities in Indonesia, with some even having gained a QS World Class Ranking. These institutions have been working collaboratively to establish the ICE Institute since 2017 under the MORTHE,<sup>3</sup> and continued with their efforts, contribution and support when the ICE Institute was moved to and became coordinated by Universitas Terbuka during its launch in 2021.

The members of the ICE Institute Consortium have the right to direct the policy of the ICE Institute, contribute a minimum of 10 online courses per semester, and enjoy shopping priority for all courses available in the ICE Institute with the highest number of users (students). In addition, they may also enjoy collaborative research opportunities with funding provided

by Universitas Terbuka, which may be shared by collaborators. Each member enters into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the ICE Institute, signed by the Rector of Universitas Terbuka as the Chairman of the Consortium and by the rector of the member university. The MOA states the rights and responsibilities of members, and formalises their agreement to recognise each other. Members of the Consortium may also receive services in terms of guidance and training in online course development from the ICE Institute.

Within the first three years of the ICE Institute's establishment there have been no financial transactions or rewards for any members of the Consortium. All contributions and the operation of the ICE Institute have been monetised as a record of the contributions from each member; this will become especially important when the ICE Institute is transformed into a corporate unit in 2024.

2. The second category of vendors is the *contributors*. These institutions are not members of the Consortium, and thus they do not have the privilege of directing the operations of the ICE Institute. However, they contribute a minimum of 10 online courses per semester, and their students are allowed to shop from all the courses available via the ICE Institute. In addition, they may also enjoy collaborative research opportunities. Each member has entered into a memorandum of agreement with the ICE Institute, signed by the Rector of Universitas Terbuka as the Chairman of the Consortium and the rector of the contributing university. The MOAs with contributors are required to allow the ICE Institute to curate the contributed online courses based on the ICE-I standard (which was developed based on the Open EdX standard), receive services in terms of guidance and training, and recognise various member institutions in the ICE Institute.

3. MORTHE was dissolved in October 2020 and reintegrated into the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology.

The contributors are varied; some institutions provide courses that can be directly certified and transferred by universities, while others contribute training packages, job market information, English testing services and so on, which supplement the core business of the ICE Institute of offering online courses for academic credits, thereby establishing a sound ecosystem of online learning.

3. The third category is the *users*, currently limited to higher education students within the framework of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka. This policy allows students to shop for courses from any course provider up to 20 credit hours per semester. The MBKM programme aims to equip students with new horizons, skills, learning experiences and networks by enabling them to study in online courses that are attended by different types of students, which is expected to prepare them for the job market. At the time of writing 341 HEIs in Indonesia have joined the ICE Institute under the MBKM programme. The number of students as users has reached more than 10,000 over three semesters.

At this time the ICE Institute can report a success rate for its students of 45% overall. Digital literacy, readiness to study online independently, and learning experience with the ICE Institute system have been the most commonly reported issues by the students. However, the ICE Institute has achieved a 97% success rate for the Micro-credential Programme for Game Developers (20 credit hours), which was designed to be more controlled by the lecturers and provide clear pathways of learning and a clear end result.

### Success factors and constraints

The ICE Institute is an innovative initiative by MOECRT to provide access to affordable and quality education via curated unbundled online courses, in order to facilitate flexible learning for all and link student success to the job market through digital credentials.

The ICE Institute embraces all higher education institutions in Indonesia, public as well as private, as providers of curated quality online courses and as users who can use quality online courses from other campuses. To sustain its operation the ICE Institute is monitoring a number of success factors and constraints, so that improvement can be undertaken. The success factors are as follows.

### Success factors

#### 1. POLICY

The ICE Institute's establishment and operation have enjoyed support from the national Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policy, and also from the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 7 of 2020 which allows transfer credit for online courses up to 40% of the total number of courses in a study programme.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, during the COVID-19 pandemic online courses were required to constitute up to 70% of study programmes.

The establishment of the ICE Institute has shifted the structure and landscape of higher education in Indonesia, from on-campus learning to online delivery. It is expected that this will enable Indonesia to achieve its strategic focus of improving access to and the quality of higher education, and its relevance to the job market.

#### 2. NOVELTY EFFECT

The ICE Institute has been offering a new concept of unbundled online courses and flexible learning. This practice is new and innovative. Universities, lecturers and students are interested in joining because they want to enjoy the new experience. Students joining the MBKM programme view the ICE Institute as a place where they can select courses based on their own interests from any university, using the online mode. Higher education institutions are interested in joining because the ICE Institute is seen as the

4. Garcia, M., Perez, L. D., Hayashi, R. (2021) *Accreditation of Online Courses in Higher Education – Early Adopters in the European Union, India, Indonesia, and Malaysia*. ADB Brief No. 196, November 2021. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/747426/adb-brief-196-online-courses-higher-education-early-adopters.pdf>

most sophisticated technology-based practice in higher education, thereby providing prestige to their university. Lecturers are interested in joining the ICE Institute mostly because the new nature of online learning, and for personal benefit.

#### 3. COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic caused intense and devastating disruption. However, on the other hand, it has been a blessing in some situations. During the pandemic online learning became a popular means of study and learning, and the Government of Indonesia issued a policy that learning practices must be 70% online and 30% face-to-face. Since then, online learning has become an everyday learning practice for lecturers and students.

