

Why increase cross-border student mobility in Asia?: Prospects and challenges

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Presentation structure

1. Why Erasmus for Asia (again)?
2. Research project
3. Major findings
4. Major issues, problems, and obstacles
5. What do these different “mobility orientation” indicate after all?
6. Possibilities and policy options for a new mechanism
7. Next steps

1. Why Erasmus for Asia (again)?

- Behind the scenes

- Existing mechanism: UMAP, AUN, ASEAN+3

- Political leadership in Japan:

- New Fukuda Doctrine

- 300,000 Foreign Student Initiative (by 2020)

- International pressure: 1st ASEM Conference of Ministers Responsible for Education, 2008

- East Asia Summit (ASEAN+6) cancelled after all...

2. Research project

- ❑ Commissioned by MEXT
- ❑ Conducted by a research team: Oct. 2008-Mar. 2009
- ❑ Purpose
 - To investigate the functions, outcomes, issues, and future plans on inter-university exchange at national and multilateral agencies in Asia (Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, PRC & ROK)
 - To identify policy options on mechanism, processes, funding, human resources to accelerate inter-university exchange in the region
- ❑ Methods
 - Literature review, interviews & site visits

3-1 Major findings: ASEAN (Thailand, Malaysia & Singapore)

□ Why these countries?

- Political leaders as founding members of ASEAN as well as top 3 economic power in ASEAN
- All desire to become “education hub”
- Balancing act of outbound & inbound student mobility

3-2 Major findings: Thailand

- Transition from traditional outbound mobility dominance to more balanced mobility
 - Outbound: 24,000 (2008); recently stable
 - Inbound: 3800 (2003) to 14,000 (2008)
 - About 10% of 14,000 is exchange students
 - 50,000 foreign students target by 2011 (education hub in SEA or Mekong Sub-region) (not finalized)
 - Doubling the number of Chinese students
 - No numerical target of exchange students
- Traditional approach to internationalize HEIs in Thailand
 - Increasing English-run programs at local HEIs
 - Incremental approach
 - Only one foreign HEI to grant degrees

3-3 Major findings: Malaysia

- ❑ Government's strong leadership (MOHE): from outbound dominance to inbound focus as an education hub; terms such as "education services" or "education tourism"
- ❑ Inbound HEIs students: 80,000 target by 2010; 57,000 in 2008; Indonesian & Chinese students as target
- ❑ Outbound: 53,000 in 2008; Australia & UK as top destinations
- ❑ Rapid expansion of HEIs (57 degree-granting institutions in 2008), especially private ones, together with 4 foreign HEIs (3 Australia & 1 UK)
- ❑ Focus on Middle East and Africa for inbound students
- ❑ Taking advantage of English prevalence

3-4 Major findings: Singapore

- ❑ Strong government leadership: EDB, STB, MOE
- ❑ Outbound students: about 30,000; inbound 30,000 (rough estimate)
- ❑ Global Schoolhouse initiative for 150,000 students (primary to higher ed.) by 2015; currently 86,000; focus on China & India
- ❑ 3 local HEIs (20% target) & 16 branch campuses of foreign HEIs
- ❑ “Outsourcing education” approach, partly to secure high quality human resources for its economy
- ❑ Weak interest in short-term or exchange program
- ❑ Strong West-bound orientation and weak Asia-bound one
- ❑ Preference of bilateral frameworks to multilateral ones

3-5 Major findings: PR of China

- ❑ Rapid expansion of self-funded Chinese students, inbound & outbound as economy and enrollment rate grows
- ❑ Inbound students: 162,000 (short-term 43,000), Outbound ones: 134,000 (2006)
- ❑ Increase of non-degree seeking foreign students, and limited increase of degree-seeking ones
- ❑ 500,000 foreign students by 2020
- ❑ Government's annual funding of 5,000 outbound graduate students (2007-11)
- ❑ Fast expansion of transnational programs
- ❑ Reservations on the effectiveness of region-wide frameworks (Asian Erasmus)

3-6 Major findings: RO Korea

- ☐ Outbound students 217,000; inbound 64,000
- ☐ Study Korea Project, 2004: 100,000 foreign students by 2012
- ☐ Expansion of English-run classes
- ☐ Initiative of foreign branch campuses set-up
- ☐ Promotion of joint & double degree programs
- ☐ Focus on internal internationalization

