

ASEAN University Network in Enhancing Student Mobility: A Case of Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Internationalization of higher education pushes for more intensive regional collaborations as well as student mobility. There are a plethora of studies exploring student mobility patterns, but research on the transformative potential of regional mobility networks is limited. As the most predominant regional network of universities in Southeast Asia, ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) University Network (AUN) commits to boosting student mobility in the region, and thus, can be conceived to be a deliberative space capable of expanding student mobility. This paper examines the role of AUN in promoting student mobility within the ASEAN region. Indonesia's engagement is used as a point of entry to assess the extent of policies and programs in encouraging student mobility in the ASEAN region.

Keywords: ASEAN University Network (AUN), Indonesia, internationalization, regionalization, student mobility

Recent trends in the internationalization of higher education in South East Asia show an advancement of cooperation among countries, reflecting the globalization of higher education which involves an increasing movement of people, culture, ideas, values, knowledge, technology, and economy (Knight, 2008, Kuroda, 2016). Globalization itself constitutes “the economic, political and societal forces pushing universities toward greater international involvement” (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 291). One aspect of this involvement means increased mobility of students, which in the case of ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) changed from 166,000 in 2009 to 220,000 in 2013 (SHARE, 2016, p.1).

The ASEAN representing an early regionalization body in the South East Asian region established ASEAN Universities Network (AUN) in 1995

to promote regional cooperation on four areas: student and faculty exchanges, ASEAN studies, information networking, and collaborative research (AUN, 2012). The creation of AUN seems to evolve under strategies of larger organizations such as SEAMEO-RIHED (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization- Regional Institute for Higher Education and Development), established by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), which aim to create harmonization of higher education in the region (Kuroda, 2016). With regard to student mobility, recent data show a significant number of ASEAN students studying in neighboring countries (British Council, 2008; Hou, Hill, Chen & Chen, 2017). According to UNESCO, 23,000 ASEAN students studied in China in 2013 (Hou, Hill, Chen & Chen, 2017, p. 13). Moreover, student mobility across universities within ASEAN countries in 2013 was 20,540, which represented 9 percent of 220,000 ASEAN students who studied in non-ASEAN countries (SHARE, 2016, p. 1).

Indeed, the presence of student mobility across ASEAN countries indicates the emerging of higher education regionalization, which refers to “the process of intentionally building connections and relationships among higher education actors and systems in a region” (Knight, 2016, p. 114). Knight (2016) sees regionalization of higher education as a continuing process, representing a dynamic of university development and other related institutions in response to the impact of globalization, which are also regarded as the players of regionalization within a region. In this case, AUN represents the key player since it was purposely established as a network to facilitate collaborations among leading universities in ASEAN countries to achieve the mission and vision of ASEAN in establishing common space for higher education (AUN, 2012). The AUN member universities, including the ones in Indonesia, also constitute the players as they are obliged to adhere to AUN’s policy. Other universities outside AUN but within ASEAN country members’ higher education system are welcome to participate in promoting student mobility across ASEAN region. In this light, this paper aims to examine the potential of AUN in promoting student mobility, which is focused on mobility of exchange students as AUN is established in particular to promote student exchange besides staff exchange (AUN, 2012). This paper highlights two questions: How does the AUN play its role in promoting student exchange mobility? Next, how do Indonesian universities able to keep up with AUN’s policy and regulation on student exchange mobility?

Furthermore, studies on regional credit mobility, such as ERASMUS (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) and AIMS (The ASEAN International Mobility for Students) report on barriers to student mobility programs, including issues related to national contexts (Zmas, 2015), compatibility of higher education systems (Vossensteyn et al., 2010) and credit transfer (King et al., 2011; Junor & Usher, 2008; Richardson, 2015; Richardson & Radloff, 2014). In this regard, this paper focuses on policies and programs on credit transfer and quality

assurance set up by AUN. Likewise, policies and programs on credit transfer and quality assurance in Indonesian higher education system are presented to explore AUN's efforts in regionalizing the region through student exchange mobility. Examination through regionalization perspective highlights the importance of all players to participate to promote student mobility as the regional goal mentioned in ASEAN Declaration and Charter. However, Indonesian case shows that capacity to participate in promoting student exchange mobility is crucial as it is shaped by both university and higher education system of individual ASEAN country member.