#### 4. SHARED VISION

The ICE Institute has been developed by the 14 founding institutions under the coordination of MORTHE since 2017. They share a commitment to promoting technology-based higher education which is indigenous to Indonesia, and a common vision of a new landscape of higher education in Indonesia.

#### 5. PERCEIVED USEFULNESS/PERSONAL BENEFIT

Lecturers' participation in the ICE Institute is closely related to perceived benefit for them, especially in terms of their promotion and tenure. There are currently 472 lecturers (38.7% male, 61.2% female) offering courses through the ICE Institute.

A lecturer's participation is rewarded by a certificate that indicates the number of participants who are taking the course, and the university of origin of the participants in each semester. This information is a valuable indicator of how widely a lecturer is acknowledged in relation to his or her teaching, and is useful when seeking promotion and tenure in Indonesia. It is also applicable to the accreditation



of the study programme and the institution. In addition, it is a rewarding experience for many lecturers to teach a fully online and self-paced course for the first time. As such, they receive training from the ICE Institute to develop online courses according to an international quality standard.

For students, their participation in online courses through the ICE Institute which can then be transferred into their curriculum has been beneficial in developing communication and teamwork skills,<sup>5</sup> in addition to widening their horizons and equipping them with new skills and knowledge.

## Constraints

### 1. DIGITAL LITERACY

Although the fourth industrial revolution (IR 4.0) started long before the COVID-19 pandemic, digital literacy among Indonesian users is still relatively low, especially for learning purposes. To be able to register, enrol, study and do exams independently in an online mode is not easy, especially when individuals are not used to it. Therefore, hotlines, social media, chatbots and other means of communication are made available to assist students at any level of learning. Further, the ICE Institute also provides various guidelines that can be downloaded and used by students.

Once the students get used to the ICE Institute and its learning management system, they enjoy their learning journey with the ICE Institute and consider the system easy to use.

Meanwhile, lecturers sometimes encounter challenges with the new applications and digital technology. They have suggested that although the system is easy to use, they are not familiar with it and with the applications required, and they would like more training to become online lecturers.

### 2. SYSTEM EXPERIENCE

At the beginning the ICE Institute system was relatively simple and unable to provide answers to users' needs and requests. Thus, many students and lecturers found that the system lacked user-friendliness. More recently the system has been improved to become much more robust and user-oriented, which will hopefully enable students to enjoy a more rewarding learning experience. Both lecturers and students find the ICE Institute's system attractive and stimulating to use; they can identify themselves within the ICE Institute's system, and the information is practical, straightforward, predictable, clearly structured and manageable, although sometimes they report that it is automated and rather complicated.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. INSTITUTIONAL BENEFIT

At the outset the shared vision of the founding members was the major driving force in the establishment of the ICE Institute. Over time, however, some members have become less committed than others, and some do not fully participate in the various operational activities of the ICE Institute. They were all hoping that the ICE Institute would provide them with full benefits for their individual institutions. Therefore, it takes a lot of effort to convince each member to stay on board, to hold to the shared vision, and to trust in the ICE Institute way. At the moment the benefits are mostly intangible: first, by sending their students to the ICE Institute they fulfil government expectations for student exchanges; and second, by sending their lecturers to participate they earn credit points for national as well as international accreditation. However, sending their students away means reducing their lecturers' teaching assignments, which may impact lecturers' incomes. Member institutions are currently working on finding the right way to manage the institutional benefits earned from joining the ICE Institute.


### 4. MUTUAL RECOGNITION

Various factors hinder the mutual recognition of courses taken by students from other universities. Thus, the ICE Institute requires a letter of endorsement from the sending university to the ICE Institute stating that they endorse students' choices of online courses. As such, they agree to recognise the courses taken by students. Further, the ICE Institute has made efforts to provide verifiable digital credentials using blockchain technology. This technology allows all records be verified digitally at a later stage. This secures the identity of the course and the certificates of completion that students are awarded.

## Moving forward

The establishment of the ICE Institute is seen as a strategic initiative, which is changing the landscape of higher education institutions in Indonesia. The operation of the ICE Institute relies heavily on collaboration with partner institutions; there will be no online courses for exchange unless they are provided by the partner institutions. As such, collaboration is critical. To date there are 42 partners of the ICE Institute, consisting of founders, contributors and users, and this number will increase in the future.

There have been success factors in establishing and maintaining these partnerships, including policy and regulatory support for the establishment and operation of the ICE Institute, the novelty effect, the COVID-19 pandemic which has pushed forward online learning, the shared vision of the founders, and the perceived usefulness of the ICE Institute. Meanwhile, the constraints indicate factors which can be improved, such as low digital literacy, system experience, institutional benefits and mutual recognition. It is expected that these insights will provide a pathway for improving the ICE Institute to be a corporate unit in the near future.

Moving forward, online courses will sit alongside regular face-to-face courses, as teaching and learning will be increasingly delivered in blended mode.<sup>7</sup> Within that framework, the ICE Institute will widen its network with international partners, add to its collection of courses and micro-credential packages, and open its services to the public for the purposes of reskilling and upskilling. At present, collaboration has been initiated with XuetangX.com to exchange online courses delivered in English. Future collaboration is expected to take place with different institutes such as Thai MOOC, KMOOC, EdX, and also with industry, to better serve users with various needs as they pertain to reskilling and upskilling, capacity building and edutainment. 

