



POLICY BRIEF

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STUDYING ABROAD — BECOMING ASEAN

REGIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY AS A DRIVER OF THE ASEAN COMMUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the sixth in a series of Policy Briefs published by the EU Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE), a four-year initiative by the EU and ASEAN to support harmonisation and boost the quality of Higher Education (HE) systems across South-east Asia. The First ASEAN Student Mobility Forum was part of SHARE's Policy Dialogue events, through which the programme supports the emerging ASEAN Higher Education Area by engaging with universities, policy-makers and students.

This Forum, organised in collaboration with the Philippines Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in Manila in June 2017, was unique amongst previous SHARE Policy Dialogues as it attracted students and alumni across ASEAN countries, all recipients of SHARE scholarships in ASEAN institutions or other related initiatives such as the ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) by SEAMEO RIHED and student mobility programmes by the ASEAN University Network, and Erasmus+.

Constructing a truly people-centred community has given impetus for a greater participation and contribution from students, as their role is increasingly recognised as key to building and promoting the ASEAN Community.

The First ASEAN Student Mobility Forum brought together ASEAN Students who were keen to 'give something back' to the schemes they had benefited from. The event celebrated young people becoming empowered to think of themselves not only as nationals of their own countries, but as true ASEAN citizens. The event was also timely, in that 2017 commemorates 50 years of ASEAN, 40 years of ASEAN-EU relations and 30 years of Erasmus+.

The overarching recommendation from this Policy Brief is that an ASEAN Student Mobility Forum should become embodied in ASEAN Higher Education thinking, and this Forum should become a regular event on the ASEAN-EU calendar, for the encouragement and embracing of student views and ideas.



CONTEXT AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This Forum attracted 238 delegates from 15 countries: 120 from industry, 83 from government, and 35 from stakeholder organisations. This included 81 students and alumni from many disciplines: Humanities, STEM, Education, Design & Communication, and Health. The high level of thinking and engagement from students marked this Forum as a milestone.

Studying in another country has a huge impact on personal development, of which academic development is only one part. The enrichment and enhancement of intercultural competencies was evidenced through students' contributions on discussion panels, collectively in student groups, and underpinned by the keynote speaker Kate Ramil of the Erasmus Mundus Association. The resourcefulness, passion and commitment shown by students, demonstrates their capacity to be part of the process of change.

1. Recommendations to ASEAN Leaders, ASEAN Ministers of Education (ASED), and ASEAN Senior Officials on Education (SOM-ED)

The Future Workforce

Keynote speaker Hamidah Naziadin of CIMB Group highlighted the need to go beyond currently required competencies, to reach for the skillsets of the future. Establishing an ASEAN employers' 'Futures Group', as a think tank of ASEAN industrial and commercial stakeholders, would stimulate emergence of ASEAN graduates with new skillsets for tomorrow's workforce. SHARE, SEAMEO RIHED, AUN, and ASEAN leaders could invite 'Industrial Champions' to join this independent group, responding to fast changing ASEAN work environments. This would pro-actively challenge universities to develop curricula that nurture an international mindset through 'hard' and 'soft' skills development, to equip future graduates to become mobile and resourceful, and to identify the regional value added in HE across ASEAN. This stakeholder-driven initiative

will support deeper socio-cultural integration in ASEAN through people-to-people mobility, building the diversity of knowledge and skills sought by forward-looking companies.

Alumni

Open to all regional mobility scholarship holders (SHARE, AIMS, AUN, and ERASMUS+) the ASEAN Alumni Network would pool all these graduate experiences. Although challenging to establish and maintain, the benefits derived are significant: enabling easier access to information and knowledge; promotion of scholarships and opportunities; and pathways to employment. Surveys, roadshows and webinars are delivery paths to alumni events. For governments, alumni data will inform future planning, and for companies, a network of diverse talents could aid recruitment. SHARE should lead a working group to assess bringing mobility scholarship alumni together in a single network.

One Voice

Who 'harmonises the harmonisers'? Where are the connections and synergies between the existing three regional student mobility schemes in ASEAN? These questions are central to the future success of intra-regional student mobility in Southeast Asia. The possible replication of structures and procedures across three different mobility schemes poses risks for HE policy makers, regarding long-term viability and sustainability. A streamlined approach with a single infrastructure, simplifies communication on scholarships to students, and uses resources more effectively. The evolution of current scholarship schemes (SHARE, AIMS, AUN), through mapping regional data in ASEAN, would develop a cohesive and overarching blueprint, based on good practices and procedures already cultivated.

Students as Stakeholders

The Forum supported students in organising themselves as a regional association of student unions in ASEAN. When this self-organisation of students on a regional level becomes functional and representative, this regional

association shall be given a seat at the ASEAN SOM-ED as a full member. This will ensure that students become true stakeholders of the ASEAN Higher Education Area.