Overall, this paper comprises four sections. The purpose and organization of AUN with regard to student mobility in the following section aims to provide background information on the emerging collaboration on student exchange, which rooted in the main objective of AUN. The following section about policies and programs on student mobility within Indonesian higher education system gives an illustration of student exchange in Indonesia as a member country of AUN. These sections, indeed, show the emerging phenomenon of regionalization in ASEAN region. In particular, relationships within the student mobility network are examined through the practices of AUN quality assurance framework and ASEAN credit transfer system. Hence, this paper reveals how far student mobility through exchange programs has been promoted through AUN network system. The use of Indonesian's case as an entry point to explore regionalization through student exchange mobility demonstrates the necessity of the development of all higher education system within the region. Thus, regionalization faces challenges if nation members did not have compatible system due to an immature system in order to collaborate equally in the region.

AUN AND STUDENT EXCHANGE MOBILITY

For ASEAN, which represents an inter-governmental organization, education serves as a vehicle to achieve various goals, such as to build competitiveness and develop ASEAN's identity through awareness of history, language, culture and common values (ASEAN, 2014). Moreover, ASEAN Declaration and Charter emphasis the utmost of collaboration in the region. Via AUN, which was established in 1995, ASEAN aims to promote human resource development through higher education (AUN, 2011). Hence, AUN targets to 1) promote cooperation among ASEAN scholars, academicians, and scientists, 2) develop academic and professional human resource, 3) promote dissemination of information, and 4) enhance the awareness of regional identity and the sense of 'ASEANness' among members (ASEAN, 2015). Clearly, the objectives of AUN cover broad areas to promote collaboration among its university members, hence, student mobility is only an avenue to achieve its goals.

The extent of higher education in ASEAN region is reflected in the total number of higher education institutions in ASEAN countries, which its total is around 7000 universities. In detail, the number of universities in 11

country members are varied: Brunei - 4 (2008), Cambodia – 105 (2014), Indonesia - 3800 (2014), Laos - 45 (2010), Malaysia - 488 (2010), Myanmar – 169 (2014), Philippines - 2299 (2013), Singapore - 19 by 2010), Thailand (141 by 2013), Timor-Leste (3 by 2012), and Vietnam (376 by 2009) (SEAMEO-RIHED, 2014; Dhiratithi, 2017, p. 6). In contrast, AUN had only 30 university members (AUN, 2012), 2015). Hence, students participating in the AUN student exchange comes from small fractions of the total student in ASEAN region. Moreover, to promote collaboration with non-AUN university members across the ASEAN region, AUN has established several platforms, including Engineering, Business and Economics, Intellectual Property, Inter-Library Cooperation and Human Rights and Social Responsibility and Sustainability (AUN, 2011, p. 12). It shows how AUN has played its role as a regional institution involving various programs in order to achieve its objectives.

Through student mobility programs, AUN aims specifically "1) to provide and promote the increased sense of ASEAN (and Asian) identity to young ASEAN/Asian people, through contacts with each other, i.e. connectivity, and, 2) to prepare these young people for the future migratory careers, through their study and stay in other countries, i.e. from 'study mobility' to 'career mobility' (Dhirathiti, 2017). In brief, AUN administered five clusters of student mobility programs with total number of student participants in each cluster during 1996 – 2016, as follows: Youth (1932), Alumni Events (199), Study Visit in ASEAN (63), Study Abroad to China, Japan and Korea (687), various scholarships (1163), and ACTS (ASEAN Credit Transfer System) scheme (825) (Dhirathiti, 2017, p. 53). With regard to student exchange mobility through ACTS scheme, 12 of 30 AUN member universities provide a scholarship for exchange programs (SHARE, 2016, p.11). It was reported that 577 students participated in the programs during 2011-2015 (SHARE, 2016, p. 13).

INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION ON STUDENT MOBILITY

Amongst ASEAN member countries, Indonesia is the largest economy in the region and has the fourth largest education system in the world after China, India and the USA (Logli, 2016). Provision of higher education is managed by the Ministry of Research and Technology and Higher Education (MoRTHE) through the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE) and other ministries such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. Mostly shaped by the Anglo Saxon model, Indonesian Higher Education system consists of 98 public and 3353 private institutions, 52 Islamic institutions and 1 Open University with a total number of students were around 54 million (Moeliodihardjo, 2014, p. 1). In 2011, the gross enrolment rate in tertiary education, which was 27.1 percent, was the highest Among ASEAN member states (ASEAN, 2014). Having a large number of

students suggests Indonesia has potential to participate in student exchange programs, however, only four public universities in Indonesia are the member of AUN. Recent data from UNESCO on student mobility, in general, showed that Indonesian students who studied abroad were 39,098, but there were only 6579 Indonesian students who studied in ASIAN countries in 2013 (SHARE, 2016, p. 1). With regard to mobility within ASEAN, the majority of Indonesian students went to Malaysia (6222), Thailand (323) and Brunei (34), while majority of International students in Indonesia came from Malaysia (2516), Thailand (57), and Vietnam (50) (SHARE, 2016, p.2).

Indonesian government support for international collaborations including on student mobility to improve human quality is reflected in ‘Indonesian Law No 12, 2012 article 38’ and the ‘Decree of Ministry of Education and Culture No 14, 2014 article 7’ encompassing regulations on practices and collaborations on teaching, research and community services of university (Santoso, 2014, p. 5). Student mobility programs in Indonesia are classified according to 1) qualification (degree or credit), 2) region (national, regional and internationalization), 3) financial source (university, government, and private sponsorship), 4) activity (lecture, internship, research, and fieldtrip), and length of program (one semester or less, such as field trip, short course and exchange student, and more than one semester, such as sandwich program and double degree/ joint degree) (Santoso, 2014, pp. 6-7). It shows there are various student mobility programs apart from student exchange mobility through AUN. In order to understand the collaborations between universities in Indonesia with those overseas through AUN student exchange mobility, the following sections discuss the practices of credit transfer and quality assurance systems in the ASEAN region through regionalization stance.

AUN QUALITY ASSURANCE

The AUN initiated Quality Assurance Framework in 1998 with primary aims to develop a Quality Assurance system and mechanism to enhance higher education standard not only among member universities but also its associate members. AUN-QA quality assessment at program level as the main activity commenced in 2007. Since 2011, AUN-QA has extended its assessment to reach out non-member universities in the region aiming to maximize its benefits for whole regional communities in particular Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar. Until recently, AUN-QA conducted the assessment on the quality of 122 study programs from 26 universities (including AUN-QA Associate Members and non-AUN Members) in 8 ASEAN countries using AUN Criteria (AUN-QA, 2015, p. 4). In this regard, drives for AUN-QA member universities to participate in the process include not only a political obligation as a member but also an awareness to improve quality of higher education.

The urgency for certification is heightened as just recently the AUN-QA Framework is implemented with the objectives “to support the ASEAN

Economic Community (AEC) and to promote cross-border mobility for students and faculty members and internationalization of higher education” (AUN, 2016, p. 5). Thus, participation in ASEAN community through student mobility demands university to have AUN certification. According to the Guide of QA (AUN, 2016), the Framework comprises quality assessment both at study program and institutional levels and is aligned with the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF), Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework. As it reflects an extended potential collaboration, it may raise the necessity of gaining AUN-QA certification amongst universities.

