



Meeting Report of the 18th Annual Review Meeting of The Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme

7-8 August 2024

Reimagining Mobility for Peace and Sustainability

- 1 The 18th Annual Review Meeting of the Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme was held on 7-8 August 2024, in Hiroshima Japan, and graciously hosted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) Japan and Hiroshima University and co-organised by SEAMEO RIHED. The Meeting Programme appears as [Appendix 1](#).
- 2 A total of 164 government officials, designated representatives, university representatives, and alumni from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Thailand attended the Meeting. The List of Participants appears as **Appendix 2**.
- 3 The meeting documents are accessible through this folder. The Meeting PPT appears as [Appendix 3](#).

Day 1, 7 August 2024

Opening Ceremony

- 4 Professor Mitsuo Ochi, President of Hiroshima University, welcomed the participants to the meeting. He praised the regional dedication and efforts to make AIMS successful as a long-standing programme fostering global connections and perspectives. He shared Hiroshima University's significant milestone of 75+75 anniversary. As the University President of a leading comprehensive research institution, he encouraged universities to play a greater role in advancing research, leveraging cutting-edge technology and science to promote peace, security, and a sustainable future for the region. Additionally, he looked forward to the creative proposals on the Future of Higher Learning from the students of the AIMS Summer Intensive Programme. He concluded by wishing the participants a fruitful and productive meeting.
- 5 Assistant Professor Dr. Romyen Kosaikanont, Centre Director of SEAMEO RIHED, shared in her Introductory Remarks that this year's Review Meeting is being held earlier than the usual schedule to coincide with the week of the Peace Memorial Day, to reflect on the need for peace and sustainability in a volatile world. With 14 years of exchange, the AIMS Programme is a growing network that strengthens partnerships and connectivity, and a gateway to explore broader opportunities. The **Joint Declaration on the Common Space in Southeast Asian Higher Education** will be signed during the 13th ASEAN Education Ministers' Meeting in Buriram, Thailand, on 25 August 2024, which would deepen collaboration with higher education agencies and stakeholders, symbolising a shared journey towards inclusive progress through mutual understanding. She urged participants not to let the past define the present and to collaborate in shaping a better future for AIMS and the region.
- 6 Mr. Shin Okuno, Deputy Director-General, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) Japan, highlighted the 50th anniversary of Japan-ASEAN relations in his Opening Remarks, emphasising the strong partnership between Japan and ASEAN countries across various sectors, including politics, economy, culture, and security. MEXT Japan provided financial support and ensured the programme's implementation with quality assurance to promote inter-university exchanges with ASEAN countries. Recognising AIMS as a multilateral programme that facilitates numerous student exchanges, he commended the AIMS Programme for its

instrumental role in fostering the development of global human resources. He expressed his hopes for a productive meeting, contributing to sustainable development and peacebuilding.

Programme Overview and Updates

- 7 SEAMEO RIHED presented a brief background of the AIMS Programme, and updates from the Special Online Steering Committee Meeting held on 25 June 2024 as follows:

- a) The AIMS Mobility Targets were agreed to set the future direction of AIMS, aiming to reach a cumulative number of students going on AIMS exchange to 10,000 students by 2030.

Country	Target Outbound Number (per year)
Brunei Darussalam	10
Cambodia	10
Indonesia	75
Japan	100
Malaysia	50
Philippines	140
Republic of Korea	158
Singapore	12
Thailand	50
Vietnam	TBC
Total	605+

- b) Research on [Impact of a consortium-based student mobility programme: The case of AIMS \(Asian International Mobility for Students\)](#)¹ was published in the Journal of International Cooperation in Education, Volume 26 Issue 1 in 2024. This research is conducted by researchers from Sophia University, Malaysian Technical Research Team and SEAMEO RIHED. The study found that AIMS significantly impacted member universities by accelerating the internationalisation processes through increasing the number of inbound and outbound students and courses offered in English and so on. AIMS has promoted harmonisation among the members by developing common procedures and guidelines, providing platforms for mutual sharing of experiences and good practices and capacity building of international relations offices. Besides, AIMS has also had a significant impact on students by enhancing their regional identity and knowledge about the region of Asia, contributing to their development as future regional and global citizens. Another paper by Sophia University will further explore AIMS' impact on students' 21st century skills.

