



EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORT TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ASEAN REGION

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JOINT ASEAN STUDENT AND ALUMNI STATEMENT Enhancing ASEAN Higher Education Area through Student and Alumni Networks

We, the students and alumni of 10 ASEAN Member States, most of whom have participated in, and benefited from, a mobility scholarship scheme primarily within ASEAN gathered on the 6th and 7th August 2019 in Jakarta, Indonesia on the occasion of Second SHARE Student Mobility and Alumni Workshop.

Reaffirming the *Joint Student Statement on the Benefits and Challenges of Continuing and Expanding an Intra-ASEAN Student Mobility Scheme*, adopted in Yangon, Myanmar on 29th August 2018 and the *joint Student Statement on The Role of ASEAN Higher Education Frameworks in a Disruptive World* adopted in Bangkok, Thailand, on 31st October 2018.

Noted with appreciation the progress made on education cooperation by our governments under the ASEAN framework and under the purview of the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education, including the implementation of the 8 Sub-Goals of the *ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016–2020*, and the *2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Higher Education*.

Appreciative of the support of the European Union through the EU SHARE Programme and welcome its seamless second phase extension to further develop and sustain an ASEAN Higher Education Area. We further express our appreciation for the achievements made by SEAMEO RIHED, the ASEAN University Network (AUN), the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQR) Committee, and the ASEAN Foundation.

Cognizant that the Fourth Industrial Revolution brings great opportunities and challenges to the region. In this context, it is important for ASEAN to set long-term goals of regional integration and capitalize on its young, educated and technology-savvy population to help boost the region's economic growth and prosperity.

Committed in our role as young generation of ASEAN – who have propensity to take initiative and be open-minded, tolerant, active, dynamic, and optimistic – to play bigger role in promoting ASEAN awareness and take part whether direct or indirect, in policy making processes in order for youths to express their views as part of building an ASEAN community.

Over the past two days, we have shared our experiences and ideas on how to further internationalise Higher Education in the ASEAN region through active participation and involvement of student and alumni networks, in the interest of people-to-people connectivity and mobility at the governmental, institution and individual levels. Taking into account the different educational systems, limited educational opportunities, and the skills mismatch curriculum, **we would like to propose the following recommendations:**

1. The role of student and alumni networks in the future of Higher Education in the region

Students & Alumni

- Recognising students and alumni as competent, active and constructive key stakeholders in the development of an ASEAN Higher Education area, in promoting a community that puts people at its centre as well as one with an enhanced awareness of ASEAN;
- Reaffirming students and alumni with Intra – ASEAN mobility experiences as influencers of ASEAN people-to-people connectivity;
- Recognising the importance of student and alumni participation, whether direct or indirect, in policy making processes, for students and alumni to express their views;
- Reaffirming the local and regional network of students and alumni to create educational cooperation in terms of mobility and joint research studies;
- Encourage regular dialogues between students and alumni with Higher Education Institutions (HEI), public institutions, industries and government policy making actors;
- Create a network of ASEAN student alumni association with links to companies from different industries to improve employability and talent management by establishing university- and national- level of alumni networks via a comprehensive database platform;
- Request Member States to create more awareness to students and alumni who want to participate in international opportunities across ASEAN region, such as internship and research opportunities;

University/Institutions

- Recognising the importance of English as a common working language in ASEAN; to design more courses and teaching materials (i.e. research papers) to be taught in English, and to have more learning opportunities in English for students
- Recognise that Host IRO and Home IRO relationship will be stronger through the student & alumni networks;
- Increase cooperation between host and home university (IRO to IRO links); recognising the importance of the exchange program between IRO staff for cross-culture experience;
- Assign an alumni management staff as part of the International Relations Office framework. In order to ensure IROs to have sufficient number of human resources and support capacity of IRO staff by giving them project management and intercultural skills and foreign language training;
- Support more active role of student and alumni engagement in the university management, curriculum design and future developments; and to make more use of digital solutions for engagement;
- Renew Member State commitment towards the missions of universities, which should be envisaged in a holistic way, that would allow education, research, and service to society to be interconnected, to the benefit of students, alumni, staff and societies, and would be in line with the principle of academic freedom;
- Provide information about internship opportunities for students and alumni across ASEAN Member States;

Government/International Organisations

- Establish an ASEAN Student Union and ASEAN Alumni Association as an additional platform for youth to implement various trans-national/regional projects. Develop an official and organised alumni database platform at national as well as regional level, which would make different individuals and industries to easily access and make use of the available data with the aim of supporting both graduate employability and internship opportunity in the ASEAN region in the most cost-effective way;

- Member States to support enabling environment for ASEAN shared cultural identity and intercultural competence;
- Continue the support for existing platforms for intercultural exposure and mobility;
- Establish the “ASEAN Youth”, focusing on the youth and invest in social programmes, such as Teach4ASEAN to empower English Language and practicality in using it as the second language;
- Recognise ASEAN students' voice in Higher Education policy making through a consultative model, wherein there will be a bi-yearly dialogue between the policymakers and the students;
- Support the simplification and removal of regulatory barriers for ASEAN student visas to encourage intra-ASEAN mobility, internationalisation and ASEAN cultural identity.