Indeed, Indonesian higher education established its own quality assurance system in 1998 with aims to safeguard the quality of higher education by accrediting study programs and institutions (Wicaksono & Friawan, 2011). As a mandatory, accreditation is conducted by *BAN-PT – Badan Akreditasi Nasional-Perguruan Tinggi* (National Accreditation Agency for Higher Education). Recent data shows that in 2016, among 4512 higher education institutions across the nation, the number of accredited institutions was only 23 percent with the majority of institutions (68%) falls under C grade while from the total of 24,638 study programs the accredited programs was 69 percent with the majority of programs (47%) received B grade (MoRTHE, 2016, p. 45). Moreover, as the 2015-2019 Higher Education Strategic Plan mentioned about the objective for higher education institutions to develop nation’s competitiveness, universities are encouraged to collaborate with overseas institutions such as through student mobility (i.e. twinning or sandwich programs), thus quality assurance through accreditation by BAN-PT becomes crucial. With regard to preparation toward ASEAN Community, Indonesian government endorses universities to get certification from AUN-QA in order to be able to collaborate with universities in the region. In this regards universities give a positive response about getting certification from AUN. Take, for example, *Universitas Hasanudin* (an AUN-QA associate member university) formed two task forces at university level involving with institution and study program assessments. The first task force provided capacity building seminar for the second one to equip the assessors with knowledge and skills on assessing study program using AUN-QA criteria. In addition, other universities who received A Grade from BAN-PT are enthusiastic to pursue certification from AUN-QA.

The description of both quality assurance system of AUN and Indonesia shows the phenomenon of ‘multilevel governance’ (Wessel & Wouters, 2008, p. 4). Firstly, governance at national level involves with day to day practice within higher education system with regards to safeguarding the quality of higher education that government demands universities to get accreditation from BAN-PT, whilst secondly, regional governance is reflected in the requirement of additional AUN-QA certification for universities to participate in promoting student mobility. In this regard, the

application of AUN-QA regulations increases normative processes in a nation which impacts day to day activities. Moreover, the concept of multilevel governance has two elements, which are 1) 'governance without government', which is about AUN who is not a government but has the mandate to govern QA across universities in the region, and 2) 'governance beyond the state', which is about management of QA by AUN as a regional institution (Wessel & Wouters, 2008, p.4).

As mentioned by Knight (2016), different rationales or objectives behind regionalization are possible to co-exist. In this case, AUN role in promoting student mobility in ASEAN region are supported by different interests of key players. Apart from its individual context, a university is shaped by government policies in determining its objective to participate. For a university, focus on improving quality of higher education is essential business since accreditation by BAN-PT since 1998. For the government, its policies emphasizing on building national competitiveness drives universities to develop their global performance which is measured by university ranking (MoRTHE, 2016). For AUN, as the implementing agency of ASEAN in regionalization, its main objective is to enhance collaborations among universities in the region through the application of AUN-QA.

The overall discussion shows that AUN plays a significant role in promoting student mobility through the implementation of AUN-QA Framework. For Shield (2016), AUN through how it assumes government role of accrediting higher education quality demonstrates its position as the key actor in the globalization of higher education in ASEAN region. The development of regional quality assurance network by AUN through operation of AUN-QA among its member and associate member universities reflects what Kuroda (2016) described AUN's role in regionalization: to facilitate and promote the increasing interdependence and collaboration in the region. Furthermore, the role of AUN is reflected in university staff perceptions of the importance of AUN-QA as follows 1) Certification is conducted using AUN criteria, 2) AUN-QA set the criteria internationally, 3) Certification aims to make education system are comparable in ASEAN region, and 4) Certification aims to ease credit transfer within the region.

Indeed, the important role of AUN may be meaningless in the reality due to many factors. In line with Verge and Hermo (2010) that resources can be a barrier in higher education regionalization, a rector from an associate member university in Indonesia reported that his university managed to get AUN-QA certification only for several study programs as it was expensive to get and maintain the AUN certification. Moreover, drawing on Neubauer (2012), who described the effects of centrifugal and centripetal forces on higher education regionalization, issues of the cost associated with AUN-QA certification might become the centrifugal force that keeps university away from participating in collaboration through AUN's student mobility program.

Hence, the growth of student mobility through exchange scheme in the ASEAN region is shaped not only by policies/ regulations set by AUN-QA but also the Indonesian regulation on higher education quality assurance

system as well as individual university situation (e.g. university's policy and financial capacity).