SEAMEO RIHED emphasised that AIMS research provides data-driven insights for policymaking and invited members to support further research both technically and financially, to be proposed at the Steering Committee Meeting.

- c) Since 2022, the AIMS Orientation Task Force has supported the setting up and organising the AIMS Virtual Regional Orientations. To improve student mobility, strengthen regional identity, and boost AIMS visibility, the Steering Committee agreed to expand the Task Force's role to include fostering communication with students and alumni to build a stronger AIMS community and enhancing AIMS visibility.

¹ Umemiya, N., Sugimura, M., Kosaikanont, R., Nordin, N. M., & Ahmad, A. L. (2024). Impact of a consortium-based student mobility programme: The case of AIMS (Asian International Mobility for students). *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jice-08-2023-0020>

- d) The AIMS Alumni Network was officially launched during the 17th Annual Review Meeting in 2023, alongside the adoption of its Charter. Chapter Leads from each member country were appointed by the Steering Committee as alumni focal points. An alumni database to track former students is currently being developed by SEAMEO RIHED. More activities for AIMS alumni such as city meet-ups and social responsibility initiatives are planned.
 - e) To support AIMS' focus on University Social Responsibility (USR) and sustainable development as endorsed by the 51st SEAMEO Council Conference in 2021, two strategies were adopted by the Steering Committee, 1) Sharing best practices, which included the AIMS USR Webinar and a visit to Yonsei University at the past Annual Review Meetings, and 2) Leveraging existing USR activities at AIMS member universities to engage students during exchanges, promoting their understanding of local and regional issues while contributing to sustainable development as global citizens.
 - f) The SEA-Europe Mobility Programme for Sustainable Development seeks to adapt to learners' needs while advancing sustainable development. By engaging diverse stakeholders from Southeast Asia and Europe—including governments, universities, edtech, and industry—the program aims to create innovative learning mobility models. SEAMEO RIHED is exploring collaboration with countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and more, and partners such as the ASEAN Secretariat and the EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package – Higher Education Programme (SCOPE-HE) under the Common Space in Southeast Asian Higher Education.
- 8 SEAMEO RIHED shared that the inputs gathered at the 18th Annual Review Meeting will shape the new AIMS Operational Handbook and feed to the discussions at the 9th Steering Committee Meeting in November 2024.
 - 9 SEAMEO RIHED reminded participants that Environmental Management and Science, Marine Science, and Biodiversity have been merged into an interdisciplinary group called "Sciences for Sustainable Development," allowing exchanges across these fields.
 - 10 Member universities interested in adjusting their participation in specific disciplines should inform their government representatives to present for discussion at the Steering Committee Meeting. Before officially proposing to the Steering Committee, member universities may also pilot exchanges in other disciplines, if it is allowed by their respective governments, to allow for flexibility and continued mobility in AIMS.
 - 11 Finally, SEAMEO RIHED expressed its sincere gratitude to the members of the AIMS working groups on the various thrusts for their continued support.

AIMS Member Countries Roundtable Discussion

- 12 Government representatives from AIMS Member Countries shared policies, strategies, mechanisms on higher education's role in sustainable development and discussed regional initiatives for promoting peace and sustainability. The session was moderated by Asst. Prof. Dr. Romyen Kosaikanont, Centre Director, SEAMEO RIHED.

