Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

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ASEAN and its Higher Education

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- 10 Member State ASEAN Economic Community - AEC 2015)
- Taken as a single country, already the 7th largest economy in the world
- One of the most ethnically and culturally diverse regions in the world
- Over 6,000 higher education institutions
- Over 15 million students enrolled in higher education
- Rapidly integrating and building people-to-people connectivity
- Higher education viewed as key to mutual understanding and promoting regional identity

ASEAN Integration

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- ASEAN's integration journey is driven by "One Vision, One Identity, One Community"
- Formalisation of the AEC 2015 created great impetus for the internationalisation in the region
- The ASEAN Socio-cultural Community Blueprint 2025 was launched in March 2016.
- The Blueprint advocated promotion of *"an innovative ASEAN approach to higher education"* which will *"promote greater people-to-people interaction and mobility within and outside ASEAN"* leading to *"the free flow of ideas, knowledge, expertise, and skills to inject dynamism within the region."*

The Architecture of ASEAN Internationalisation

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- Apart from ASEAN Secretariat's Education, Youth, and Sport Division, the primary entities driving ASEAN's cooperation and internationalisation agenda forward with dialogue partners are:
- South-East Asia Ministers of Education Organization's Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED)
- The ASEAN University Network (AUN)

Internationalisation Initiatives: AIMS

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The AIMS Programme offers ASEAN students a single semester exchange across a choice of 68 institutions in six ASEAN member states two of the ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN+3) dialogue partners: Japan, and South Korea.

- AIMS is ASEAN's flagship higher education mobility programme
- It seeks to engender a sense of ASEAN citizenship and identity among its participants
- A central tenet of the AIMS programme is the concept of "Balanced Mobility"
- Just over 2000 students have participated to date
- AIMS Programme will likely have to modify its structure to create scale and impact.

Internationalisation Initiatives: EU-SHARE

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SHARE

European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region

EU-funded Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) Programme was launched in 2015. The aims of the programme are to strengthen regional cooperation and enhance the quality, competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education institutions and students.

Policy Dialogues:
Assessing all relevant higher education issues at policy and operational levels

ASEAN Qualifications Reference Frameworks & Quality Assurance:
Developing systems and frameworks by sharing and augmenting experience through consultation, mapping and study visits to Europe

Credit Transfer System and Student Mobility with Scholarships:
Creating tools to support a common platform for online credit transfer.
Testing the new framework by providing 500 scholarships

Internationalisation Initiatives: EU-SHARE

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The overall aim of the project is to facilitate, support and expand both intra-ASEAN and ASEAN-EU mobility.

The SHARE result areas EU and ASEAN partners are collaborating on are:

- ASEAN Qualifications Reference Frameworks (AQRF) and ASEAN Quality Assurance (ASEAN QA)
- Development of an ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS) and ASEAN-EU Credit Transfer Systems (AECTS)
- Intra-ASEAN and ASEAN-EU mobility scholarships

The Challenges for ASEAN Internationalisation

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- Diversity of education systems across the region
- Complexity of harmonising academic calendars
- Recognition and trust in qualification frameworks
- Information sharing between countries and institutions
- Language of instruction
- Funding disparities

The Way Forward for ASEAN Internationalisation

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ASEAN has the foundations and impetus to fully integrate its internationalisation.

To build this it needs to:

- Augment regional cooperation on higher education initiatives
- Strengthen existing frameworks and develop new action lines
- Look to new modalities of internationalisation with the private sector

“We are on the right track when our youths see themselves as part of the ASEAN community and feel a shared sense of responsibility for ASEAN’s future.”

Former Singaporean Foreign Minister K. Shanmugam

ASEAN Day, August 2015

Thank you for your kind attention