ASEAN CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM (ACTS)

The role of AUN in promoting credit mobility is reflected in its policies and programs aiming to support student mobility while undertaking a degree through programs such as student exchange or study abroad. AUN, as the implementing agency of ASEAN for higher education cooperation, has an obligation to address the mission of ASEAN in promoting higher education development in the region. In this context, to promote credit mobility AUN has set up and managed a credit transfer system (ACTS) for its member universities in the region (SHARE, 2016). As a member of AUN, the Indonesian government and the four-member universities are bound to participate in accomplishing the ASEAN vision mission to move toward ASEAN community in 2020 (AUN, 2016). In this context, the operation of the ACTS requires implementation of QA assessment across member universities in the region since credit gain from a study at another country can be recognized only when it is recognized and comparable, which means it is assessed using the same QA system.

AUN established ACTS, a common credit transfer mechanism, comprising grading scales, an online list of available courses and online application system with a goal to promote student mobility in ASEAN region. This system was proposed at the 9th AUN-QA workshop in 2008 and after going through several meetings the ACTS Steering Committee endorsed the ACTS implementation among AUN member universities commencing in 2011 with Universitas Indonesia to host its secretariat. The ACTS secretariat's role is to develop the ACTS online system and monitor student mobility under this scheme. This credit transfer system takes into account existing institutional or national credit systems when conversing credits, study periods and learning outcomes. The ACTS is applicable for student mobility through the AUN-ACTS Study Awards and AUN Member Universities Scholarship. The second program – Scholarship from AUN member universities is a commitment toward AUN which enhance student participation in the mobility program where AUN member universities must provide 10 scholarships a year. It shows the ACTS facilitate student exchange by reducing barriers such as differences in curriculum, education system, credit transfer, and funding. In 2012 one year after implementation of ACTS, the ACTS steering committee conducted program evaluation and identified that there were 200 applications for the first year of the program. The next agenda for the ACTS steering committee meeting aims to discuss how to extend the implementation of ACTS among all AUN member universities and partner universities under the 'Re-Inventing Japan Projects' (ACTS-UI).

The system of AUN-ACTS seems promising since it has simplified university administration process of transferring credit across countries. In

this regard, as members of AUN, the four universities – *UI, UGM, ITB* and *UNAIR* have the obligation to comply with AUN policy to promote student mobility through the ACTS. In practice, the role of AUN in promoting student mobility is depicted in how Indonesian higher education and its member universities react to AUN.

Universities respond to the mandate from AUN differently. *UGM*, as an example, through its own policy - Statute *UGM* Article 17 (3) decides to promote student mobility through ACTS program as a strategy amongst several others in internationalizing its curriculum (Hadmoko, Arsana, & Almahendra, 2015). Similarly, *UI* as the host for the AUN-ACTS secretariat supports the program through the provision of 10 scholarships per year for students and provides detailed information on selection procedure on its International Office website (ACTS, 2009; *UI*, 2017).

Drawing on Jayasuriya and Robertson (2010, p. 1), the adoption of AUN-ACTS by AUN member universities reflects rescaling of the governance of higher education institutions as the globalization of higher education through AUN-ACTS involves with 'reconstitution of the scales of which governance takes place'. In this regard, the organization of transfer credit using AUN-ACTS illustrates the emerging new modes of governance by AUN in the region. Indeed, the presence of regional governance by AUN is obvious as shown in the organizational structure of AUN in which the role of AUN Secretariat includes to coordinate and monitor while member universities have an obligation to adhere to AUN policies/ regulations (AUN, 2012). Moreover, the implementation of AUN-ACTS to support student mobility among AUN member universities reflects the influence of AUN as the regional institution on university practices. The mandatory of AUN-ACTS among member universities in addition to the implementation of national credit transfer system reflects what Wessel and Wouters (2008) referred as 'multilevel regulations'. All of this suggests the emergent strong role of AUN in promoting student mobility across the region, which is in line with de Jesus (2016), who states that AUN with its small number of member universities has the potential to pioneer projects, such as credit transfer arrangement. However, the interplay of the presence of multilevel regulations indicates the influences of various factors on student mobility, hence it becomes complicated to recognize AUN's role in promoting student mobility at the institutional level.

