Regional Cooperation and Cross-Border Collaboration in Higher Education in Asia
Ensuring that Everyone Wins
REGIONAL COOPERATION AND CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASIA

Ensuring that Everyone Wins

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Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Provide a clearinghouse of information on models of regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration, and on regional experience with these models

Recommendation 2: Develop and provide information and planning tools for use by university personnel in identifying appropriate collaboration partners

Recommendation 3: Develop and provide information and planning tools for use by government personnel responsible for national oversight of regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration among higher education institutions

Appendix: Main Benefits and Risks of Cross-Border Collaboration

References

Higher Education in Dynamic Asia: Study Reports
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
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<td>AUN</td>
<td>ASEAN University Network</td>
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<td>HEI</td>
<td>higher education institution</td>
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<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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<td>QA</td>
<td>quality assurance</td>
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<td>RIHED</td>
<td>Regional Center for Higher Education and Development</td>
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<td>SEAMEO</td>
<td>South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization</td>
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<td>SEAOHUN</td>
<td>Southeast Asia One Health University Network</td>
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<td>UP</td>
<td>University of the Philippines</td>
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Quality education is essential for creating a sustainable human resource base upon which to build a country’s development. Asia is experiencing a growing need for skilled managers and professionals in a variety of fields. Investing in higher education will help developing Asian countries build high-income economies with the innovation, knowledge, and technology needed to thrive in an interconnected, competitive world.

ADB has accumulated significant experience in providing support for improving education systems in its developing member countries. In response to the growing needs of these countries, ADB is boosting its support for higher education. The changing landscape of higher education requires new thinking and updated practices. Questions central to the issue include: What are the strategic and operational priorities for higher education in the region? How should support be targeted to achieve a high, sustainable impact? How can ADB best assist its developing member countries to substantially raise the quality of and expand access to higher education within a reasonable, yet ambitious, time frame?

To provide insights into the kinds of changes demanded in higher education, ADB financed a major regional study drawing on the views of subject experts, higher education leaders, regional stakeholders, and participants of an international conference on higher education in Asia.

*Higher Education in Dynamic Asia* is the result of this study. I am confident that it will provide valuable input into the process of higher education reform across Asia. It will also provide critical input into ADB’s work in assisting the region to develop the full potential of its people.

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Increasingly in recent years, governments and stakeholders in Asia have demonstrated a resurgence of interest in investing in higher education as a means of promoting competitiveness and economic growth. This has spurred higher education leaders to seek ways to effectively utilize the available resources to raise quality and efficiency in higher education. One widely advocated strategy for accomplishing these ends is greater regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration among higher education institutions. Such collaborations have taken many forms, including student and faculty exchanges, dual and joint degree programs, twinning between pairs of universities, and the formation of university networks.

After a decade of rapid growth that saw western universities opening branch campuses abroad, this activity is increasingly concentrating in the Asia region. Also, leading universities of advanced Asian countries are increasingly pursuing branch campuses in developing countries in the region. Countries in the region pursue regional cooperation initiatives for quality assurance and the harmonization of education and skills qualifications to support labor mobility and regional economic integration. Regional cooperation can play an important role also in helping to share country-level lessons and good practice experiences in, for example, institutional partnership models and diversification of higher education systems.

While regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration are increasingly popular among higher education experts, the level of enthusiasm and the nature of the concerns of higher education administrators and institutional leaders, on whom the operation of these collaborative programs actually falls, are less well understood. This publication, Regional Cooperation and Cross-Border Collaboration in Higher Education in Asia: Ensuring that Everyone Wins, investigates the extent that governments and higher education leaders from across Asia believe that regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration can provide an effective strategy for strengthening higher education in the region, and examines the issues they believe need to be addressed if such collaborations are to be successful. It also examines the wider international experience with university collaboration, which may offer lessons for the development of these arrangements in Asia. The publication provides operational recommendations for supporting governments of developing countries and universities in the region in pursuing regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration in higher education development.
The publication draws on study material prepared by David W. Chapman. Stephen J. Banta provided editorial advice, Dorothy Geronimo coordinated the publishing process, and Hazel Medrano provided administrative support. Many thanks to all for their contributions.

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Introduction

In the last 5 years, there has been renewed international interest in increasing access to higher education and strengthening its quality as a means to support national economic development. In 2010, for example, the United States Agency for International Development identified the strengthening of higher and tertiary education as one of three priority areas for funding (USAID 2011b). Responding to demand from its developing member countries, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in its education sector operations, has increased support for the development of higher education (ADB 2010). The common element is the belief that higher education plays an increasingly important role in shaping the capacity of the work force and in fostering research and innovative thinking in ways that will largely define the economic competitiveness of nations.

The international interest in and resources being channeled to higher education have led to considerable desire among higher education leaders to find ways to effectively utilize those resources for raising instructional quality and operational efficiency. One widely advocated strategy for accomplishing these ends is greater cross-border collaboration among higher education institutions (Chapman et al. 2010a, Sakamoto and Chapman 2010, Kot 2011). Such collaboration has taken many forms, including student and faculty exchanges, dual and joint degree programs, twinning between pairs of universities, and the formation of university networks.

Regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration1 in higher education constitute big business, which is getting bigger (Sakamoto and Chapman 2010). Increasing numbers of countries, particularly across Asia, are initiating and participating in regional and cross-border collaborations as a strategy for strengthening their higher education systems. In the past, these collaborations were most frequently structured as partnerships between Asian universities and universities in the United States (US), Europe, and Australia. That pattern is changing; intraregional collaboration among universities within Asia has grown dramatically over the last 10 years. One reason for this growth is that higher education leaders may believe that partnering with regional universities will engender a more nuanced understanding of their program needs (Postiglione and Tan 2007).

Colleges and universities in one country generally enter into partnerships with those in other countries to increase revenue, enhance instructional quality, expand curricular offerings, raise institutional prestige, obtain skill sets not available on their own campuses, or some combination of these. The opportunities for collaboration are made increasingly easier by the

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1 “Regional cooperation” can have a broader meaning than “cross-border collaboration,” but throughout most of this publication the terms are essentially synonyms.
growing economic and social integration among countries and by the widespread availability
of inexpensive, high-speed communications—forces that are prominent components of
globalization (Sakamoto and Chapman 2010). At the same time, the variety of ways in which
partnering arrangements are structured has diversified.