Country and Panelists	Key policies/strategies/mechanisms
Brunei Darussalam Ms. Dina Roslina Binti Haji Aliuddin, Acting Assistant Director, MOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wawasan Brunei 2035, National Vision for Brunei Darussalam • Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2023-2027 Brunei Darussalam's National Vision 2035 is integrated into all ministries, including the Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan for 2023-2027, with internationalization as a key goal for higher

	<p>education. The Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council is advancing credential recognition in the region. Despite its small population and limited higher education institutions, Brunei Darussalam is focused on improving education quality and reducing inequalities, and welcomes student exchanges to enhance regional collaboration.</p>
<p>Cambodia H.E. Dr. SOM Ratana, Under-Secretary of State, MoEYS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangle Strategy and Rectangular Strategy • Roadmap of Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals for Education 2030 • Cambodian Higher Education Roadmap for 2030 <p>Cambodia's Triangle and Rectangular Strategies focus on human resources development to foster sustainable growth and regional peace. The Roadmap for Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals and the Higher Education Roadmap for 2030 aim to advance national development goals.</p> <p>Cambodia is committed to enhancing education quality by encouraging outcome-based education, curriculum updates, improved teaching methods, and strengthened Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) systems, with the National Accreditation Committee handling External Quality Assurance (EQA).</p> <p>Key efforts are concentrated on improving teaching and learning, advancing research in STEM and agriculture, and enhancing governance. These initiatives are crucial for improving education quality and fostering effective international collaboration.</p>
<p>Indonesia Prof. Dr. Sri Suning Kusumawardani, Director of Learning and Student Affairs, MoECRT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merdeka Belajar (Emancipated learning) for the SDGs <p>Indonesia's Merdeka Belajar policy supports sustainable development by transforming the education system to be more inclusive and innovative. It allows students to pursue diverse learning opportunities outside traditional programs, including mobility, internships, community projects, and entrepreneurship, with benefits such as credit transfers and industry partnerships.</p> <p>The policy aligns with SDGs by enhancing quality education, promoting lifelong learning and digital technologies, offering teacher training, and strengthening vocational education.</p>
<p>Japan Mr. Hiroshi ANDO, Minister's Secretariat, MEXT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top Global University Project • New budget programme on internationalisation • UNESCO Japan Prize on ESD 2023 • Tuition reduction/exception and grant-type scholarships <p>Internationalisation remains a key priority for Japan. The recently completed Top Global University Project, which supported over 40 universities in enhancing global engagement, has led to new budget programmes for international education, which Japanese universities are now invited to apply.</p> <p>Two key SDG-related initiatives were highlighted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The UNESCO Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), awarded to Kanazawa University in 2023 for its efforts in local community revitalisation through sustainable development education. 2. A support system introduced in 2020 offering tuition exemptions and grant-based scholarships, ensuring

	<p>broader access to higher education and promoting gender and social equality.</p>
<p>Malaysia Mr. Erizman bin Soib, Internationalization of Higher Education Officer, Strategic Planning and International Operation. (Inbound), MOHE</p> <p>PPT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG governance structure in Malaysia • National SDG Centre (Ministry of Economy) • Monitoring Malaysian SDG progress <p>Malaysia emphasized that tracking SDG progress requires collaboration among various stakeholders and ministries. Key focus areas include developing the Talent Global Hub, formalising Open and Distance Learning, expanding microcredential collaborations in 2025, and boosting exchange programme opportunities for students and academics.</p>
<p>Philippines Dr. Laurene Chua-Garcia, Vice President for External Relations and Internationalization, De La Salle University</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transnational Higher Education Act (Republic Act 11448) <p>The Philippines recently passed Republic Act 11448, which expands access to education by encouraging collaborations between local and international higher education institutions, advancing global academic partnerships through transnational higher education.</p> <p>The government has increased funding to support international engagement, including participation in international conferences. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is enhancing higher education quality standards with AUN-QA and improving impact rankings with Times Higher Education.</p> <p>Additionally, the Philippines is localising UN SDGs through smart city initiatives and regional collaborations to enhance understanding by the communities. ICONS, an annual event by the ministry, recognises outstanding achievements in internationalization.</p>
<p>Republic of Korea Mr. Dongseok SEO, Senior Director of University Innovation Office, KCUE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Development Plan 2021-2040 • Regional Innovation System and Education (RISE) <p>The Republic of Korea supports the SDGs through its Sustainable Development Plan (2021-2040), addressing global issues like COVID-19 and climate change. In response to challenges such as a declining school-age population and the need to boost higher education competitiveness, the focus is on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhancing lifelong education in universities. 2. Expanding distance and e-learning. 3. Increasing higher education funding through the Regional Innovation System and Education (RISE) policy, which shifts funding responsibilities to local governments and eases regulations in collaboration with local authorities. This includes a two-year STEM-ED pilot in seven regions, set to expand nationwide in 2025.
<p>Singapore Ms. Lim Siew Lee, Assistant Director, International Cooperation & Strategy Team, MOE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing Asia 70-70 Target <p>Singapore supports SDG 4.7 by developing global citizens through the "Knowing Asia 70-70 Target." This initiative aims for 70% of Singaporean higher education students to gain overseas exposure and skills, through internships, service learning, and immersion programmes, with 70% of these experiences in key</p>