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## Together We Can: The Impact of Regional Higher Education Cooperation in Enhancing Quality, Accessibility, Internationalisation and Harmonisation

SOMKIAT KAMOLPUN

This article discusses the impact of regional education cooperation in enhancing the quality, accessibility, internationalisation and harmonisation of higher education system and institutions. It consists of five segments: 1) education quality, accessibility, internationalisation and harmonisation as regional goals; 2) the views of regional bodies and their member states; 3) current efforts; 4) challenges; and 5) future directions.

### Quality, accessibility, internationalisation and harmonisation as regional goals

Quality, accessibility, internationalisation and harmonisation are the focuses of regional education cooperation. The ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021–2025, the Roadmap on the ASEAN Higher Education Space 2025, the SEAMEO 7 Priority Areas and UN SDG4 clearly emphasise the significance of education quality, accessibility, internationalisation and harmonisation at every level.

The goals are to equip learners with necessary competencies, promote lifelong learning by

addressing barriers to inclusion, and support regional connectivity through more comparable and compatible education systems. Not only are these goals regional education aspirations, they are also the foundation of the ASEAN Community and regional development, particularly in enhancing economic competitiveness and reducing the development gap within the region.

### What are we talking about when we talk about quality, accessibility, internationalisation and harmonisation?

This relates to how ASEAN, SEAMEO and each individual country in the region perceive quality, accessibility, internationalisation and harmonisation. The discourse surrounding higher education quality has gradually shifted from exceptionalism, elitism and excellence to how the higher education sector develops and enhances learners' competencies, as well as serves specific purposes. This changing discourse reflects critical issues including stakeholders' expectations, skills gaps and the diversity of higher education

“The discourse surrounding higher education quality has gradually shifted from exceptionalism, elitism and excellence to how the higher education sector develops and enhances learners' competencies, as well as serves specific purposes.

institutions. The aims are to ensure learner employability and workforce productivity, and workers' ability to keep pace with future jobs, changing labour markets and the advancement of technology.

Lifelong learning has emerged as the focal point of the discourse around accessibility. This expands the meaning of accessibility in two aspects: 1) groups of learners; and 2) access, retention and completion. First, the higher education sector is expected to provide education and training to both traditional-age and non-traditional age learners. Second, the higher education sector needs to tailor education and training provision to ensure that learners are retained and are able to complete their studies and training at their own pace. Hence, flexible education and training systems and supporting mechanisms are priorities in the region.

Unlike quality and accessibility, the discourse surrounding internationalisation and harmonisation remains intact. These are the processes aiming to recognise higher education diversity, ensure comparability and compatibility among different higher education systems, and promote common guidelines and practices for cooperation. The mechanisms are cross-border student and faculty mobility, mutual credit and degree recognition, and lifelong learning.

### What are we doing to achieve the goals?

The countries in Southeast Asia, ASEAN and SEAMEO and their dialogue partners, including the Plus Three countries and the European Union, have been working diligently and collaboratively to achieve the aforementioned goals. Their efforts include dialogue, leadership enhancement, and system and programme development.

First, dialogue refers to discussion platforms and networks that operate at bilateral and multilateral levels. The aim is to create mutual understanding on policy issues, enable a cooperation framework and implementation

process, share information and practices, and review the implementation and outputs of agreed initiatives. Hence, dialogues serve as a regional think tank, a monitoring mechanism and a community of practice. In addition, they provide opportunities for policy makers, experts and scholars in the region to meet and build an amicable atmosphere for regional cooperation.

The notable multilateral dialogues in the region are the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and the SEAMEO High Officials Meeting (HOM). Although higher education is discussed in the ASEAN SOM and SEAMEO HOM, the focuses are likely to be on basic and vocational and technical education. To complement the ASEAN SOM and SEAMEO HOM and highlight the significance of higher education, the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (RIHED) created a Southeast Asian Higher Education Senior Officials Meeting (SEA-HiEd SOM) to serve as a regional higher education dialogue. In addition, ASEAN and the European Union include a Policy Dialogue under the SHARE Programme.

Apart from the dialogue at the government level there are a number of networks that serve as dialogues for specific purposes, for instance the ASEAN University Network, the ASEAN Citation Index (ACI), the ASEAN Cyber University, the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) and the ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework (AQRf).

Second, cooperation in leadership enhancement is a key part of enhancing quality, accessibility, internationalisation and harmonisation. Leadership is crucial for the higher education sector in general and institutions in particular, particularly in ensuring good governance, addressing challenges and uncertainty, and supporting regional, national and institutional policy initiatives. SEAMEO RIHED has promoted and implemented leadership enhancement programmes for decades through a number of projects, including the Greater Mekong Sub-region University Consortium (GMS-UC) and Horizon Southeast Asia.

Finally, system and programme development efforts involve regional cooperation in quality assurance and qualification recognition, credit transfer schemes, and student and faculty mobility. Higher education systems in Southeast Asia are diverse in terms of their level of development, degree structure and management. To ensure comparability and compatibility, ASEAN, SEAMEO and member states have initiated and implemented the AQAN and the AQRf, credit transfer schemes and student mobility programmes.