Often collaboration works to the advantage of each partner, but not always. As both the
popularity of these collaborations and the range of purposes, activities, and mechanisms being
pursued through partnerships have expanded, so too have the complexities. New models of
collaboration, the expanding scale of use, changes in government regulations, and shifting
economic circumstances converge to raise new issues for higher education leaders seeking to
reap the benefits of cross-border partnerships (Sakamoto and Chapman 2010).
Collaborative efforts and partnerships among universities are concentrated around three main forms of collaboration (Sakamoto and Chapman 2010):

- **International collaboration in the delivery of instruction**, including such mechanisms as student exchange, branch campuses, and joint degree programs, are seen as a way (among other things) to internationalize curricula and increase tuition revenues.
- **Cross-border partnerships** in non-instructional activities include collaboration in research, faculty development, and accreditation.
- **Cross-national harmonization** of curricula and operating regulations is offered as a means to increase student mobility and facilitate the cross-national assessment of instructional quality.

Each of these forms of collaboration offers benefits, but also poses challenges and risks.

Collaboration in the delivery of instruction is probably the most common form of cross-border partnership. Research into these types of programs suggests that the dominant motive of those *exporting* instructional programs is revenue generation, while the main motive of those *importing* these programs tends to be to increase access and build educational capacity (Kot 2011). Knight (2005) identifies six main forms that this type of collaboration has taken: branch campuses, independent institutions, acquisition/mergers, study center/teaching sites, affiliation/networks, and virtual universities. She observes that, with the exception of networks and virtual universities, these programs have been developed largely through the physical presence of an institutional program in an overseas location. Programs abroad are similar to those offered at the home institution. Financing is clear-cut, with tuition paid for credits earned. Examples of instruction-oriented cross-border collaborations include the University of Nottingham campus in Ningbo, People’s Republic of China (PRC); the German Institute of Science and Technology in Singapore; and the program of Khon Kaen University in northeast Thailand with the National University of Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

Collaboration around non-instructional activities has focused on such things as faculty development, technology sharing, joint science and technology initiatives, quality assurance (QA), and delivery of non-academic services. These non-instructional collaborations are generally less well understood than instructional collaborations, particularly as they often involve more complex financial arrangements than do instructional partnerships.

One of the main non-instructional areas in which there is substantial cross-border collaboration is research, fueled in part by the changing pattern of research funding across countries (Vincent-Lancrin 2010). Rapidly emerging economies across Asia are increasingly the producers of...
scientific research, and a number of their governments are investing heavily in building research capacity (Chapman et al. 2010b). In the PRC, for example, gross expenditure on research and development increased by about 19% annually between 2001 and 2006 (OECD 2008, UNESCO 2009). One implication of the growth in funding for research across some parts of Asia is that a substantial new cadre of researchers is entering the scene in countries that have less well-established research traditions, procedures, and systems. This is likely to promote cross-border collaboration, as newer researchers seek collaboration as a way to further develop their own skills.

Cross-national harmonization is undertaken to introduce more comparability and compatibility in admissions criteria, academic degree standards, graduation standards, and QA standards across participating countries (Adelman 2008a, 2008b). One goal is to increase the cross-institutional and cross-national mobility of students and instructional staff. The best known of the harmonization efforts around the world is the Bologna process, which involves most of the countries in Europe (http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/ bologna/about/, retrieved on 16 May 2012). The key components of this process involve, among other things, organizing higher education in a comparable three-stage structure (bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate) across countries, establishing national qualifications frameworks that are compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area, defining learning outcomes for each of the three stages, and establishing common QA standards and procedures.

While Europe has led this movement, harmonization activities are under way in most regions of the world. Across Asia, multiple organizations have promoted cross-border harmonization efforts, including the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) University Network (AUN), the Asia-Pacific Quality Network, and the South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization’s (SEAMEO) Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (RIHED). The themes that cut across these efforts generally include promoting collaboration around issues of teaching, research, student and staff mobility, and QA (Sakamoto and Chapman 2010).
W hile there is considerable enthusiasm for cross-border collaboration as a strategy through which colleges and universities can raise instructional quality, extend their curriculum, modernize their teaching methods, and expand their research endeavors, the history of cross-border collaboration is mixed (Sakamoto and Chapman 2010). Not all collaborations yield the payoffs that advocates anticipate. The less-than-successful experiences of George Mason University (Lewin 2009) and Michigan State University (Abramson 2010, Heywood 2010) in the United Arab Emirates and that of the University of New South Wales in Singapore (Altbach 2011) suggest caution: There is a risk that such collaboration will get oversold. While the promise of cross-border collaboration has been widely discussed, the concerns of education leaders about the actual costs and payoffs of entering into these partnerships are less well understood.

To that end, this study\(^2\) was undertaken to identify and assess the views of senior education leaders, selected from South and Southeast Asia, regarding (a) the benefits and risks of regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration, based on the participants’ own professional experience and research; and (b) the challenges these leaders have faced in entering into and sustaining such efforts. Such information can play an important role in shaping the strategies that both development partners and university leaders use in assessing the value of such collaboration. The central questions of interest were: To what extent do regional cooperation and cross-border collaborations under way across the region actually foster the development of the colleges and universities that enter into these relationships? To what extent do the benefits of each of the three strategies of collaboration outweigh the costs?

Results of the study are summarized in the Appendix and discussed below.

**Greatest Benefits Can Be Greatest Risks**

Cross-border collaboration was viewed as contributing to financial stability, quality improvement, mutual understanding, expanded access, student mobility, and circulation of human capital. At the same time, respondents/participants saw risks posed by the possible low quality of programs, brain drain, and foreign competition with local institutions. Ironically, then, some of

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\(^2\) For this study, 15 senior leaders of higher education institutions (HEIs) and regional networks, and senior researchers in cross-border collaboration, from South and Southeast Asia completed a 10-item survey regarding their experience with cross-border collaborations among HEIs. Respondents were then convened for a 2-day modified focus group discussion designed to elaborate on and clarify their views regarding the benefits and risks associated with cross-border collaboration. The terms “respondents” and “participants” thus refer to the same group.
the benefits are also some of the risks. Is the movement of students to be viewed as brain drain or circulation of human capital? Will foreign competition help improve or hurt local institutions? Study participants saw both as likely outcomes. While there was widespread belief that cross-border collaboration could yield important payoffs, they recognized the uncertainty.

Do Regional and Cross-Border Partnerships Actually Help Universities?

While respondents were ambivalent, the weight of their sentiment was that these collaborations are mostly beneficial, though some benefits are intangible. Nonetheless, quality control and unwelcome foreign competition can be problems. There was concern about the risk of exploitative practices, such as the delivery of low-quality instruction, primarily by foreign institutions whose only interest is in maximizing profit. The concern was not so much that top-tier universities would be exploited. For the most part, those universities are sophisticated and can take care of themselves. But as international collaboration expands to lower tier (e.g., regional and private) universities, there may be less capacity to understand and assess potential partners.