2. Recommendations to Managers of Higher Education Institutions in ASEAN

Forum feedback indicated good progress in the drive for more widely available access to intra-regional student mobility in ASEAN. However, concerns emerged from student groups, who identified challenges to the removal of barriers and obstacles.

Provide better Information

There remains a lack of easy to understand, transparent information, regarding existing mobility opportunities. More is required at two levels: the advertisement of mobility scholarships from the scholarship providers (online and social media), and promotion through individual universities by highlighting opportunities and the associated benefits from undertaking mobility. Where no International Office exists, university leaders should encourage 'local' forums, where students with mobility experience can share information, using a buddy system, creating an open and friendly atmosphere for widening the 'footprint' of student awareness.

Prepare Students better

Once committed to a mobility scholarship, better communication to the student around the 'process' of what will happen, through pre-departure briefings, should be consistently in place. Universities can use scholarship alumni as ambassadors and build an archive of visual material and student testimonials, forming an on-line 'briefing resource', accessible to all.

Recognition of Achievements and Transfer of Credits

Recognition of the students' achievements through the Credit Transfer System across ASEAN remains a concern, in particular where students undertake studies in a host institution where the curriculum does not mirror that of the home institution. Fostering a learning outcomes approach in curricula design and linking

credits to learning outcomes will help tackle this challenge, and establishing learning agreements will assist in the transparent accumulation and transfer of credits (See SHARE Policy Brief 2). Key messages from the Forum's session on 'Making Mobility Count' reinforced that patience is required as mobility increases, and that uniform recognition of achievements requires a common mind-set and a political will of all concerned stakeholders.

3. Further Recommendations to improve the Quality and Management of regional Student Mobility

Mapping Regional Data in ASEAN

The importance of mapping regional data in ASEAN will have greatest significance for driving economic development and informing student choice. Navigating costs and complexity, it is crucial that universities are encouraged to provide the right kind of information that Ministries of Education can process into useful data sets at national level. A wider ASEAN platform could then share the data comprehensively, providing a backdrop to usefully inform decisions on intra-regional student mobility. SHARE, with its regional partners, should form a working group to devise a workshop, devoted to this single topic, using experience drawn from government departments, university academics and students.

Student-led Improvements

Recommendations from the students and alumni at the Forum were wide ranging, covering six themes. Outputs were presented briefly, but the quality of ideas and feedback warrants closer inspection and review. A working group, with student representation from across ASEAN, should revisit the ideas and prioritise them in an Executive Summary for planning future mobility support systems. The purpose is twofold: to build a regional structure of university student council unions, creating an agenda of student led priorities; and to promote intra-regional student mobility, through a database of best practice, identified by the students, including on-line case studies.

REFERENCES

ASEAN Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Higher Education (ASEAN, 2015), at <http://share-asean.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/KL-Declaration-on-HE-2015.pdf>

ASEAN State of Education Report 2013 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2013), at <http://www.asean.org/storage/images/resources/2014/Oct/ASEAN%20State%20of%20Education%20Report%202013.pdf>

Bologna with Student Eyes 2015 (European Students' Union, 2015), at <https://www.esu-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/BWSE-2015-online.pdf>

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The Rationale for Sponsoring Students to Undertake International Study: An Assessment of National Student Mobility Scholarship Programmes (British Council and DAAD, 2014), at https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/e002_outward_mobility_study_final_v2_web.pdf

The Shape of Global Higher Education: National Policies Framework for International Engagement (British Council, 2016), at https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/f310_tne_international_higher_education_report_final_v2_web.pdf

PREVIOUS SHARE POLICY BRIEFS (AVAILABLE AT SHARE-ASEAN.EU)

Policy Brief 1 – Towards Greater Harmonisation of Higher Education in ASEAN. May 2016.

Policy Brief 2 – Enhancing Internationalisation in ASEAN: Credit Transfer Systems and Student Mobility. October 2016.

Policy Brief 3 – Towards a Shared Understanding of Quality Assurance: Policy Recommendations for Implementing a Regional QA Framework in ASEAN. January 2017.

Policy Brief 4 – Degree Structures and the Harmonisation of Higher Education in the ASEAN Region. February 2017.

Policy Brief 5 – Making National Qualifications Comparable Across ASEAN: The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. May 2017.



SHARE IS PROUD TO SUPPORT 50 YEARS OF ASEAN AND
40 YEARS OF ASEAN-EU RELATIONS IN 2017

SHARE, the European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region, is a four-year initiative by the EU and ASEAN. Launched in Jakarta in May 2015, SHARE aims to support ASEAN in harmonising regional higher education by sharing European expertise. It does this through strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing the quality, competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education for institutions and students, and thereby contributing to a closer ASEAN community. SHARE is implemented by a consortium of Europe's major international education agencies, led by the British Council and comprised of Campus France, DAAD, Nuffic, ENQA, and EUA. More information on SHARE at www.share-asean.eu