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Practical Note

Education for the ASEAN Community – The Case of Indonesia

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Abstract

Education plays a significant role in all of the strategies made and initiatives taken to achieve various outcomes of ASEAN. One of the core strategies which engage the Higher Education sector to meet the ASEAN Community in 2015 was "Cross-border mobility and internationalisation of education—to promote regional sharing, cultivate a regional perspective among member states and contribute to the spirit of regional unity and excellence." The purpose of this practice note is to find and analyse initiatives taken by the Government and Higher Education institutions focussing in Indonesia, the largest population and largest economy country in ASEAN and how the initiatives positioned the education in the region. This note is intended to contribute to the knowledge of ASEAN Community, especially on its education area.

Keywords: Higher Education, Internationalisation, ASEAN Community

Introduction

Education plays a significant role in all of the strategies made and initiatives taken to achieve various outcomes of ASEAN. The *ASEAN Charter*, the legal and institutional framework of ASEAN also specifies an education specific related clause as one of the purposes of ASEAN as "to develop human resources through closer cooperation in education and life-long learning, and in science and technology, for the empowerment of the peoples of ASEAN and for the strengthening of the ASEAN Community – *a* visioned of ASEAN nations living in peace, stability and prosperity which is to be achieved by 2015" (Article 1 paragraph 10).

At the 2009 ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting, it was decided important to have a work plan that guides the education relationship in achieving ASEAN community and the ASEAN 5- Year Work Plan on Education was established in 2011. One of the four strategic priorities agreed upon which engages the Higher Education sector was "Cross-border mobility and internationalisation of education—to promote regional sharing, cultivate a regional perspective among member states and contribute to the spirit of regional unity and excellence."

This priority poses challenges to be achieved as each country has different education system and approaches in embracing internationalisation. Yet, there are very few analysis made on country's education strategies relates to achieving the ASEAN Community. Thus, the major purpose of this practice note is to discover and analyse initiatives taken by the Government and institutions in internationalising its Higher Education and the positioning its education in the region. This note is intended to contribute to the knowledge of ASEAN Community, especially on its education area.

Indonesia was chosen as the focus of this discussion because with over 3000 Higher Education institutions, Indonesia which is also the largest population country and largest economy in the ASEAN has huge shares and important roles in contributing to the success of the ASEAN's education work-plan.

Internationalisation of Higher Education

Internationalisation in Higher Education sector is considered as a process that has different meanings to many. To some, it may mean building an international, intercultural and global perspective to their stakeholders along with useful knowledge, skill and attitudes (Elkin & Devjee, 2003; Knight, 2004) through the process of having internationalised activities as part of a HEIs' academic strategies such as new international program, international mobility of students and lectures, international partnership and projects including international research initiatives (Knight, 2004; Chin & Ching, 2009). To others, it could mean delivering courses to other countries through various partnership arrangement and new models of teaching delivery (Knight, 2004; Wildawsky, 2010). At the very general level,

internationalisation of universities will teach people to have international knowledge and eyeshot (Jinwei, 2005).

Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) also serves different purposes to the institutions. It may serve as a response to the global society, economy and mobility; to support investment and specialities in conducting strong research activities; or to gain income for the institutions and to support a nation's economy (Qiang, 2003; Kapur & Crowley, 2008).

Some Higher Education institutions (HEIs) are more advanced than others in progressing with the internationalisation of their universities (Wildawsky, 2010). A study held by Ayoubi and Massoud (2007) defined stages of internationalisation of higher education institutions from being International Losers (there is no intent nor having activities on becoming international) to become International Speakers (has the intention described in their vision or mission statement but not so much in the strategies) then to enter the International Actors stage (without any specific intentions but already took up activities related to internationalisation) and in the end become the International Winners (have the intent described in their vision and mission statements along with a set of strategies and some activities related to internationalisation being successfully implemented).

Sullivan (2011) viewed the internationalisation activities taken at Higher Education Institution are represented by stakeholders of the industry which include the administrator (Planning and Administration), students (Student Education), and faculty (Faculty Development).

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are unique and diverse of characters. According to Bartell (2003), they have (1) goals which are fuzzy, differentiated, unclear and often

hard to measure; (2) internal stakeholders from numerous disciplinary and culturally diverse and external stakeholders which are varied and requires managers to link them all together; (3) high labour intensive with staff from diverse background and profession, making achievement of organisational goals and objective complicated; (4) different values and system believed between the academics and administrator, which reduces efficiency and effectiveness in solving problems and issues; and (5) complex, rapidly changing and demanding environment. Thus, it requires collegial process and executive authority in managing them.

Initiatives of the Indonesian Government

The Indonesian Qualification Framework (IQF) was signed by the President in 2011 and is currently in the process of being implemented. The IQF becomes the main benchmark in the classification of competencies of academic education, vocational education and professional education graduates (Bill No 12 Year 2012 on Higher Education, article 29). Through the IQF and the descriptor of each level of qualification, quality of learning outcomes can be standardised across the country. IQF also allows qualifications to be made comparable and recognised by other countries and so supports mobility and cross border education.

The national Government also provides various scholarship programs for lecturers at HEIs to study and/or to conduct research overseas since 2009. 1000 full scholarships have been available every year. This initiative will not only enhance qualification of Indonesian lecturers but also a mean to bring the international learning and living experience back home and build education networks internationally (Rustad, 2011).

In late 2011 the Government announced schemes of International Cooperation grants that assist HEIs to develop policy, regulation, guidelines and procedure documents for collaboration purposes. These documents were to support the HEIs to initiate and or to implement international collaboration, to define unit and operational costs in initiating or strengthening international collaboration, and to initiate non degree international collaboration.