Are Some Models of Collaboration More Promising Than Others?

Most regional cooperation and cross-border collaborations have been (and continue to be) around instructional programs. A wide variety of partnership models are used, including dual degrees (students split their studies between two universities and receive a degree from each), joint degrees (illustrated by the program between the University of St. Andrews in Scotland and the College of William and Mary in the US, in which students complete 2 years at each institution and earn a single diploma carrying the insignias of both institutions), twinning (typically two universities partner with each other in conducting a program or activity), branch campuses (such as the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology of Malaysia campus in Cambodia), and student exchange. Each model had advocates among the study participants, and there was little or no consensus as to any model being particularly effective. The general view was that the promise offered by any particular model will depend on the attractiveness of the program, the readiness of the institutions involved, and government policies. Participants felt the risks could be managed through proper QA mechanisms if they are well designed, transparent, and consistently implemented. However, reflecting on the adequacy of current QA frameworks, participants were pessimistic. Most felt that current QA frameworks are not very effective.

The Downside of Collaboration

Participants also called for caution. There is a need for wider debate at the national level on the potentially harmful implications of cross-border collaboration. There was widespread concern expressed among participants about the risks of exploitative and/or low-quality foreign providers entering the region. Participants observed that it is difficult to ensure the quality of on-line education, and that the existence of “diploma mills” is real.
The problems countries experience with foreign providers stem from several sources. In some cases, they can be attributed to policy inertia and the absence of QA systems. Another reason can be the rather disparate socioeconomic levels of various countries, e.g., Singapore and Myanmar. Differing sociopolitical environments translate into different national economic and educational needs, which means that very often collaborative efforts tend to be rather one-sided in nature, as the country with a superior standard of living naturally adopts a “we-know-it-better” attitude.

In the study, regional education leaders expressed concern about how to ascertain the seriousness and integrity of would-be partner institutions if those institutions are not already known to them. For example, in one Southeast Asian country, non-accredited higher education institutions (HEIs) from abroad established collaborations with newly established private HEIs that ultimately yielded little or no mutual academic benefit. The international partner universities turned out to be little more than diploma mills. But the problem worked both ways: It appeared that some local educators collaborated in facilitating the entrance into the local higher education market of foreign HEIs that they knew to be of low quality in return for personal gain.

A further issue is the challenge caused by linguistic diversity. For example, Singapore, which operates almost entirely in English in its education system, has a definite edge when it comes to attracting students or educators to its shores for courses or even visits. Linguistic diversity is connected as well with the current lack of transferability of qualifications or comparability of educational institutions across the region. Finally, some faculty and researchers who have gone abroad do not return, or return to employment outside the university. Some see this as a downside of collaboration.

Is Collaboration Worth the Cost?

While much attention has focused on finding effective models for partnership, there is also the question of whether cross-border collaborations under way across the region actually foster the development of the colleges and universities that enter into these relationships. Some question the extent to which the benefits of these collaborations outweigh the costs.

Some of the benefits from academic collaborations are not always tangible. The study participants found it difficult to calculate the financial costs of collaboration. Benefits can be in forms impossible to translate into monetary terms (e.g., newly developed personal relationships and friendships, increased local prestige). Still, if parties are satisfied and results fit institutional goals, costs can be justified and considered as worthwhile. Only in cases wherein collaboration is imposed from outside and there are conflicting vested interests would losses exceed benefits. Therefore, transparency and openness (without any hidden agenda) will promote meaningful collaboration with mutually beneficial outcomes.

Nonmonetary Benefits

Some participants in the study saw cross-border collaboration as a mechanism through which good teaching, learning, and QA practices from the international partners can be introduced to
institutions in the receiving country. Collaborations can help induce universities and colleges to share and learn from best practices and global thinking. Partnerships can help less experienced institutions avoid “reinventing the wheel” around issues of administration and academic matters. Advocates argue that cross-border collaboration can promote improved education quality and the increased relevance and capacity of higher education through such ways as developing systems of distance learning, establishing more efficient and effective administrative and QA systems, and improving the availability of professional staff and facilities. Learning from institutions in which there is a strong work ethic and tight time management can be valuable in supporting institutional development.

Some offered a counterview, arguing that that good universities in the region look for partners who are equal, if not better. Seldom do universities high in the global ranking offer their expertise to universities low in the global ranking. There is a tendency for collaborations to be initiated by several well-known universities, with peripheralization of the lesser known universities.

Overall, the prevalent view among the participants in the study was that benefits outweigh costs. While there have been some serious quality problems, participants suggested that the benefits from cross-border collaborations are most likely to outweigh the costs when (a) higher education institutions are wise and strategic in their choice of partners and the activities that they want to undertake, (b) cross-border provision complements or supplements and does not crowd out domestic provision, and (c) appropriate safeguards and measures are effected to address/minimize the risks.

**Motives**

Some participants expressed the view that many cross-border collaborative programs tend to be profit oriented and overpriced. Tapping the most lucrative segment of the education market is their primary purpose. Closely related to this view is the concern that the main agenda of universities in the region is to build their reputation and prestige. Establishing joint programs with other prestigious universities is seen as a way to increase their own standing.

From the perspective of regional higher education leaders, the most effective approach is when foreign providers operate courses in cooperation with local institutions with a requirement to share practices in teaching and learning with the local institutions. This approach constitutes a learning experience for the local institution. The quality should be comparable to that being offered by the mother institution, and the international institution has to comply with the minimum requirements that apply to local institutions.

**Quality Assurance in Cross-Border Collaboration**

The QA frameworks of most countries in the region are not yet geared to addressing the challenges of cross-border education. Across the region, there is still a lack of comprehensive frameworks for coordinating various initiatives at the international level. When they do exist, the countries are often not properly equipped to cope with cross-border provision. In some cases, regional QA frameworks have been undertaking complementary jobs to those of ministries
of education. Nonetheless, Australia; Hong Kong, China; Malaysia; and New Zealand have succeeded in setting up QA frameworks for cross-border education. Similarly, the establishment of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network in 2008 was a significant move towards promoting regional QA sharing and collaboration.

The study participants observed that current QA frameworks are weak at the national level; they believe that many domestic QA mechanisms are ineffective and that this has, in some cases, translated into lower expectations for quality. They observed that the response to QA issues involving cross-border collaboration has been, for the most part, reactive. To some extent, the weak QA efforts are attributed to the speed at which private, for-profit HEIs have proliferated: QA organizations have not been able to keep up with the workload.