	<p>fast-growing Asian markets such as ASEAN countries, China, and India.</p> <p>Partnerships with universities and stakeholders in the region are formed to identify potential opportunities for exchanges. ASEAN and Chinese language courses, cultural awareness programmes and ground support services with partner universities help prepare students for these experiences. The Asia-Ready Global Talent Programme by Enterprise SG, provides monthly allowances for internships in Southeast Asia, thereby complementing the Ministry of Education's efforts.</p>
<p>Thailand Dr. Luksmon Smansin, Director of International Affairs Division, MHESI</p> <p>PPT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation Policy and Strategy (2020-2027) <p>Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation (MHESI) is a relatively new ministry and has introduced the Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation Policy and Strategy (2020-2027), which aims to transform Thailand's higher education system.</p> <p>The policy emphasises lifelong learning to support the SDGs by promoting continuous personal and professional development, social resilience, inclusive growth, and reducing inequality. Initiatives include Thailand Online Class, reskilling and upskilling programmes, micro-degrees, and Thailand MOOCs, providing flexible and accessible learning opportunities to enhance skills and knowledge for personal and regional development.</p>

13 Ideas for AIMS regional initiatives to promote peace and sustainability include:

1. Regional collaboration

- Policy Dialogue: policy harmonisation to support recognition and QA, sharing best practices, issues on SDGs, gender safety education
- ASEAN Education Hub to enhance mobility and knowledge sharing among students and academics
- ASEAN Research Consortia: Universities and institutions forming consortia to tackle specific SDGs with pooled resources and expertise. Exchange faculty and researchers' programmes to improve educational standards through the sharing of best practices and pedagogies, joint research on educational technologies and curriculum development, joint curriculum development, internships
- Government Support: Emphasise scholarships, involvement, cooperation, and capacity building.

2. **Regional digital platforms** for virtual exchanges, online courses, and collaborative research to increase accessibility and inclusivity, especially for students unable to participate in physical mobility programmes

3. Expanding engagement and partnership

- Student Collaboration: Design solutions for SDGs through student workgroups in AIMS Alumni Network and USR Working Group.
- Enhance collaboration with organizations working on similar goals and support SDGs through university-community partnerships.

- Industry Collaboration, focus on quality education, decent work, industrial innovation, and climate action.
- 14 The Moderator summarised that the region is diverse, therefore mutual commitment and collective efforts from all the stakeholders are needed to drive the region for sustainable development.

**Keynote Session on
“Moving AIMS into the Future: Exploring Innovative Mobility for Flexible Learning”**

- 15 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Chawin Chantharasenawong, Vice President for Internationalisation at King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT), Thailand, discussed the future of education, focusing on flexible learning and micro-credentials. He emphasised their potential to tackle issues such as outdated curricula, accessibility barriers, and skills gap. KMUTT’s business models adapt to these changes, addressing the needs of new learners and reskilling the workforce amid Thailand’s declining population.
- 16 He highlighted a shift from degree-based to outcome-based education, with a focus on competency-based assessments and personalised, real-world learning experiences. Universities are increasingly collaborating with industries to define learning outcomes. Higher education is expected to become increasingly competency-based, offering more personalized learning experiences. Key customer profiles were identified: B2C (students seeking to build skills for work or advance their career), B2B (businesses to develop leadership and mid-career growth programmes), and B2G (government initiatives).
- 17 Unlike traditional degrees, micro-credentials focus on skill acquisition and can be completed in varied timeframes, with a simple pass/fail assessment. KMUTT’s research indicates their value for mid-career professionals looking to change or advance their careers. However, for micro-credentials to become more widespread, they need greater recognition from industries, employers, and universities. The full presentation is available as [Appendix 4](#).

