

Improving academics competence and global engagement: Students' participation in SEA-TEACHER and SEA-TVET

Prof. Dr. R. Asep Kadarohman
Rector, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and Its Global Engagement

Since its early establishment in 1954, as one of educational institutions in Indonesia, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (Indonesia University of Education) is a leading Indonesian Higher Education Institution (HEI) which consistently focuses on education. Starting 1998, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia has been transformed into a comprehensive university, enabling it to administer both teacher education as its main core business, and also non-educational programs. The main focus of education program includes foundation of education, pedagogy, subject matter, pedagogical content knowledge, teaching practicum, and research paper, while non education program consists of foundation courses, subject matter course, internship program, and research paper.

With its vision as a leading and outstanding university, the university has determined some missions as follow: (1) providing quality education, (2) conducting research rooted in the local wisdom, (3) developing teacher education, (4) disseminating experiences and innovations for the development of the society. In academic area, these mission are implemented in the form of general learning outcome such as (1) building scientific, educative, and religious attitudes, (2) developing sharing and caring personality in work place and social life supported with **global competitiveness and comparativeness**, (3) becoming adaptive to dynamic changes, (4) developing **good citizens with national, regional and global views**, (5) being able to integrate skills of (a) learning and innovation, (b) mastery of information, media and technology, (c) career and life; and finally (6) becoming long life learners.

The above mentioned learning outcomes are designed so that students have the capacity to face the challenges of internationalization that have currently been existing, namely ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Based on the blue print of AEC 2015, Education sector plays a significant role in building ASEAN Economic Community by strengthening the implementation of its economic initiatives; accelerating regional integration in the priority sectors; **especially in facilitating the movement of business persons, skilled labor and talents**; as well as strengthening the institutional mechanisms of ASEAN. Besides, education sector also

plays a significant role in building ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community by developing and strengthening the coherence of policy frameworks and institutions to advance Human Development, Social Justice and Rights, Social Protection and Welfare, Environmental Sustainability, ASEAN Awareness, as well as narrowing the Development Gap.

Having a deeper look at this ASEAN Economic Community, we can find that it focuses on Single Market and Production Base, which has five 'free flows' as core elements (goods, service sector, investment, capital and skilled labor). Regarding this core elements, ASEAN works toward regional harmonization and standardisation by enhancing cooperation among ASEAN University Network (AUN) members to increase mobility for both students and staff within region and developing core competencies and qualifications for job/occupational and trainers skills required in the priority service sectors.

In response to the challenge of AEC and as one of the institution in ASEAN countries, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia has the responsibility to promote knowledge of resources and social cultural potencies among universities across ASEAN Community. Besides, the university also has the responsibility to contribute and actively participate in developing a synergy of institutional and regional mobility programmes. This response to regional condition is also in line with a more global initiative by UNESCO which declared Global Citizenship Education (GCED). This initiative requires students to be immersed in technology-cultivated, autonomous, and global-oriented yet local wisdom-rooted education. In its application, this program promotes the idea of global or world citizenship by promoting equity education for all students across the world. One focus of GCED is Transversal Competences such as intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, global citizenship, media and information technology skills, creative and innovative skills and others. These competences need actual practice in global interactions to support global engagement. Students at Higher Education Institutions are future global citizens who have privilege to become future leaders. As the world becomes smaller and global, they should have global worldviews and embrace the spirit of global citizenship. Since the shrinking world becomes more diverse, they should embrace values of global life such as tolerance, understanding, partnership and collaboration.

On the other hand, ASEAN also has missions in building awareness of ASEAN, develop ASEAN identity, develop a qualified, competent and well-prepared of ASEAN labours. This ASEAN mission are implemented in the form of SEA Teacher and SEA TVET program. Regarding this, UPI which has intention in develop good citizen with national, regional dan

global vision has been contributes and actively participates in SEA Teacher and SEA TVET program. This policy is taken to support UNESCO global and ASEAN regional initiative of students' involvement in global activities to prepare them as future global citizens and leaders.

SEA TEACHER and SEA TVET Projects

SEA TEACHER is a project that aims to provide opportunity for pre-service student teachers from universities in Southeast Asia to have teaching experiences (practicum) in schools in other countries in Southeast Asia. This project is the implementation of one of SEAMEO 7 priorities areas 2015-2035 especially priority areas number 5 (five) which focuses on Revitalizing Teacher Education. The Objectives of SEA TEACHER Projects are to enable pre-service student teachers, develop their teaching skills and pedagogy, encourage the pre-service student teachers, practice their English skills, to allow the pre-service student teachers, gain a broader regional and world view, expose future teachers to diverse teaching and learning situations and opportunities, and the value of flexibility.