However, another reason is that the national regulatory frameworks and legislation have not been fine-tuned to assess the quality of cross-border education. The diversity and unevenness of the QA and accreditation systems leave some cross-border higher education provision outside any framework of QA and accreditation. Consequently, most participants in the study felt that more should be done to assure a minimum quality standard across higher education partnerships within the region. While the need is clear, some participants observed that the task will be challenging. As one participant observed, development partners supporting education development will face an uphill task in succeeding where regional governmental organizations such as SEAMEO have not.

Some of the Western countries heavily involved in cross-border collaborations, such as Australia, United Kingdom (UK), and US, have national QA and accreditation procedures and regulations that extend to cover the cross-border operations of their respective HEIs. However, these national systems do not cover many nontraditional and private, for-profit cross-border providers (including virtual and stateless providers), which are not normally part of nationally based HEIs. An important step toward assuring the quality of cross-border education would be the further development of national regulatory frameworks. For this effort, policy collaboration among the governments and universities should be encouraged. The general feeling of the study respondents was that QA efforts are only in their infancy. More needs to be done.

**Research Collaboration**

The study participants felt that regional cooperation and cross-border collaborations related to scientific research were largely restricted to a relatively narrow group of top-tier universities in the region. The feeling was that partnerships around research could be helpful, but are not always so. Still, while most university partnerships focus on instruction, there is a growing market for research collaboration.

With the interest of governments and higher education leaders in raising the international profile of their universities, collaboration in research is likely to emerge as an increasingly important area for international partnerships. Advances in information and communications technology pave the way for increased academic and research productivity. The exchange of scientists and scholars seemed, to some study participants, to be the most appropriate way to actually implement increased academic and research partnerships, particularly in science
and technology. Others mentioned cosupervising graduate research and the creation of joint degree programs, especially at the doctoral level. Advocates of this suggest that collaborations that allow for short stays at the partnering research universities facilitate the continuation of the work when research partners are apart. The end result is not only the graduation of the doctoral candidates, but also the effective linkage of these research incubators with departments or laboratories at developed universities in which the professors of both universities work.

There was some optimism among the study respondents: If regional cooperation and cross-border collaborations can facilitate the operations of regional centers of research excellence, they effectively enhance regional capacity and productivity. Experience from the Southeast Asia Engineering Education Development Network, which is a subnetwork of AUN/SeedNet, offers a useful model wherein university faculty are given free mobility in teaching and research among schools. At the same time, some concerns expressed were particularly that research collaboration tends to focus on the “high-flying” universities; it tends to center on building the research capability of premier national universities. Presumably these top research universities are then role models for other universities in the region. The common model or emerging prototype is a cluster of academic institutions and industries that effectively transfer whatever knowledge is produced.

Overall, in the experience of these respondents, cross-border collaboration in research and publication has improved the research productivity of those HEIs that have been participating actively in joint and multicountry research. Increased productivity, in this case, is indicated by an increase in the number of internationally indexed publications (some coauthored with foreign partners) produced during the last 10 years by researchers based in HEIs with international linkages.

International research partnerships need to collaborate around research issues of importance to all the partners. To that end, the study respondents suggested that scientific research in lower income countries should initially focus on applied research. When the country has achieved greater socioeconomic development, more basic research can be undertaken, and more of a balance between applied research and basic research can then be developed. There is a need to emphasize socially relevant research and national evaluation systems.

An example that illustrates such local relevance is the University of Southeastern Philippines partnership with Maligaya Meat Asia Corporation on a 3-year project to test and promote organic hog raising in the Philippines using an organic supplement developed in the Philippines. Similarly, the University of the Philippines (UP) partnership with the University of Utah was successful in extracting Philippine marine natural products for which UP does not have adequate laboratory facilities. With the University of Utah’s research laboratories and UP’s novel compounds, scientists from both universities made a breakthrough discovery of a family of biomolecules called conotoxins from cone shells collected in the Philippines. These biomolecules are widely used today in neuroscience research in the study of ion channels and neuromuscular synapses.
The Role of Collaboration in School-to-College and College-to-Work Transitions

Partnerships are often vested with multiple purposes. One area of interest is the extent that cross-border collaborations in higher education can improve students’ transition from secondary to higher education, from undergraduate to graduate level education, and from higher education to the labor market.

Generally, study participants were optimistic that cross-border collaborations can help simplify the mobility of students among institutions by creating clarity and speed in the exchange of information regarding credit verification, conditions for transfer, and equivalency of academic credentials. Others saw the greatest value in the college-to-work transition. They argued that university-industry linkages focused on on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and the design of curricula responsive to industry needs could be promoted through university transition programs. Cross-border collaborative programs may better prepare graduates for entry into increasingly regional and global labor markets. For example, collaboration may help improve the English proficiency of those who decide to enter these programs. However, the situation differs by country. Many countries in Asia already face an acute challenge in the school- and university-to-labor market transitions of their graduates. Some countries have managed the transition successfully, while others might learn to handle these transitions better, in part from the experience of other universities, shared through cross-border collaboration.

Some respondents, however, were more pessimistic and did not hold much expectation that cross-border programs could help students’ transition from secondary to higher education, teacher preparation, or the labor market. They observed that student transitions are affected by economic and other factors far beyond the control of HEIs.

Impacts on Equity

Respondents believed that regional cooperation and cross-border collaborations in higher education probably have limited impacts on improving equitable access to higher education for underserved and vulnerable populations. Programs delivered through a cross-border collaborative mode are usually more expensive than conventional programs delivered by local HEIs. Therefore, cross-border collaboration programs tend to absorb the best and most financially viable students, leaving others behind.

The emphasis on high quality may work against the consideration of equitable access and inclusiveness. That is, to the extent that the inflow of foreign higher education into a country, in whatever form, is supposed to be of high quality and prestige, underserved and vulnerable populations may be left out. The high fee structure limits the access to cross-border higher education programs to upper-middle income families. If cross-border higher education activities are developed only with market-oriented mechanisms, they will not serve the interests of underserved populations. In most cases, the underserved and vulnerable populations can have access to the cross-border collaboration in higher education only when funds or scholarships are available for such targeted groups. If equitable access is a goal, then governments and
HEIs should strategically promote the participation of underserved but talented populations for cross-border higher education opportunities by reforming the admission process and creating scholarships.