An understanding of the context of Indonesian higher education with regard to internationalization via student mobility becomes relevant to capture the role of AUN, which is in line with Zmas (2015), who argues that national context shapes student mobility. At national level, rooted in Indonesian higher education's long-term internationalization goal to promote nation's competitiveness through enhancing student global competence (MoRTHE, 2015) a Guide to Credit Transfer Program was launched by the Directorate General for Learning and Students, Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, in 2017 (DGHE, 2017). It provides a guidance on transferring credit gained from study overseas at partner-university for a

particular period. All universities, both public and private are allowed to participate in the program but only with partner university who has Memorandum of Understanding, which includes the principles of equality, equity and mutual benefit as stipulated in the Constitution Number 24/2000 on international partnership (MoRTHE, 2017). This allows universities in Indonesia to study various credit transfer systems of partner universities overseas. Government supports for student mobility through this program include scholarship provisions. It shows to some degree the development of Indonesian higher education that it has its own system of transfer credit.

Another important context of Indonesian higher education system is reflected in the establishment of the Indonesian Qualifications Framework (IQF) as a reference in identifying competence for each level of qualification (MoRTHE, 2016; Santoso, 2014). The IQF provides an understanding of 9 qualification levels and its equivalent learning outcomes from various forms of education, i.e., formal, non-formal, informal or work experiences (Moeliodihardjo et al., 2015). Thus, the IQF serves to complement the ACTS in recognizing learning outcomes and qualification undertaken from an overseas institution.

Furthermore, the context of higher education reflecting dynamic within Indonesian higher education system is originated from its basic law and strategic plan. In this case, the government policy also influences student mobility (Hénard, Diamond, & Roseveare, 2012). The preamble of Indonesian Higher Education Law 12/2012 states that:

“Higher education, as part of the national education system, plays a strategic role in developing the intellectual life of the nation and advancing science and technology with the aim, among others, to increase national competitiveness in the context of globalization” (OECD-ADB, 2015, p. 184).

To implement the law, vision of higher education as stated in the Strategic Plan 2015-2019 (MoRTHE, 2015, p. 21) is “the realization of quality higher education along with the capability of science and technology to support competitiveness of the nation” (*Terwujudnya pendidikan tinggi yang bermutu serta kemampuan iptek dan inovasi untuk mendukung daya saing bangsa*). Whilst the objective of the strategic plan is:

“To increase the relevance, quantity and quality of highly educated human resources, and the ability of science and technology and innovation for the excellence of the nation's competitiveness” (*Meningkatnya relevansi, kuantitas dan kualitas sumber daya manusia berpendidikan tinggi, serta kemampuan Iptek dan inovasi untuk keunggulan daya saing bangsa*) (MoRTHE, 2015, p. 22).

Those statements showing competitiveness as main orientation has driven universities eager to become a World-class University or Research University

alongside with development of internationalization programs among universities. The common practices of internationalization as appeared in universities' websites include the use of English in the university website (even though Bahasa Indonesia is the national language), and availability of information on student mobility (Author, 2009). Thus, internationalization of higher education through student mobility, such as twinning program had been started before AUN promoted student mobility in 2011. In this respect, in particular, the DGHE released the Ministerial Regulation Number 49 on Standard of National Higher Education, and the Regulation number 14 about collaboration amongst institutions, including through twinning programs, joint and double degrees, student exchanges and the shared use of resources in order to achieve the objectives of ASEAN Community, such as improving competitiveness of the nation, and increasing affordability, equality, relevancy, self-reliance and welfare (Richardson, 2015, p. 31). This context suggests the readiness or capacity of Indonesian higher education in responding to globalization through AUN-ACTS. This is in line with Chatterton & Goddard (2000), who explain that university engagement with regionalization is shaped by the availability of knowledge, skill, and infrastructure that in this paper, is shown through various policies, regulations, and programs that are aligned well from university to state and regional levels.