2. Student and alumni empowerment in the ASEAN - Challenges & Opportunities

Students and Alumni

- To instil global awareness at the level of the students and alumni to be more informed and involved in the ASEAN region;
- Students as a crucial stakeholder to participate in policy-making in Higher Education sector;
- Alumni network as professional network to enhance employability and labour mobility across the ASEAN Member States;
- Foster an ASEAN alumni buddy system to support inbound and outbound student, where incoming new student members are paired with an alumnus from different ASEAN members states;
- Empower alumni committing to promoting the student mobility in the ASEAN region;

Universities/Institutions

- Work with companies and organisations to provide internship opportunities for students on exchange from within ASEAN;
- Establish clear linkages between institutions in matters concerning in – and outbound mobility and application process;
- Promote niche areas of different universities within ASEAN to encourage students in ASEAN to pursue exchange programmes within ASEAN;
- To stimulate the use of ASEAN Member states official languages in HEIs;
- In order to transform the International Relation Office of home university to be more informative to the students and to have a solid unit helping the students through the process, there should be capacity building and training workshops for the staff from International Relation Office;
- To improve the quality and adaptability of Higher Education in ASEAN region by developing technical assistance including training and student exchange programs;
- Include ASEAN studies as an optional minor in Higher Education degree offered in ASEAN;
- Maximise the use of information and communication technology (ICT) especially social media to establish cross-border networks in the ASEAN region;
- Capacity building between ASEAN educators to further prepare them in the digital era, through:
 - (a) Intra-ASEAN educators exchange programs to share their knowledge and technical proficiency to fellow educators.
 - (b) Online trainings and programs for ASEAN educators, personalised to teach different major;

- (c) Online discussion forums for ASEAN educators to enable teaching techniques and best practices consultations in different countries;
- (d) Creating an ASEAN advisory body in charge of dealing with competency issues for educators.
- Fostering future graduates (students and alumni) as active and responsible ASEAN citizens; and creative and technically proficient graduates; critical thinkers, problem solvers, and lifelong learners;
- To develop ASEAN partnerships at inter-institutional, local, national and regional levels, in order to provide attractive and relevant curricula, which provide active learning outcomes, cross-cultural experiences in a mutual understanding perspective and through mobility, and opportunities to cross-fertilize good practices in teaching and research.

Governments/International Organisations

- To include student representatives in planning committees for official ASEAN celebrations;
- Include ASEAN studies as an optional minor in Higher Education degree offered in ASEAN;
- Commit to ensure inclusive education in ASEAN as well as coaching lifelong learning through further education reforms;
- Establish quality assurance & framework within ASEAN universities to further encourage the equal quality between universities through:
 - (a) Framework for education quality in universities
 - (b) Adoption of a local framework for ASEAN Standards;
 - (c) Accreditation Process; and
 - (d) Implementation, monitoring, and protection of the ASEAN-Level MOOCs System especially with regards to intellectual property issues.
- Encourage institution-to-institution cooperation and assess different options and requirements to develop ASEAN single branded scholarships, including review existing or successful scholarship programmes from other countries/regions;
- Addressing the inequality of digital facilities and literacy in several ASEAN countries through inter-governmental collaborations, transfer of technology and support funding allocation resources to build ASEAN digital infrastructures, especially in the rural areas;

3. Engage students and fresh graduates/alumni to be voluntarily active.

Students and Alumni

- Promote ASEAN student and alumni volunteerism to engage in community development, such as improvement of the literacy rate of the community;
- Cultivate a culture of self-improvement among ASEAN students and alumni through campaigns, research and development; independently, and/or in coordination with relevant stakeholders;
- Foster a mentor-mentee relationship to guide and inspire the young ASEAN generation;
- Maintain close connection with ASEAN alumni for experience sharing and financial support.

Universities/Institutions

- Recognition and support from the universities towards the establishment of an ASEAN alumni association;

- Position the ASEAN alumni as the partner of university internationalisation programs. For instance, coordinate host students to teach local language to ASEAN students and ASEAN students to teach English to local community;
- Encourage student, teacher, and administration staff exchange programmes, scholarship provisions, diversity symposiums, joint virtual classrooms, joint dissertation defenses, university-to-university cooperation, the promotion of ASEAN studies, foreign language requirements, trainings and conferences, research collaborations, peace dialogues and trans-national job opportunities;
- Provide internship opportunities and credit earning activities for students and alumni in internationalisation management and implementation of student exchanges, for instance:
 - (a) Establishment of a buddy system for incoming students and involvement in pre-departure briefings and student orientations
 - (b) Internship/training cooperation between universities and international organisation/corporate industry for inbound and outbound students/alumni;
- Seek opportunities of partnership with industrial companies, for instance, conducting symposiums, focusing on intra-ASEAN cooperation, or campaign the advantages of hiring students with intra-ASEAN mobility experience.

Governments/International Organisations

- Recognise and support from the national government and ASEAN organisation toward the establishment of the ASEAN alumni association;
- Enshrine mechanisms to ensure that students voice is considered in all levels of policy design making;
- Promote the need for universities to strengthen English competency and to offer co-curricular options to learn additional ASEAN languages;
- Foster and support the engagement and cooperation among student leaders and alumni representatives within the ASEAN region and beyond;
- Expand fast and reliable Internet access to ease information acquisition and cross-cultural communication in ASEAN region;
- Ease intra-regional mobility by:
 - (a) Expanding visa options at no cost for student mobility and internship purposes;
 - (b) Increasing the frequency and reach of air and sea routes between ASEAN countries, particularly for students, academia and university staffs;
- Facilitate Higher Education institutions in supporting ASEAN alumni activities;

The realisation of this Joint Student and Alumni Statement on “*Enhancing ASEAN Higher Education Area through Student and Alumni Networks*” will be accomplished through enhanced cooperation among students, alumni and relevant stakeholders. This Joint Statement will be submitted to ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Member States, by means of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) based in Jakarta.

Adopted in Jakarta, this 7th August 2018.

Acknowledged by:
Student and Alumni participants of the Second SHARE Student Mobility and Alumni
Workshop