Nonetheless, study participants varied on this point. Some, albeit a minority, argued that cross-border higher education can improve general access and can reduce inequality for the traditionally underserved and moreover vulnerable population. These advocates argued that better quality education would help students from disadvantaged backgrounds to be upwardly mobile. Governments in developing countries have limited human and financial resources, and cross-border education offers these countries possibilities to widen access by providing qualified teachers, learning resources, and facilities to cope with the expansion. By creating new capacities, cross-border collaboration can increase access significantly. However, considering that the private sector, operating with a profit motive, has been more proactive in such collaboration, there was a fear among the study participants that the collaboration may result in adverse impacts on equity for underserved and vulnerable populations unless the collaborations are carefully structured to avoid this outcome.

A Role for International Organizations

Study respondents offered six suggestions for what international development organizations such as ADB might do to support and encourage positive, productive, and successful forms of cross-border higher education partnerships across the Asian region. They suggested, first, that since international organizations usually work most directly with governments, they can help governments create legal and regulatory frameworks that support such collaborations. For example, international organizations can assist countries in developing qualification frameworks, credit descriptors, QA instruments, and minimum quality standards in ways that will promote the flow of students and academic programs across borders. Respondents believed that supporting governments in creating favorable legal environments for mutually beneficial collaborations could be a priority activity.

Second, international development organizations can assist countries in regulating the cross-border supply of education that uses electronic transmission; this could be achieved through the framing of appropriate legislation related to the recognition of degrees awarded through e-learning. Third, international organizations can sponsor meetings and symposia that provide a mechanism through which countries can learn from each others’ experience. Fourth, these organizations might operate as matchmakers among interested universities, and sponsor collaborative research studies. Fifth, they might actively encourage collaboration as part of lending agreements. Sixth, these development organizations might provide technical support and financing to strengthen coordination and collaboration among regional and subregional networks that are specializing in higher education development.
While Asia arguably leads the world in university partnership activity (Kuroda 2010), experience gained in other regions also offers useful insights into the operation of collaboration. Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East are aggressively experimenting with university partnership models. New evidence emerging from this wider international experience can be relevant to Asia. Of particular relevance is the rise of university networks as a mechanism for strengthening participating institutions. In this chapter, some examples of higher education networks in Asia are discussed, and lessons from global experience are highlighted.

University Networks

*Twinning* typically involves two partner institutions entering into a relationship aimed at accomplishing a particular activity (e.g., redesign of the nursing curriculum, conduct of a research study), and the twinning relationship tends to end when the particular task is accomplished. *Networks*, on the other hand, involve a larger number of “member” institutions that come together to promote a particular issue on which universities find benefit in collaborating. They tend to be focused on a broader set of activities than do twinning arrangements, and typically, in creating a network, the intention is to establish a longer term, more sustainable set of relationships. For example, the Southeast Asia One Health University Network (SEAOHUN) was recently formed by 13 universities from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Viet Nam to promote a particular approach to training animal and human health workers. The network is loosely associated with two universities in the US (USAID 2011a).

A brief description of SEAOHUN will help illustrate the concept: Many contagious diseases start in wildlife, jump to livestock, and then jump to humans. Early identification of these diseases, when they first emerge in wildlife, would allow earlier intervention, hopefully before the diseases reach humans. To this end, the “one health” perspective advocates improved communication between animal health and human health workers for the purpose of promoting this early identification of new diseases. SEAOHUN is engaging instructional staff from the participating universities in redesigning, aligning, and integrating their curricula in ways that promote greater communication among those teaching in fields related to human health and animal health and among students preparing to work in those fields. Deans from the member universities established a governing board for the network, which promotes and manages network activities across and among the member universities.

SEAMEO’s RIHED is another example of a university network, in this case aimed at improving communication and cooperation among universities, particularly around issues in administration and governance (SEAMEO RIHED 2011). Similarly, the AUN provides a framework for collaboration by universities on the issue of QA (AUN 2012).
Networks can sometimes take on activities that would exceed the abilities of individual institutions to do. This is well illustrated in the recent work of Pappaioanou (2012), in which she describes a variety of specific activities that university networks might undertake (see Box).

### Illustrative Activities of a University Partnership and Network

- Encourage and promote the development of practice-based training opportunities for students.
- Promote career options in a discipline or professional area of focus.
- Establish collaborative activities with government, private, and community agencies to strengthen education or research in a discipline or professional area of focus.
- Provide formal and informal forums for members to discuss relevant issues related to professional development.
- Provide mentoring programs aimed at department chairs, associate deans, and deans (i.e., the academic leadership) that provide support and professional development to those new to university leadership positions.
- Collect, analyze, and report on regional and/or national data to provide evidence on the outcomes and impacts of education that can be used in advocating for resources to advance education, research, and service.
- Facilitate special, cooperative initiatives across universities aimed at sharing curricula, course syllabi, and other educational resources and tools.
- Conduct research to advance scientific understanding of a problem and/or to inform policy formulation and decision making.
- Serve as a center of technical expertise to inform policies and to support technical communications around an area of concern (e.g., developing white papers, assessing benefits and costs of policy options).

Source: Adapted from Pappaioanou (2012).

There is already a substantial and growing body of experience regarding the ingredients of successful networks. Whether a cross-border collaboration succeeds or fails depends, in large part, on how its network is designed and implemented. Early decisions matter. Recent work by Chapman and Wilson (2012) offers the following ten “lessons” from recent international experience. As universities across Asia experiment with different forms of collaboration, these lessons may offer relevant insights.

The benefits of a network can sometimes also operate as a liability. One benefit of a network is that it can draw on and mobilize a wider range of talent (than a twinning arrangement). Similarly, it offers a framework that can be used to address a large number of issues. Because networks appear to accommodate many subprojects and have greater potential for sustainability, they can be more attractive to external funding agencies and development partners. At the same time, there is the risk that building and maintaining relationships within a network will get so complicated that it will compete with actually engaging in substantive work.
Know what outcomes a university seeks in joining a network. Some international experience suggests that network participants can spend a disproportionate amount of time negotiating the organization and governance of the network itself, sometimes at the expense of making progress on more substantive activities. The lesson from this is that universities need to be clear about their goals and reasons for joining a network. University administrators and network leaders need to be clear about what constitutes success and how they will know success when they see it. A network should be viewed as a tool, not as an end in itself.

The greatest benefits of networks can be their greatest weakness. While collaboration through a university network can be used to address many issues, choosing the issue of common interest can require hard decisions and consume a lot of time. Not taking that time has consequences, the most serious of which is loss of network focus. A network can be like an octopus, with arms flying in all directions.

Networks need champions, but champions can dominate networks. Network success depends on having an overall network champion and having champions at each member university. However, champions can hijack a network. This happens when a champion channels activities to a narrow set of personal interests or uses a network to enhance the standing of particular individuals.