The AQAN and AQRf aim to create reference points, connecting and promoting comparability and compatibility among different quality assurance systems and qualifications frameworks. In addition, both networks provide assistance and support to countries without existing quality assurance and qualifications framework in place. Credit transfer schemes facilitate student mobility and regional connectivity; existing systems include the AUN-ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS), the ASEAN-EU Credit Transfer System (AECTS) and the UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme, as well as credit transfer systems under bilateral institutional agreements.

Student mobility programmes serve three important purposes. First and foremost, they help to cultivate learners' competencies, particularly foreign language proficiency, intercultural awareness, self-reliance skills and so on. Second, they offer a testing platform for the AQAN, AQRf and regional credit transfer schemes. Finally, they are an opportunity for participating institutions to boost their visibility and reputation at regional and global levels. The most notable programmes are the Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) programme and the SHARE Scholarships Programme. In addition there are national government scholarship programmes, for instance Singapore's ASEAN Scholarship Programme and the Thailand Scholarships Programme.

## Does all we have done really help?

We cannot deny that ASEAN, SEAMEO and the countries in Southeast Asia are working tirelessly to enhance the quality, accessibility, internationalisation and harmonisation of higher education in the region. However, the results and impacts of different programmes vary. The dialogues and student mobility programmes are among the most successful if we consider their tangible results. The dialogues under the SEAMEO framework resulted in the creation of the AIMS programme, AQAN and ACI. The ASEAN SOM and ASEAN and dialogue partner platforms have initiated regional education work plans and the SHARE programme.

Thousands of students and approximately a hundred institutions have participated in the AIMS programme and the SHARE scholarship programme. Apart from developing participating students, these provide opportunities for local students and staff to interact with foreign students, and encourage participating institutions to upgrade their facilities, teaching and learning approaches and credit and qualifications systems. The programmes also result in intra- and inter-regional credit transfer and qualifications recognition.

The AQAN and AQRf have been successful in launching regional guidelines. However, ASEAN member states still have reservations about connecting their systems to regional ones. Likewise, regional credit transfer schemes have not exactly been embraced by higher education institutions; most intra-regional credit transfers happen under bilateral agreements between higher education institutions.

## Challenges and future directions

The challenges of regional higher education cooperation lie not in a lack of effort or willingness on the part of ASEAN, SEAMEO and countries in the region. The critical issue is how the region addresses the pre-existing context and builds on current successes. The implementation of regional

initiatives is slowed down by the pre-existing context, including diversity in higher education systems, ASEAN and SEAMEO structures and limited budget. There is no easy fix for this, but we can start by promoting closer collaboration between ASEAN and SEAMEO, focusing on reducing redundancy in their roles, scopes of work and projects.

Although student mobility programmes have yielded fruitful and tangible results, the numbers of participating students and institutions are very limited. The expansion of these programmes requires policy and financial commitments from both governments and higher education institutions. Hence, ASEAN, SEAMEO and participating countries may wish to explore alternative approaches to promote inclusivity in mobility programmes, for instance by facilitating online and hybrid mobility and shorter-term mobility. 📖

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## Collective Intelligence for Sustainable Learning and Living

ANDY GIBBS & PHILIP MASTERSON

To ensure the sustainability of the Southeast Asian region, we need to ensure that the region's higher education sector is both agile and flexible enough to withstand future challenges. Through synergy and shared goals and the development of collective intelligence, policy choices and options for new directions for governments and universities can be learnt to facilitate adaptation and agility. A flexible system to foster internationalised lifelong learning is also crucial. In order to overcome the challenges faced, the evolving context of higher education carries a clear need for the application of collective intelligence, working together for better learning and a more sustainable future for the Southeast Asian region.

In July 2022 SHARE Policy Dialogue 15, on the theme 'Envisioning the Future of a Common Higher Education Space in Southeast Asia', was convened in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam, the ASEAN Secretariat, SEAMEO RIHED, the ASEAN University Network, the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, and other members of the ASEAN Working Group on Higher Education Mobility (AWGHEM). During the event SEAMEO RIHED and SHARE announced their plans for the development of a new online platform for the region, in order to carry forward the work of the region's partners in higher education, promote collective intelligence and learning for today's challenges, and provide a sustainable platform for the Community of Practice established by SHARE to complement the shared goals and vision of partners towards a common space. This platform is known as RIHED-SHARE.

### Collective Intelligence and Communities of Practice

In seeking to engage in and contribute to an ASEAN community, the SHARE consortium saw Community of Practice development as an opportunity for participants in Higher Education Institutions to collaboratively develop, collect and share knowledge and strategies that would build capacity to better support students. Additionally, it was believed that this approach would create possibilities to explore and share best practices, creating meaningful learning opportunities and effective support for students, as well as exploring ways in which learning opportunities and support can better address diverse learner needs, including how technology can change the ways in which students engage in their learning.

“**A Community of Practice curates and accelerates the learning process by identifying the common purpose of a group of people, provides a platform for interaction and creates a programme of activities.**”

The Communities of Practice methodology emerged in the mid to late nineties. It draws on social learning theory to explain that learning is an intrinsic human need, and that a group of people who share a concern or passion for something they do will learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. A Community of Practice curates and accelerates the learning process by identifying the common purpose of a group of people, provides a platform for interaction and creates a programme of activities. These elements, People, Purpose, Programme and Platform, are referred to as the four Ps, and they guide the development of a Community of Practice.