Parallel Session

- 18 The Parallel session had 4 breakout groups by governments, faculty members, IROs and Students/Alumni.
- 19 The government group exchanged the updates of AIMS member countries regarding micro-credentials and the possibility of introducing regional approach of micro-credential for regional mobility in the region. The faculty group engaged in a World Café-style discussion, explored innovative and flexible mobility ideas. The IROs group brainstormed various communication aspects of the AIMS Programme, addressing eight different topics. The alumni group discussed issues related to the AIMS Alumni Network. Additionally, the IROs and alumni came together for a brief session on how to strengthen linkages between IROs and alumni and how to enhance AIMS visibility for students to be more interested in intra-regional mobility.
- 20 The list of facilitators, rapporteurs, and presenters appears in [Appendix 5](#).

Report of Discussions from Parallel Session

Government Group

- 21 The Government Group discussed the developments and practices of micro-credentials in member countries as a relatively new learning method aimed at enhancing the recognition of learning and competencies, promoting flexible learning, and exploring its potential application within the AIMS Programme.

- 22 SEAMEO RIHED shared the findings from the [micro credentials research](#) including the definition of micro-credentials in each country. Additionally, the group sought input on 1) developing a common understanding for implementation, and 2) explored ways to address challenges and proceed with micro-credential development in their respective countries/region.
- 23 During the meeting, representatives shared their experiences with implementing micro-credentials in their countries.
- 24 The Philippines reported that in 2020, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) introduced a law recognizing micro-credentials through proof of learning. These micro-credentials have been integrated and redefined within the framework of Lifelong Learning, with a system emphasising learning outcomes, quality, and standards. Additionally, the development of a Qualifications Framework is currently underway.
- 25 In Indonesia, micro-credentials play a key role in the emancipative learning initiatives introduced by a 2020 law. Through this, higher education institutions recognise credits earned outside their programs, based on learning outcomes.
- 26 In Malaysia, micro-credentials have a more established history, having been implemented in polytechnic education. In 2020, the Malaysian Quality Assurance Agency (MQA) introduced systematic guidelines to further support micro-credentials, strategically aiming to make them more accessible to international students. These micro-credentials must be aligned with the appropriate visa types for short-term mobility. However, a key challenge is that the current design is primarily focused on local students. To better serve international students, the program needs to be adapted to accommodate varying timeframes for course completion.
- 27 In Singapore, micro-credentials are widely used within the higher education sector. However, several challenges remain, including: (i) industry recognition, (ii) standardising the titles of micro-credentials, (iii) ensuring recognition of micro-credentials within the country, and (iv) maintaining the quality assurance of courses offered as micro-credentials. This last challenge, concerning quality assurance, is one shared by multiple countries.
- 28 In Brunei Darussalam, the accreditation of learning is overseen by the Brunei Accreditation Council. The active development of regulations and recognition of learning is evident on their official website. Lifelong Learning Centres, including those affiliated with ministries and institutions offering courses, can also have their programmes accredited.
- 29 In Thailand, micro-credentials have been developed with government support through the establishment of a national credit bank system, aimed at recognising learning competencies. Several leading universities have pioneered the introduction of micro-credentials within their institutions. On the policy front, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI) is collaborating with key universities, such as KMUTT, to pilot micro-credentials, particularly within the mobility programme of University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP). The primary challenge for Thailand, however, remains building a broader understanding of micro-credentials.
- 30 In Japan, certain learning experiences, particularly those related to job hunting, are certified. Additionally, cultural and Japanese language learning is classified into levels, such as platinum, gold, silver, or bronze. The Japanese government is collaborating with international experts to establish a micro-credential system, with a dedicated working group focused on ensuring its relevance to business and industry needs.