3-7 Major findings: Multilateral frameworks & mechanisms

- UMAP, 1991
 - Under Australian government's support, Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee initiated together with representatives from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong
 - Full member: 19 countries & 2 territories in the Pacific Rim
- SEAMEO RIHED, 1993
 - 12th regional center of SEAMEO (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization)
 - SEAMEO created in 1965, earlier than ASEAN's establishment in 1967
 - East Timor is a full member of SEAMEO, but not a member of ASEAN (yet)
- AUN, 1999
 - 21 leading universities in 10 ASEAN member states

3-8 UMAP

☐ Developments

- UCTS (UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme)
- USCO (UMAP Student Connection Online)

☐ Issues

- Changes of members' mobility orientation
- Lack of supporting environment like EU integration
- Voluntary participation and limited expansion
- Weak policy & financial support
- Shortage of “promoters”
- Too diverse?

3-9 RIHED

□ Developments

- Main functions: Capacity development, policy advocacy & research in HE
- Focus: Harmonization and quality assurance of HEIs in the region (“Common Space in HE”)

□ Issues

- Limited human & financial resources for this gigantic task
- Institutionally not part of ASEAN

3-10 AUN

□ Developments

- Tailwind: ASEAN integration by 2015
- Joint curriculum development (e.g., ASEAN Studies)
- ACTS proposal
- Plan of expansion in 2009
- Cooperation with Japan, China, South Korea, EU, etc.
 - JICA supported SEED-Net (degree mobility program in engineering among ASEAN & Japan)

□ Issues

- Harmonization (curriculum, degree, credit & credit transfer, study period, academic calendar, administration, etc.)
- Approval of ACTS
- Different understanding of “mobility”
- Expansion of English-run programs
- Many “limited”: membership, funding, number of student & faculty exchange, etc.

4-1 Major issues, problems, & obstacles

☐ Political aspects

- Legacy of war and colonialism
- Sovereignty, nationalism, and a principle of no external intervention into internal affairs

☐ Economic aspects

- Various “divides”: Economic, ICT, etc.
- Difference in labor market mobility

☐ Cultural aspects

- Language

☐ Educational aspects

- Academic calendar

4-2 Japan as a case

- ❑ Issue of policy consistency between 300,000 Foreign Student Initiative & Asian Erasmus: Can AE contribute to the goal?
- ❑ Tradition of life-time employment & still weak job mobility
- ❑ Limitations to student mobility: Job hunting process & increasing “inwardness”

5 What do these different “mobility orientation” indicate after all?

- ❑ When a country decides to treat foreign students as clients of education services, it usually seeks inbound degree students rather than credit (exchange) students.
- ❑ More interest in profitability and reputation by having degree-seeking students, while cross-cultural experience of exchange students is downplayed.
- ❑ Dominance of country-centered strategy over international or regional mobility “regime.”
- ❑ Lack of effective linkage between country strategies and missions of regional frameworks
- ❑ Differences of loose voluntary participation-based UMAP and rigid qualification-based AUN as multilateral frameworks

6-1 Possibilities and policy options for a new mechanism

- ❑ Relying on “ASEAN Way”: ASEAN as a driver, “+3” as passengers? Where is the engine?
- ❑ Target countries: Experiment by a group of active like-minded countries (promoters)→ Expansion to other countries
- ❑ HEI: Focus on active HEIs, regardless of size, funding, academic/research standing, with financial assistance
- ❑ Designation of regional counselors
- ❑ Numerical target: Difficult to set up from the onset

6-2 Possibilities and policy options for a new mechanism

- ❑ Existing networks/mechanism: Explores which one is suited to have a linkage with the new mechanism
- ❑ Academic disciplines: Start from “cross-borderable” ones (finance, business, natural science, “Asian Studies,” etc.) with incentives for students
- ❑ Language: English as a mutual one
- ❑ Duration: Start by 2-week program due to academic calendar gaps
- ❑ Joint/double degree programs; joint supervision for masters

7. Next steps: Dialog for action

- ☐ Need to think “why mobile student?”
- ☐ Do supra-national regional interests exist?
- ☐ “Feeling inconvenient” as an engine for reform, and share inconvenience: Lesson from Erasmus
- ☐ Can a new mechanism alone bring Asian student back home?
- ☐ Up-stream talk for action necessary beyond agreements?
- ☐ Alternatives to ASEAN Way?