On the 13 July 2012 the Indonesian Parliament passed the Bill of Republic of Indonesia No.12 Year 2012 on Higher Education. The Bill includes a new provision of relevance that supports internationalisation of Higher Education. This is the provision for foreign HEIs to deliver higher education in Indonesia and for Indonesian institutions to build collaboration with overseas HEIs. The new Bill also has a provision on autonomy for HEIs in the conduct of: management; finance; student's affairs; staffing; and infrastructure and facility (Article 64). This will allow HEIs to be more integrated and support internationalisation and build creative partnership with overseas institutions.

Initiatives of Higher Education institutions

At the institutional level, a number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have acted to embrace internationalisation which can be seen at their mission statements, English language website and new curriculum developed delivered in English (Soejatminah, 2009). Vice Rectors of collaborations and Heads of International Offices of universities in Indonesia regularly met and held workshops to share knowledge and raise capabilities (Universitas Sumatera Utara, 2012; Universitas Airlangga, 2013).

HEIs are also active in building their own international collaborations. The 2010 data showed that there are over 2000 institutional collaborations involving 43 public HEIs in Indonesia. These collaborations were mainly in the form of Twinning, Double Degree, Credit Transfer, Lecturer/ Staff exchange, Student exchange, and Joint Research. Nine (9) universities recorded having more than 10 lecture exchanges, six (6) universities had more than 20 international student exchanges and nine (9) universities had more than 10 international joint research initiatives (Jazzidie, 2011).

The positioning of Indonesian education regionally

On student mobility, UNESCO data (2010) showed, Indonesia hosted about 6500 overseas students whom mostly are from Malaysia (about 40%) and Timor Leste (about 45%), while about 34,000 Indonesians departed to study overseas. The same data also shows that in 2010, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore hosted about 57,000, 19,000 and 48,000 overseas students respectively (UNESCO, nd).

Indonesian position on international research can be seen from a study conducted by Scientometrics (Science Analysis, n.d.) which compared total number of scientific publications of the world since 1996. From 1996 to 2010, Indonesia was ranked as 64th, producing a total of 13,047 scientific documents while Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia were ranked as 32nd, 42nd and 43rd producing 109,346, 59,332 and 55,211 documents. In 2010 alone, Indonesia produced 2032 documents while Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand produced 14,407, 13,913 and 9,129 respectively.

World Intellectual Property Organisation which is administered by Patent Cooperation Treaty reported a new record of 181,900 international patent applications in 2011, a growth of 10.7% when compared from 2010. The top 5 countries filing for patent and the estimated number of patents in 2011 are the United States (48, 596), Japan (38,888), Germany (18,568), China (16,406) and Republic of Korea (10,447). From ASEAN countries, contributions are led by Singapore (671), Malaysia (264), Thailand (66) and then followed by Philippines and Vietnam (both 18), Indonesia (13) and Laos (5). This showed that Indonesia's capacity for innovation is still relatively low (World Intellectual Property Organisation, n.d.).

At the institutional level, three leading universities in Indonesia were ranked at the 273rd, at the range of 450-500 and at the position of 601+ in the 2012 QS World University Ranking (QS World University Ranking, n.d). While ranking does not necessarily represent level of internationalization of an institution, it does represent an international respectable standing (Baty, 2012).

Conclusion

According to the Association of Indonesian Private HEIs, only 10% of the private HEIs are ready to face the *ASEAN Community* (Winarto, 2013). There are also less than 200 of the 3585 HEIs in Indonesia have setup specific function or position managing internationalisation (Purwanto, personal communication, 5 April 2012). In addition, there are also some controversies comments made against the embracing of globalisation focus, as there are concerns of the diminishing of local values (Bani, 2012) and the questioning of how Indonesia embracing internationalisation through its efforts in becoming world class universities (Watson, 2011).

Discrepancies of education capacity of ASEAN countries hinder the efforts to achieve the ASEAN education plan which is to establish cross-border mobility and internationalisation. These education plans are highly relevant in the process to achieve ASEAN Community more specific at its economic factor as they play major roles in the establishment of free flow of skilled labour; provides knowledge to develop competitive regional economic policy and technologies to support regional integration; and acts as the mean to achieve equitable economies.

Internationalisation of HEIs will produce globally skilled labour; research and knowledge that assist the development of competitive regional economic policy; innovations and technologies that support regional integration. These are all contributing to support the road map of ASEAN Community, especially the Economic pillar which aims to establish ASEAN as a single market and production base, allowing the alliance to be highly dynamic and competitive, economically equitable and fully integrated as a region in the global economy.

Recent comment was made by Vice President of Indonesia on how globalisation such as efforts to achieve ASEAN Community in 2015 is unavoidable (Kantor Wakil Presiden, 2013). Rector of Universitas Gadjah Mada also made statement on how Indonesian HEIs need to be more exposed and be more proactive in embracing the globalisation (Wibisono, 2012). Those comments showed that Indonesia views internationalisation process quite openly and positively and it is the nation's expectation for their HEIs to be proactive and be the contributing players in embracing these changes.

Increasingly it is no longer a choice whether to internationalise, but a necessity if Indonesia is to produce graduates with the necessary skills and research that contribute to a democratic, prosperous and sustainable world that benefit the health and wealth of all Indonesians and be an economically equitable nation embracing the ASEAN Community by 2015.

About Author

Pingkan Umboh is a student at Binus University undertaking Doctorate of Research Management study. Her research is in the area of Internationalisation and organisational performance focussing in Higher Education institutions in Indonesia. She can be contacted at kasuang3@yahoo.com

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