A Community of Practice for Higher Education practitioners would link theory, practice and policy. The ASEAN Education Workplan specifically seeks to establish Communities of Practice on Higher Education Mobility, related to the recognition of academic credit and outcome-based education. The establishment of such a community would, it was envisaged, also increase the availability of programme design and capacity development by facilitating mentoring and peer learning.

The mention of mentoring and peer learning in the ASEAN HE workplan was reinforced by a needs analysis survey conducted among SHARE partner universities to test the feasibility of establishing a Community of Practice. They were asked, "How could a Community of Practice be helpful to you?" Most respondents identified that sharing expertise and mutual support would be the most helpful intervention, but opportunities to discuss emerging themes and relevant issues as well as formulating policies and protocols were also seen as helpful. Almost half the respondents felt that a Community of Practice would provide an opportunity to influence and offer input to higher education policy.

SHARE recruited volunteers, including a range of academic, support and management staff from eight ASEAN member states, to help set up the Community of Practice and establish a Steering Group. A series of five workshops was held, examining different aspects of community

development such as writing a vision and a mission which would give a clear purpose to the group. Once this was completed, a programme of activities was created for the community. After the five workshops it was clear that there was a great deal of commitment and enthusiasm to form a Steering Group and forge ahead with building the community.

The Steering Group set about examining how to create an infrastructure for the group and grow membership. In doing so it faced several challenges, one of which was deciding who could be a member of the community. On the one hand we wanted to create a space where individuals could state their individual views, but on the other hand many members could only join with the permission of their employers and were constrained to reflect the views of their employers. Rather than choose between individual or institutional membership the Steering Group opted to allow both, although this is a compromise that does not effectively address the conflict between individual agency and institutional control.


Nevertheless, the SHARE programme was able to set up a Community of Practice that attracted over three hundred Higher Education practitioners to sign up, and which was able to deliver a programme of activities that included sharing expertise on mobility and internationalisation, seeking European funding, women in academia, quality assurance, consultation with the ASEAN Secretariat and building regional partnerships. As promised, the SHARE programme has supported the Steering Group to set up the community, develop a programme of activities and define membership and purpose. However, with this achieved, and with the current phase of the SHARE Programme ending in December 2022, questions have arisen over the existing Community of Practice platform and its sustainability, since current members would need to be transferred to a new platform.

## Our Shared Goal: RIHED-SHARE

Recognising the importance of partnerships in higher education, and based on our shared vision for an inclusive space for collective intelligence in higher education for sustainable learning and living in Southeast Asia, SEAMEO RIHED saw the development of an open knowledge platform as a key driver towards achieving Priority Area 6 (Harmonisation of Higher Education and Research) of the SEAMEO Education Agenda and the 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development. Knowledge maximisation has also been identified as a key priority by SEAMEO RIHED, in the form of collective intelligence for the common space in Southeast Asian higher education.

SHARE Policy Dialogue 15, which took place on 27/28 July 2022, explored the ongoing efforts and partnership of SEAMEO RIHED, EU SHARE and the ASEAN Secretariat to develop a common vision for higher education, based on RIHED's strategy and ongoing efforts to redefine the common space. During the event the proposal for RIHED-SHARE was put forward by RIHED as an inclusive and collaborative initiative to lay a foundation for enhanced regional cooperation in higher education and promote learning and collective intelligence. The need for more accessible, equitable and convenient learning has been clearly identified throughout the pandemic, and we have also seen immense potential for innovation as digital and educational technologies as well as new providers have allowed people to work and learn in spaces of their own choosing. However, more flexibility is required to accommodate learners throughout their life, as well as more equitable partnerships between higher education and other stakeholders involved in knowledge generation in order to facilitate more inclusive learning for all.

After being announced at SHARE Policy Dialogue 15 with a view to strengthening the engagement of the existing Community of Practice and providing an open platform to detail the developments of the common space in Southeast Asian Higher Education, improvements to the current functioning of the Community of Practice, as well as new features for RIHED-SHARE, are currently being developed to encourage regional knowledge sharing and dissemination, bringing together regional policy updates and options, research findings, and progress updates through a common and open platform.

With a planned launch later this year, RIHED-SHARE will operate until 2030 and beyond as an online meeting space and platform that aims to facilitate collective learning for the continuous development and sustainability of higher education in Southeast Asia. National governments, leaders and stakeholders in higher education, researchers, experts, and learners from diverse groups will be able to access and view higher education-related information, and it will provide curated content, analysis and information on a variety of topics related to the development of a common space in Southeast Asian higher education. RIHED-SHARE will also incorporate and upgrade the existing Community of Practice (CoP) platform, and will play a key role in ensuring the sustainability of partnerships in higher education by engaging audiences from the region and beyond. 

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# A Culture of Partnership and Cooperation: Key to Shaping the Future of Higher Education in Southeast Asia

LIBING WANG

Partnership and cooperation are words that are easy to say but hard to match with deeds. However, they are more than just rhetoric. The interconnected nature of the current challenges facing humanity and the planet requires collective and concerted actions from all of us, including higher education actors and stakeholders.