Overall, the discussion shows the context of Indonesian higher education, indeed, supports AUN's role in promoting student mobility. However, in addition to contextual factors of Indonesian higher education, regional environment, such as an emerging new network provides an opportunity to learn for universities indicating the enhanced potential transformative space to promote student mobility. As an example, the SHARE (Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region) program – a collaboration with European Union (e.g. British Council, Campus France, EP-Nuffic, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the European University Association (EUA), and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), was launched in 2015 with goals to provide support for ASEAN countries in harmonizing collaboration among higher education in the region based on European experiences through strengthening regional cooperation and enhancing the quality, competitiveness and internationalization of ASEAN HE for institutions and students (SHARE, 2016b). This project provides various supports to develop capacity, including a seminar on credit transfer in Jakarta attended by four Indonesian universities, two Malaysian universities, and representatives from AUN, EU, ASEAN and SEAMEO-RIHED (SHARE, 2016b). In particular, the seminar discussed designing a study program based on learning outcomes in order to support transfer credit between universities. Secondly, SHARE aims to design credit transfer system to support student mobility between ASEAN countries and universities across Europe using Bologna experience by making ACTS compatible with ECTS in Europe. Thirdly, SHARE (SHARE, 2016a) provides technical-supports in five areas 1) Policy

Dialogues on harmonization of higher education in the ASEAN region, 2) Implementation of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) and the development of National Qualification Frameworks, 3) Fostering the ASEAN QA Framework (AQAF) at regional/national levels, 4) ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS) & ASEAN-EU Credit Transfer Systems (AECTS), 5) ACTS & AECTS Student Mobility with Scholarships. Hence, AUN role is supported by other networks who promote student mobility.

The ACTS, obviously, gives benefits for its member universities in ASEAN countries with the implementation of an international standard. The unique qualities of AUN member universities give other benefits, such as the ability to participate in collaboration through cost-sharing basis: the implication of “the spirit of ASEAN-ness, which incorporates equal partnership and regional belonging and identity” as the unique qualities of AUN university members (AUN, 2011, p.13). In this kind of mobility network, the relationships appear to be what Knight (2016, p.117) describes as convergence and harmonization, which is “stronger, more strategic links involving systemic changes”. In general, it reflects how AUN has played its role in promoting student mobility in the region. However, even though it is a political mandate for member countries to support the success of AUN in promoting student mobility, further study is required to identify potential issues associated with the implementation of the credit transfer system across universities in the region.

The discussion shows that context of Indonesian higher education with the presence of national systems of quality assurance, credit transfer, and qualification framework appear to contribute in promoting student credit mobility in the region. It implies that implementation of AUN-QA and AUN-ACTS may be affected by the extent of higher education development. This is in line with Keo and Jun (2016) who state that disparities among higher education institutions across the region present a challenge for ASEAN as a regional association. In particular, Hou, Hill, Chen, Tsai, & Chen (2017, p. 13) mention about ‘disparity between systems and expectations, particularly in terms of income demographics, accreditation, and linguistics’ might affect collaboration in the region. Moreover, the AUN-QA reports about the existing discrepancy in the number of study programs assessed by AUN-QA across ASEAN countries (AUN-QA, 2015) and diversity of QA agencies in ASEAN (Dhirathiti, 2017). All of these suggest the possibility of a different story if Indonesian higher education system has not been at its current development.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, this paper shows that AUN has played an important role in promoting student mobility within the ASEAN region. However, as a regional system, the achievement of AUN’s goals, such as promoting student mobility depends on the other players within the region, which is all AUN member universities. Thus, the contribution of the other players is a must to achieve

the objective. In this regard, the context of players, which is in this paper is the development of Indonesian higher education system and the four AUN member universities, have significant influences. Moreover, the regional environment affects universities in addressing regionalization. The existing various networks in the region constitutes a learning space for all universities to gain knowledge and develop skills relevant to develop the region alongside with AUN.

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