Networks function best when there is transparency in decision making. A common complaint in multi-university networks is that network members do not know what is going on across the network. They feel left out. Networks function best when there is transparency in decision making. This can pose a challenge for some universities, e.g., in Southeast Asia, where some universities operate as “steep hierarchies,” characterized by strong, top-down administrative structures (ADB 2011). There is a trade-off. If there is too little communication, people feel left out. If there is too much communication, it creates bureaucracy and wastes time.

Network success depends, in part, on understanding the differing institutional procedures of member universities. University networks may span different national legal systems and different university operating procedures. When that is the case, network members must recognize that member universities may operate with different rules and procedures. Partners need to know how decisions are made at each member university. Moreover, in some countries, actually making changes to a university curriculum can take 2-3 years, given the levels of institutional and national review that are required. Internal changes in rules and procedures may be necessary for universities to participate in a network. Such changes can lead to shifts in power relationships on campus. One result is that such changes can be threatening to some university members.

Third-party funding of university networks provides opportunities, but can also create special problems. Third-party funding is when an external agency finances partnership activities. This can contribute needed resources and make new initiatives possible. However, when third-party financiers are involved, their role in determining network activities and schedules needs to be clear. For example, does the network follow the timeline (e.g., fiscal year) of the funder or the timeline of the universities? An additional risk is that too large or too rapid money flow from third-party funders can distort the flow of activities. Some third-party funders penalize a network if it does not spend the money provided fast enough; but spending before an institution
is ready is wasteful. Finally, the availability of third-party funding can drive universities to engage in activities in which they may not really be interested, leading to halfhearted participation. See the next section for an elaboration of third-party funding.

**Money matters, but it should not be allowed to matter too much.** Networks can be stressed by arguments over resources. Participating universities need to be realistic about costs, but clear about purposes. At the same time, institutions may each want to bend the agenda of the network to their own interests. Similarly, opportunities for funding may not be consistent with local needs. For example, funding may be for HIV/AIDS research even though more people are dying from malaria. When a funding organization wants to finance an agenda not well aligned with what local university personnel believe is the greater problem, universities need to be able to decline the funding. In resource-scarce universities, this can be a very difficult decision.

**Multi-partner collaboration is an acquired skill.** There is a tendency of network administrators to base networks on friendship patterns — to stay with relationships they know and work with the same partners. This can lead to stagnation and crony networks. If opportunities flow only to the friends of the network champions, problems follow. A network needs to have procedures for bringing new people and groups into it.

**Networks offer the greatest advantages to the weakest partners.** Weaker institutions and lower prestige disciplines have the most to gain by partnering or networking with stronger institutions and/or higher prestige disciplines. Conversely, strong partners may see partnering with weaker institutions as “helping the competition.” For example, a study of a health-related university network in Thailand revealed a concern among some instructional staff and administrators that collaboration might level the playing field in undesirable ways — that strong universities might lose their comparative advantage by collaborating. Those in strong institutions did not necessarily want to collaborate with competitors (Chapman et al. 2011). While this was subtle and not a universal sentiment, it is a discernable sentiment that those planning networks need to consider. Collaboration is most attractive when it is among equals, and each partner wants to benefit. However, partnerships between unequal institutions can easily become philanthropy, as the stronger institution is expected to give without getting much in return (Chapman and Wilson 2012).

In many respects, the move toward university networks is a natural outgrowth and progression of the growing interest in other forms of cross-border partnership. University networks offer important opportunities to leverage talent and resources more widely, but having multiple partners can also increase operational complexity. As networks become more widely used as a mechanism for collaboration, development organizations such as ADB may consider increasing support to such collaborations that spans multiple borders and institutions.

**The Role of Third-Party Funding**

One area in which wider international experience can be of particular relevance concerns the role of third-party funding of partnership arrangements. Given the importance of third-party funding in supporting many partnerships and the interest of development partners in promoting collaboration as a mechanism for capacity development in universities, it is important to look
at the international experience concerning this issue. Recent research by Wilson (2012) is of particular relevance: If cross-border collaboration offers an effective way of strengthening universities, one might expect universities in low- and middle-income countries to seek out these arrangements and actively initiate international partnerships. One test of this premise is provided in Wilson’s (2012) study of partnerships at Makerere University in Uganda. She was particularly interested in the extent to which partnerships supported by third-party funding developed differently than did those that were initiated by Makerere University itself. In particular, she wanted to understand the extent to which outside funding influenced the nature of the university-to-university relationships that were formed. This issue is of considerable relevance to universities in Asia.

Wilson found that cross-border collaboration was indeed popular. Makerere University had engaged in nearly 100 international partnership relationships over the preceding 10 years. Wilson focused on a subsample of 37 partnerships that faculty members at Makerere identified as the most successful. Counter to expectation, none of those were initiated by Makerere itself. Moreover, these partnerships were not regarded as a mechanism for strengthening the university as much as a mechanism for attracting external funding, mostly on the part of individual faculty members themselves. Faculty were attracted by the financial benefits (e.g., consultancies, stipends) offered by the international partners for their participation and, sometimes, by the prospect of publications that might result from the collaboration (important in faculty career advancement and salary increases). Wilson found that, while senior people were key in establishing the partnerships, they often handed the day-to-day work to junior colleagues. These internal power dynamics often left junior faculty members bearing the weight of partnership responsibilities.

In short, faculty participation in cross-border partnerships can be motivated largely by individual faculty entrepreneurship. Wilson found little evidence that these partnerships actually led to institution-wide strengthening of programs or curricula, in part because the universities were not organized in a way that built the benefits of these partnerships into the longer term fabric of the institution. In the Makerere case, the main problems included an overly bureaucratic procurement process, selection of participants based on criteria other than merit, and interdepartmental rivalries over “ownership” of the partnerships. These are issues of considerable relevance in any location, and the Makerere study highlights issues that need attention in partnership endeavors everywhere. The interest of international organizations in partnerships and networks as mechanisms for strengthening universities needs to be tempered by an understanding of the motives and incentives that operate at the level of the instructional staff, who typically are the ones who do the work associated with implementing these collaborations.