The alternatives are isolationism and competition. Common sense should quickly rule the former out, but the latter seems to be quite popular in underlying many policies and practices in higher education.

## Regional integration

Let's start by looking at the bigger picture of the region. The creation of the ASEAN Community in 2015 was a milestone in Southeast Asia's journey towards regional integration. Partnership and cooperation in regional trade and security seem to have been the early starting points for producing tangible outcomes.

However, as we progress deeper into regional integration processes, the integration of people, their mindsets and skillsets would inevitably emerge as the foundations required to consolidate the ASEAN Community.

The enabling role of education, including higher education, has been widely recognised by governments and stakeholders in Southeast Asia. Higher education should not divide; rather, it should unite countries in the region towards a shared future of peace, prosperity and sustainable development.

“ Unless higher education systems can work together regionally in a harmonised way, we will not be able to lay the most critical foundation for nurturing an ASEAN identity.

Unless higher education systems can work together regionally in a harmonised way, we will not be able to lay the most critical foundation for nurturing an ASEAN identity, which will be required to sustain the ASEAN Community from the political, economic and socio-cultural perspectives.

## Bilateral and/or multilateral

Regarding partnership and cooperation between and among countries in the region, countries can utilise bilateral and multilateral platforms, which will contribute to better mutual understanding and cooperation between and among higher education systems in the region.

There are significant and growing motivations for ASEAN countries to learn the best policies and practices from other countries, especially within the region. Mutual inspiration and mutual learning have become a norm, as evidenced in the inclusion of international referencing and benchmarking into national policymaking processes in many countries in the region.

Bilateral study visits, joint workshops and institutional agreements on specific issues and areas of common interest may be planned and budgeted as part of the routine work of ministries and higher education institutions. Staff and officials in charge of international partnership and cooperation should be well trained to acquire the requisite professional knowledge and expertise to carry out their duties.

Many multilateral platforms, such as SEAMEO, ASEAN, UNESCO and other development partners operating in Southeast Asia, can play an essential role in bringing countries together for better transparency, comparability, compatibility and the harmonisation of higher education systems in the region.

Bilateral and multilateral platforms should be mutually supportive, since bilateral efforts can upscale into multilateral frameworks while multilateral arrangements can be localised and implemented through bilateral channels. Bilateral and multilateral efforts should align and complement each other so that all higher education systems in the region can have shared frameworks for policy development and action.

## Stakeholders' engagement

Higher education stakeholders can be seen from either the supply or the demand side. However, there is a need to encourage stakeholders' partnerships and cooperation to be more inclusive and complementary, ensuring their contribution to both the supply and demand sides of higher education.

Despite the context of competition as suppliers of higher education services, partnerships and cooperation between and among higher education institutions is relatively common, with staff and student exchanges, infrastructure sharing, joint research, and other joint initiatives all taking place fairly frequently.

However, there are gaps in engagement with stakeholders from the demand side. HEIs should expand their engagement with students, parents,



communities, employers and industries in setting up their institutional agenda.

While staying committed to the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, there is also a need to promote the collective ownership of HEIs to ensure that their provision is more responsive to the needs of the demand side, thereby delivering social accountability for HEIs.

The government has a critical role to play in balancing the principles of institutional autonomy and social accountability, as well as managing concerns from both the supply and demand sides. Partnership and cooperation among different stakeholders are key factors that will drive the future of higher education in Southeast Asia.

### Higher education governance

The relationships between governments and HEIs have been dynamic and constantly evolving. Southeast Asia has seen efforts to corporatise universities, for example in Malaysia, to give more autonomy for better accountability. However, governments in the region generally have more financial or regulatory tools to leverage and direct the development and policies of colleges and universities within their respective national contexts.

There is no apparent dichotomy between centralised and decentralised systems, since institutional innovations and alignment have increasingly supported national regulations. This situation requires stronger partnerships and cooperation between governmental and external regulatory bodies and HEIs.

In terms of quality assurance, external frameworks such as national qualifications frameworks have been operating in many ASEAN countries. These are useful benchmarks, but they should be institutionalised by HEIs into internal regulations, templates and workflows. Frontline teachers should eventually use them in their programme development and course planning at the faculty level.

In the Shenzhen Statement, UNESCO Bangkok and key stakeholders in the region highlighted the need for a living quality culture in higher education, which remains critically important to ensuring the quality and relevance of higher education in this region and beyond.

Higher education finance also needs partnership and cooperation among different stakeholders to create cost-sharing mechanisms on top of the investment from governments. The introduction of affordable tuition fee systems supported by student loan schemes and public-private partnerships is essential to the financial sustainability of higher education systems.

### Reshaping teaching, research and social service

The message from UNESCO's third World Higher Education Conference held in May 2022 is clear. There is a need to reshape and reimagine the three traditional missions of universities through fresh lenses. These include adopting inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches to research and innovation, educating well-rounded professionals who are also fully-fledged citizens able to address complex issues cooperatively, and acting with a sense of social responsibility at the local, national, regional and global levels.

To achieve our shared goals, partnership and cooperation in higher education must happen at many levels and in many domains related to the teaching and learning activities in a diverse range of HEIs. This could include, for instance, in-person or virtual mobility of students and teachers, recognition of qualifications including micro-credentials, development of regional subject-specific quality standards through stakeholders' engagement, the democratisation of teaching and learning processes with more participation by students and stakeholders, and so on.