Meanwhile, SEA TVET is a project that aims to promote TVET student and staff exchange, which shall include cross-country industrial attachment and internship programs. This project is related to SEAMEO Priority Area number 4 (four), that is, Promoting Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The objectives of SEA TVET Program are to create networking among TVET providers; provide opportunities for participating institutions to work together in student and staff exchange and industrial attachment; and share best resources/practices and to generate new/innovative ideas through research collaboration. Meanwhile, the goals of this projects are to leverage the standard and competency of TVET in Southeast Asia through internationalization and harmonization; promote and develop the curriculum harmonization, and internationalization of study programs through lecturer/student exchange, joint research programs and industrial linkages; and create a sustainable networking platform among TVET leaders and institutions in Southeast Asia and industry, as well as other related development agencies. SEA TVET program can be implemented into six main activities such as are students exchange, staff exchange, industrial attachment for students, industrial attachment for staff, sharing expertise and resources, research collaboration. Furthermore, industry areas which become major interests in SEA TVET program are: (1) Hospitality and Tourism (first priority area) (2) Electronics, Mechatronics, and

Manufacturing; (3) Agriculture and Fishery; and (4) Construction, (5) Other areas (as long as partners are available).

Basically, SEA TEACHER and SEA TVET Projects consist of three main activities, which include orientation, implementation, and reporting. During the orientation session, the participants are introduced to the campus life, school culture, and industry as well as the culture of the place they visit. Meanwhile, during the implementation session, the participants usually conduct teaching observation, develop lesson plan, teaching practice, and industrial linkage. The last stage is reporting. During this stage, the participants are required to make a daily report, presentation and final report in the form of blog.

The SEA TEACHER Project gives some benefits for students and also for teacher as a mentor. Some benefits of SEA TEACHER Project for students include (1) learning different teaching skill and pedagogy, including lesson plans; (2) learning different school situation; (3) improving their English language proficiency; (4) making friends of diverse cultural backgrounds; and (5) learning local cultures. Meanwhile some benefits for mentors are (1) becoming more familiar with different teaching skills and pedagogies of other students, leading to curriculum adjustment to internationalization; (2) becoming more familiar with real linkage between industry and university, leading to curriculum harmonization; (3) increasing their English language skills; (4) becoming more confident in interacting with international students.

Similar to SEA TEACHER, SEA TVET project also provides some benefits not only for students, but also for the lecturers at university, as well as for mentors at industries. The students will **learn** not only the **technical-know-how**, but also the **experience living and “working” abroad** that enable them to learn new language/s, cultures, and other regional experiences. Meanwhile, teachers who participate in staff exchange will be benefited from the institution abroad in the area covered during the exchange, besides also having the experience living and “working” abroad, and regional networking with other teachers in the region. While teachers who work in the host institution will serve as mentors and will experience in serving international students. The institution such as secondary TVET schools, vocational and technical colleges, and polytechnics participating in SEA-TVET consortium will gain benefits through networking, learning from good practices of other institutions in the region, and having the opportunity to partner with various institutions for students’ and staff’s exchange overseas. Besides, the SEA TVET program might enhance the performance of the industry by

having a students and staff members who are more knowledgeable about the industrial requirements, thus, enabling them to perform jobs in multi-cultural working environment.

Some Challenges and Proposed Solution

However, the implementation of the SEA TEACHER and SEA TVET Projects sometimes bring some challenges. This obstacle need some solutions for a better implementation in the future. The first challenge is program duration. So far, to avoid visa requirement among ASEAN countries which may burden participating students, the program was only been conducted in the period of one month. During this period, the participants are expected to gain experience of teaching and working overseas. However, this one-month period may work well with SEA TEACHER but not with SEA TVET. Some industries in SEA TVET Project suggest that it needs extension for two or three months so that the participants will gain more benefits from the project they are engaged with. However, the prolonged duration has consequences in visa issue as most ASEAN countries apply visa fee for internship program. In the future, SEAMEO is suggested to make an agreement with ASEAN Foreign Ministers regarding this visa arrangement in order to promote the mobilization of students and staff members in ASEAN region. The increase of duration provide a possibility for credit transfer between ASEAN universities which eventually has impact on promoting the number of international students at universities in the region.

The second challenges is limited English proficiency. Some participants have very limited English proficiency so that they cannot perform basic communication during the program. Regarding this matter, the sending institution need to have more emphasis on language competency in their selection process. Besides, the sending institutions also have to provide support for language preparation for the participants. English proficiency is a significant media for the participant to gain knowledge and experience through an effective communication with the school, industry, and community.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the above-mentioned explanation, it is concluded that both SEA-TEACHERS and SEA-TVET are beneficial to improve students' content knowledge and pedagogical skills, competence and qualification, curriculum harmonization and industrial linkage, English language skills, and global engagement. Therefore, the more ASEAN countries and institutions

get involved in this project, the wider area will gain its benefit. Furthermore, it is expected that more higher educational institutions outside ASEAN region will be involved, including from Japan, Korea and China (ASEAN Economic Community plus 3) and other countries to participate this program so that participating students may have wider job opportunities. Last but not least, to sustain the framework of SEA-TEACHERS and SEA-TVET, an independent U to U partnership, beyond SEAMEO initiative, is highly encouraged so that more students can have more opportunities of exchange and mobility.