A variation on the implications of third-party funding is offered in an example from the Middle East, described by Al-Barwani et al. (2010). Lacking its own QA system for higher education, the Government of Oman required all private universities to partner with an international university, which would then have responsibility for assuring the quality of the instruction and institutional operation of its Oman partner. The “third party” in promoting these collaborations was actually the Oman government. While the “receiving” institutions in Oman paid for the full costs of the collaboration, they were required by the government to do so, and thus their actions were not at all voluntary. Al-Barwani et al. (2010) describe a situation in which a creative solution to one problem (weak QA) eventually led to a new set of problems that would have been hard to anticipate, described in more detail below.
Over the last 30 years, on a per capita basis, the higher education system in Oman has been one of the fastest growing in the world, a rate of expansion that put considerable pressure on academic quality. While private higher education was legalized only in 1995, by 2010 it had grown to four private universities and 19 private colleges. Recognizing the need to assure quality at these new private colleges and universities, but lacking a national accreditation system, the Oman government sought a cross-border solution. The government mandated that all private higher education institutions enter into an affiliation with an international counterpart institution. The international partner would review the overall curriculum and individual course content, often be involved in the appointment of teaching staff and administrators, and oversee the examination process. The intention of this affiliation system was to assure that student achievement in the Omani institution was comparable to that of students at the international partner institution. In return, the international affiliate was paid by its Omani partner for its services, either as a fixed fee, as a percent of profits, or on a per capita enrollment basis. At times, these fees could be substantial. Some affiliates received more than $200,000 per year for their oversight services.

For the most part, this cross-border collaboration for QA worked well. However, by 2000, the Omani higher education system had grown to a size and complexity such that Oman wanted a more country-centered QA system. In 2001, to bring some greater level of coherence to college and university curricula and operating procedures, the Oman Ministry of Higher Education established the Oman Accreditation Council as an autonomous organization. The Council sought to develop a common metric for assessing institutional quality and establishing course credit transfer procedures for students wanting to switch to a different college. This, however, sparked unanticipated controversy. Two factors were particularly important in fueling this resistance.

First, most international affiliations had developed as franchise agreements, in which the diplomas that graduates earned were awarded by the international affiliate institution. This arrangement turned out to be an important recruiting device for the Omani institutions. Students enrolled in order to gain an international degree, which, in turn, yielded prestige, employability, and mobility often not attached to locally issued degrees. Some Omani colleges and universities saw a move away from this arrangement as threatening their financial well-being.

Second, Omani HEIs had affiliated with a wide range of international partners, often with different curricula, instructional philosophies, and assessment schemes. As Al-Barwani et al. (2010) observe, curricula across the private colleges and universities variously took on some of the features of Australian, British, Canadian, English, German, Indian, Jordanian, Lebanese, Scottish, and US universities. It soon became clear to institutional administrators and faculties that they would likely have to change aspects of their curricula and operating procedures to accommodate a more unified national system, an unpopular idea on most campuses.

Together, these factors contributed to stiff opposition on the part of these colleges and universities to the efforts of the Accreditation Council in establishing an Omani accreditation system. This resistance emerged not only from HEIs involved in weak affiliations wishing to protect their prerogatives, but also from HEIs involved in strong affiliations that (accurately) thought their existing system was working fine.
The larger lessons for Asian universities to be drawn from Oman’s use of cross-border collaboration as a strategy for developing the capacity of its own HEIs are twofold: First, even well-planned and successful partnerships can have negative side effects. Second, as external circumstances and internal university incentive systems change over time, partnership arrangements need to be reviewed and reevaluated on a regular basis.
Regional and cross-border collaboration in higher education is an expanding trend. Opportunities for such collaboration are increasing, and collaborative cultures have improved. An increasing number of countries, particularly across Asia, are initiating and participating in regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration as a strategy for strengthening their higher education systems. However, economic integration efforts in Asia have not fueled regional cooperation in higher education to the extent expected by many. Within the growth that has occurred, intraregional collaboration is still a minor portion of the overall action. Still, higher education leaders generally believe that cross-border collaboration in higher education offers a promising mechanism for revenue generation, student recruitment, and quality enhancement, and sometimes a way to improve research. Among the anticipated benefits are improved intercultural competencies, development of international language abilities, and introduction of new teaching and learning methods. Collaborations across the region have employed a wide variety of partnering arrangements (twinning, franchising, dual degrees, joint degrees, etc.). Each method has advocates, with little consensus to suggest that any one method is most effective.

Regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration in higher education could benefit from more easily available information about program designs, more transparency and openness about how these programs work, and wider regional recognition of academic degrees and programs.

Despite widespread enthusiasm for these programs, education leaders express concern about the threat of low-quality programs entering their country. They worry that the growth of these programs may lead to exploitation of local universities in their countries. Education leaders recognize that the different legal provisions across countries affect the operation and growth of these collaborative efforts. While national and regional organizations have been working to promote QA standards and mechanisms related to cross-border collaboration, these efforts are still at an early stage.

In the past, these collaborations were most frequently structured as partnerships between Asian universities and universities in Australia, Europe, or US. That pattern is changing. Not only has the participation of universities across Southeast and East Asia in regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration grown dramatically over the last 10 years, but an increasing number of collaborations are among universities within the Asia and Pacific region itself. Thus, the dimensions of South-South cooperation are strengthening in higher education in the region. Often these collaborations work to the advantage of each partner, but not always. As both the popularity of collaboration and the range of purposes, activities, and mechanisms being pursued through these partnerships have expanded, so too have the complexities. New models

**Recommendations**
of collaboration, the expanding scale of use, changes in government regulations, and shifting economic circumstances converge to raise new issues for higher education leaders seeking to reap the benefits of regional cooperation and cross-border partnerships.

The following concrete operational recommendations are suggested for development partners, such as ADB, to help countries and HEIs improve their collaborative efforts in higher education.

**Recommendation 1: Provide a clearinghouse of information on models of regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration, and on regional experience with these models**

**Rationale.** A substantial number of cross-border collaborations are already under way among HEIs in the region. Often, however, the experience gained from these activities is not captured in a form that can be easily shared. Higher education leaders have indicated their keen interest in being able to access such information.

**Recommended action.** Assist with sharing lessons and case studies of regional cooperation and cross-border programs in the region.

**Recommended support through project operations.** Projects can support HEIs experienced in collaboration to prepare case studies and share their experience with particular emphasis on distilling lessons that could guide other universities that are planning to pursue regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration partnerships.

The information and case study materials could be used for national level capacity development activities and also as reference material for regional workshops targeted at (a) universities assessing the feasibility and beginning to plan regional and cross-border collaborations for their own campuses, and (b) government officials involved in policy development and national oversight of collaborative arrangements among universities.