Short-term student mobility should be part of higher education programmes, if possible, in order to expose learners to different cultures in the region

and develop their ASEAN identity accordingly. We have seen many good initiatives in the region, including those run by the ASEAN University Network (AUN), the SEAMEO Regional Centre specialising in Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED), and the ASEAN Secretariat. More scholarships are needed, both from public and private sources, to support the further expansion of student mobility within the region.

In terms of research, ASEAN could consider establishing regional research facilities and infrastructure to support joint research projects, boost research culture and capacity, and turn colleges and universities, especially the top-tier institutions in the region, from teaching-oriented to research-oriented HEIs.


Regarding social service, working with local communities and industries should be the primary form of outreach work for colleges and universities. Activities like awareness raising, capacity building, advocacy, technology transfer, and incubating local industries and entrepreneurs are all the results of partnership and cooperation between HEIs and local partners.

Content-wise, teaching, research and social engagement activities – the three missions of HEIs – should integrate and prioritise content related to the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to make them relevant and ensure that partners contribute to the achievement of the SDGs in their respective countries.

### Concluding remarks

In conclusion, partnership and cooperation should take place between and among different countries, stakeholders and actors, including teachers and students. Partnerships may also be multi-dimensional across domains and content, and a holistic approach is necessary to ensure that no areas and stakeholders are left behind.

In the context of ASEAN integration, partnership and cooperation in higher education can prepare learners to acquire relevant skillsets and achieve a collaborative mindset as they move towards the cultivation of an ASEAN identity and support the consolidation of the ASEAN Community.

Therefore, there is a need for higher education systems to be more sensitive and responsive to partnership and cooperation, eventually establishing a culture of partnership and cooperation as an integrated and overarching strategy to shape and transform the future of higher education in Southeast Asia. 

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## Sustainable Strategic Partnerships in ASEAN: What is Needed in Enhancing Regional Mobility

YAZRINA YAHYA & LILY FREIDA MACABANGUN-MILLA

Like most industries locally and globally the higher education (HE) sector has experienced a series of fundamental challenges in the past decade, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the few years before the pandemic the HE sector became ever more complex and was seen as a global service delivered in a competitive knowledge marketplace, instead of a sector that serves the societal mission. However, the pandemic has made many HE institutions realise the imperative of partnership and collaboration to address global societal issues.

To cope with these challenges, HE institutions need appropriate strategies to enhance their three basic missions: teaching, research, and public service. In general, education has always been considered a public good, the purpose of which is to disseminate knowledge and contribute to the development of society (Council of the European Union, 2014). However, in a globalised world knowledge, research and innovation are becoming increasingly important resources, and these developments are influencing the societal role of universities (Valimaa & Hoffman, 2008). Despite their national orientation, most HE institutions strive for internationalisation in terms

of faculty, students and curriculum as a source of opportunities and resources (Altbach et al., 2009). Moreover, for countries importing foreign students international HE is a lucrative business, not only in providing economic income to universities but also in enhancing research facilities to cater for international research work and providing an international landscape to local students and communities (Altbach, 2004; Lee, 2014). This trend towards internationalisation suggests that there is a need for each individual institution to create a strategic roadmap to enhance internationalisation at their home campus, and to clearly define their institutional interests and priorities in undertaking internationalisation.

Recognising the importance of globalisation and internationalisation, ASEAN established a Roadmap on the ASEAN Higher Education Space 2025 to contribute to the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 (ASEAN, 2022). The roadmap envisages a resilient and sustainable ASEAN Higher Education Space that enables greater harmonisation and internationalisation of the region's HE systems. It is reflective of the new reality of education worldwide,

“Institutions may want to focus more on local and regional partnerships rather than reaching further afield to the global north, since such local partners may bring more relevant and collaborative benefits to the home institutions.

and proposes adaptive and sustainable approaches in responding to the changing context of HE. A central plank of the roadmap is promoting the mobility of students, faculty, researchers and interns within the region, alongside the development of common quality assurance benchmarks and mutual recognition of HE credentials within Southeast Asia, which includes the ten ASEAN members plus Timor-Leste. Hence, an ASEAN-wide digital Credit Transfer System (CTS) to support ASEAN mobility and an ASEAN branded scholarship scheme for all ASEAN member states are in the pipeline and will be launched soon.

Notable programmes in SEA that support the robust mobility of students include the SEAMEO-RIHED Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) and ASEAN University Network (AUN) Mobility programmes. Both AIMS and AUN represent laudable models of regional mobility for talent development, research projects, programme assessments and network alliances. Both models engage with and build on cooperation between universities, students, faculty, national ministries, a regional organisation (SEAMEO) and AUN.

Although ASEAN has provided the platform to assist in the mobility effort, initial work is required by HE institutions (HEIs) in ASEAN. There is a need for individual HEIs to strategise their partnerships with international partners in order to enhance the mobility of their students and academics. In general, to succeed in the increasingly competitive field of internationalisation HEIs often partner with other international HEIs and formalise their cooperation to allow both institutions to expand their activities and enhance their existing offerings (Kinser & Green, 2009).

In ASEAN HEIs the practitioners working with strategic partnerships are faced with new, pressing challenges. Most HEIs are looking into the number of partnerships their personnel are involved with, as this can give an indication of the international presence of an institution; however, this is not by itself sufficient as a proxy for international engagement. What matters more is the scope and type of activities covered, as well as the sustainability of partnerships. Institutions are becoming increasingly cautious about who they partner with and are abandoning the practice of signing collaboration agreements without strategic consideration, which was common in earlier years (Deardorff et al., 2012). Therefore it is very important for HEIs, and ASEAN HEIs in particular, to collaborate strategically by being selective about whom they partner with to ensure more sustainable and enduring collaboration between institutions and organisations.

Building sustainable academic networks, facilitating exchanges among students and staff, and enhancing regular exchanges and transfers of knowledge and practice are the foundations of long-term and mutually beneficial partnerships. Hence, institutions may want to focus more on local and regional partnerships rather than reaching further afield to the global north, since such local partners may bring more relevant and collaborative benefits to the home institutions. In addition, partnering with local sister universities (perhaps those which may not have a presence in the rankings but which

show strength in delivering on public service and the public good) can benefit home institutions in that they can act as mentors or coaches to these sister universities, while the latter can share their challenges and local/cultural contexts to enhance the partnership. This kind of mutually beneficial and balanced collaboration will help both institutions to grow together and move forward for a mutually better future.

To ensure strategic partnership lift-off, at the institutional level it is necessary first to develop an international strategic policy and strategic planning. Sandström and Weimer (2016) outlined some considerations for international strategic partnership policy development and managing alliances, which cover a lot of facets. These considerations have been further enhanced by new deliberations in order to gain a better mechanism for strengthening strategic alliances. Therefore, in developing international strategic partnerships HEIs need to take account of these matters:

- conduct an existence audit of policy related to internationalisation and strategic partnerships; if they are non-existent, develop policies to ensure active implementation of existing partnerships and/or discharge inactive or outdated partnerships
- execute an inventory count of existing partnerships, their output, impact and level of activity
- perform an evaluation exercise on what constitutes a strategic partnership to the institution, classify which are strategic to the achievement of institutional objectives in terms of internationalisation, and align with institutional strategy
- identify the degree of existing partnerships, and if necessary increase the depth and breadth of identified partnerships
- recognise the right partners, which will grow together with the home institution to ensure a win-win partnership for both

- determine local and global regions that have not been looked into to locate new potential partners and collaborations, which will provide a wider network and collaborative benefits for the home university
- secure faculty interests and initiatives in existing/ established institutional policies on strategic partnerships (Matross Helms, 2015)
- include safety protocols for exchange students and academics and the institutional assessment of virtual learning
- undertake exchanges, mobility and projects on multi-modal platforms, both on-site, virtual or hybrid-flexible, to be included in the policy. This is needed because in the light of the challenges brought by COVID-19, the partner institution must have the creativity, capacity, capability and willingness to use various platforms, and this needs to be stated in the policy.

Once the above considerations have been examined, the HEI needs to establish plans to manage its strategic partnerships. The HEI needs to look into these matters:

- establish an internal institutional approval process for international strategic partnerships
- authorise a specific unit or staff to develop and implement strategic partnerships
- develop well-defined descriptions of partnerships, including: a mission statement; programme goals and objectives; competencies of the students, staff and faculty involved; the educational services provided; the operational policies and procedures of all HEIs involved; financial relationships; and record-keeping policies (Matross Helms, 2015)
- monitor and communicate that partnerships must be built on trust, effective communication and ongoing demonstration of the relationship (Hefferman & Poole, 2005), as well as the sharing of benefits, respect and fairness (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014)

- consider cultural context (including institutional context) during all phases of the partnership, from initial negotiations to monitoring and maintenance of the relationship (Matross Helms, 2015). It is important to have candid conversations about administrative and academic culture, as both involve different aspects. Administrative culture involves reporting structures, institutional leadership, decision-making, communication, negotiation practices, relationship management and dealing with crises. On the other hand, academic culture encompasses pedagogy, grading and evaluation, use of technology, process for determining curriculum, and research culture. Identify any possible ethical dilemmas that may arise
- perform regular evaluation of partnerships, their intended and actual output, and their strategic relevance to the institution
- be aware and alert that partnerships and the priorities of partner institutions evolve over time.

As conditions, challenges and opportunities evolve rapidly in our globalised world, in order for HEIs partnerships to remain relevant and transformational HEIs must be agile and responsive in adapting to change and expanding their engagement with governments, ministries, communities, industries and regional organisations, working together towards a shared vision of accelerating regional growth and community-building in ASEAN. 📍

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SEAMEO RIHED is the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional Centre specialising in higher education and development. As an inclusive learning organisation and leading partner in higher education committed to sustainable development, we work to foster cooperation and provide policy platforms among governments and universities to enhance higher education for the sustainable future of the Southeast Asian region.



### SHARE

SHARE is an EU-funded project with an overarching objective to strengthen regional cooperation and enhance the quality, competitiveness and internationalisation of Southeast Asian higher education institutions and students, contributing to an ASEAN Community. The main aim is to enhance cooperation between the EU and ASEAN to create a common space for higher education in Southeast Asia. The SHARE Consortium is led by the British Council and comprises the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and Nuffic. SHARE has worked with regional counterparts to implement the programme since 2015.

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