**Recommendation 2: Develop and provide information and planning tools for use by university personnel in identifying appropriate collaboration partners**

**Rationale.** Higher education leaders in the region are optimistic about the value of regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration but also have a concern about identifying and linking up with international partner universities of high quality and integrity. They worry that the growth of collaboration programs could lead to exploitation of local universities in their countries. Asian university leaders are often aware of top international universities but may not be as familiar with high-quality but lesser known HEIs.

**Recommended actions.** Assist in sharing information on potential partner universities and help broker collaborative partnerships.

**Recommended support through project operations.** Projects could sponsor the development of planning frameworks and other suitable tools that universities in the region can use to assess (a) the potential and appropriateness of possible international partners, and (b) their own readiness to enter into an international collaboration partnership arrangement. Such an effort can help broaden the range of colleges and universities that leaders of universities in the region consider as appropriate partners, and vice versa.
Recommendation 3: Develop and provide information and planning tools for use by government personnel responsible for national oversight of regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration among higher education institutions

**Rationale.** An important dimension in designing effective regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration partnerships is the legal and regulatory frameworks that support such collaborations. Different legal and regulatory provisions across countries affect the operation and growth of international collaborative efforts. To this end, government officials need information on the legal and regulatory frameworks that have proven effective in supporting collaborative partnerships.

**Recommended action.** Assist countries in developing instruments and standards that support the design and implementation of collaboration activities across borders.

**Recommended support through project operations.** First, projects could provide technical assistance and sponsor activities for developing qualification frameworks, credit descriptors, QA instruments, and minimum quality standards in ways that would promote the flow of students and academic programs, and the implementation of other collaboration activities across borders. Second, projects could sponsor activities that assist countries in regulating cross-border supply of education using electronic transmission. This could be achieved through the framing of appropriate legislation related to the recognition of degrees awarded through e-learning. Third, projects could sponsor regional and cross-border meetings and symposia that provide a mechanism through which countries can learn from each others’ experience in these aspects.
Main Benefits and Risks of Cross-Border Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits to the Institution</th>
<th>Frequency (N = 15)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits to the Institution</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial benefits, improved cost effectiveness</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotes cultural awareness, diversity, mutual understanding</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality improvement</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to best practices; promotes innovative practices</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of institutional capacity and competitiveness</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional recognition and prestige</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved integrity; codes of conduct</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compensates for poor facilities at home institution</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sees pairing with more advanced institutions to be valuable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved administrative performance</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves regional identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Builds mutual trust</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits to Students</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Expands student access and mobility</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves skills and competencies of students</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves students’ access to regional and international job market</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves English language skills of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits to Instructional Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint publications</td>
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<td>Upgrading research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits to the Country</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helps in brain gain, brain circulation</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saves foreign exchange, as students stay in country</td>
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<tr>
<td>RISKS</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low-quality programs coming into the country</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leads to brain drain</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign competition with local providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equity problems (if only the rich can pay)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Generalized concern</strong>: May do more harm than good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of institutional identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intrusion on national sovereignty</td>
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<td>Theft of intellectual property rights by foreign ventures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign programs may be dissonant with local values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overcommercialization of higher education; concern about being flooded with providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diverts resources away from strengthening higher education institutions at home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pressure to pass students who did not earn it (since they paid for course)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Returning students lose standing and/or skills not utilized back home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of administrator capacity to manage the programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underutilization of foreign faculty coming to Asian institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased dependence on foreign institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BOTH BENEFIT AND RISK</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May accelerate demise of weak domestic institutions</td>
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References


Higher Education in Dynamic Asia: Study Reports

The reports from the Asian Development Bank's regional study on Higher Education in Dynamic Asia provide an analysis of the issues facing higher education across Asia; suggest priorities among these issues; and offer detailed recommendations for the role that governments, higher education leaders, and other stakeholders and partners such as ADB could play in strengthening higher education systems and institutions in the region. Other titles include the following:

Higher Education Across Asia: An Overview of Issues and Strategies (2011)
This publication summarizes findings and recommendations of a major regional study on Higher Education in Dynamic Asia, financed by ADB. It provides an overview of the critical issues challenging higher education across Asia. It summarizes suggested priorities and solutions among those key issues and offers recommendations to help countries and higher education institutions implement the solutions.

Improving Instructional Quality: Focus on Faculty Development (2011)
This publication provides an analysis of key factors that can help strengthen the internal efficiency of higher education institutions in Asia. It focuses on differentiating institutional missions, improving the quality of teaching, creating a more positive institutional culture, and strengthening university-based research.

The publication focuses on critical issues of financing higher education in Asia, including alternative funding sources; privatization of public higher education institutions, and financial consequences of the rise of private higher education; student loans; and lower cost strategies for delivering instruction. It provides evidence that a key priority to strengthen higher education finance is via effective implementation of quality assurance.

Although expanded access is the major accomplishment of higher education systems in Asia, equitable provision of higher education is a challenge. The publication focuses on improving access to higher education for students from marginalized groups, and on mainstreaming access and equity in national and institutional policies and strategies. In addition, it analyzes the expansion of higher education access and equity via the growth of private higher education and effective technology-based instruction.

Private Higher Education Across Asia: Expanding Access, Searching for Quality (2012)
The publication focuses on the growth of private higher education in Asia. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the various types of private higher education institutions and their functions, and pursues timely perspectives, including implications for policy, quality assurance, and accreditation.

Administration and Governance of Higher Education in Asia: Patterns and Implications (2012)
The publication discusses the types and functions of various administration and governance systems of higher education in Asia. It particularly focuses on issues of institutional autonomy, and implications for financing, quality assurance, and personnel management.

Improving Transitions: From School to University to Workplace (2012)
The publication explores the critical issues of alignment and relevance among schools, universities, and the labor market in Asia. It argues that incoming university students must be prepared, and thus school curricula need to align with university entrance examinations. Meanwhile, university curricula ought to correspond with market demands to increase the employability of graduates with the right skill sets for the workplace.
Regional Cooperation and Cross-Border Collaboration in Higher Education in Asia
Ensuring that Everyone Wins

Investments in higher education (HE) to promote competitiveness and economic growth have spurred HE leaders to seek ways of effectively utilizing the available resources to raise quality and efficiency in HE. One widely advocated strategy to accomplish this is through greater regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration among HE institutions. Such collaborations may include student and faculty exchanges, dual and joint degree programs, twinning between pairs of universities, and the formation of university networks. This publication provides operational recommendations for supporting governments and universities in the region in pursuing regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration in HE development.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB’s vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region’s many successes, it remains home to two-thirds of the world’s poor: 1.8 billion people who live on less than $2 a day, with 903 million struggling on less than $1.25 a day. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.