Faculty Group

- 31 The Faculty Group discussed 3 main topics: 1) sharing of good practices and recommendations on credit transfers and recognition of learning in AIMS 2) advancing interdisciplinary and innovative mobility, as well as integrating micro-credentials within the AIMS Programme and 3) expanding AIMS into other mobility activities

- 32 The first group discussed the issue of students having more difficulty in transferring credits when the courses are not the same with the home universities. Some possible solutions include setting up free electives, non-compulsory credits which allow transfers for international studies, which are practiced in Indonesia and some universities in Thailand (Kasetsart University). This allowed for a greater flexibility in credit transfers. For compulsory courses, ensuring course syllabi and learning outcomes are readily available for comparisons to agree on the credit transfers.
- 33 The second group suggested broadening the scope of disciplines to include fields such as Artificial Intelligence, the arts, education, and areas aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They also supported internship consortium in AIMS to foster stronger partnerships with industry.
- 34 Although international micro-credentials hold significant potential, challenges persist in achieving broader social recognition and global acceptance. The group emphasised that successful implementation requires collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including strong support from governments. For AIMS, a blended learning approach could be beneficial, incorporating 3-4 weeks of pre-learning followed by fieldwork during students' exchange experiences.
- 35 The third group proposed leveraging digital technology, artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT) to enhance and match mobility opportunities. Collaborative online international learning (COIL) was supported as a virtual alternative to physical mobility. Additionally, the group encouraged cultural exchange and USR activities that celebrate the region's diversity and support sustainable development goals. They also supported internships and externships and suggested the establishment of comprehensive guidelines for these programmes.

IROs Group

- 36 The IROs group worked in eight subgroups to explore various topics aimed at improving communication and collaboration within AIMS. A detailed summary is available via [Padlet](#) and [document](#), with the key topics outlined below:
 - **TOPIC 1: Effective Communication Channels**

Challenges identified included language barriers, cultural differences in communication, time zone issues and technical difficulties during online meetings, and the complexity of visa and immigration processes. Ensuring the security and confidentiality of sensitive data (in line with GDPR) and managing digital communication tools were also discussed. The group highlighted the importance of crisis management, staying updated with technology, and handling personnel changes. Preferred channels included email, social media (Messenger, WhatsApp).
 - **TOPIC 2: Standardizing Information for Students**

The group proposed standardizing pre-exchange, during-exchange, and post-exchange information to help students navigate the program more easily. This included application guidelines, course listings, living costs, health insurance, visa, accommodation, transportation, and cultural tips. They also suggested offering excursion activities and follow-up systems during the exchange and feedback reports after the exchange.
 - **TOPIC 3: Activities and Timelines for AIMS Student Mobility**

Key activities such as funding, outreach, and application procedures were discussed, along with course matching and pre-departure preparation. Timelines were provided for outbound and inbound students, including nominations, course matching, application, visa arrangements, orientation, and post-programme reports.

- **TOPIC 4: Communication with Faculty**
Recommendations included clear requirements for students, FAQs, credit transfer guidelines, regular workshops to align faculty expectations, and feedback platform.
 - **TOPIC 5: Support Needed from Governments**
The group emphasised the need for adequate funding to support AIMS students, upgrade university facilities, streamlined credit transfer processes, clear guidelines for obtaining AIMS funding from government, centralised visa procedures on AIMS website, promoting/showcasing unique opportunities offered by AIMS member universities, and training workshops for IROs.
 - **TOPIC 6: Ensuring Health, Safety, and Well-being of Students**
Discussions focused on providing health and safety information, mental health support, logistical assistance, and ensuring that health insurance and disability support were readily available for students.
 - **TOPIC 7: Institutional Memory for Programme Sustainability**
The group proposed creating operational guidelines and online repositories to store templates, documents, and data. AIMS members suggested developing a microsite for partners and members, with access to important documents and key performance indicators (KPIs) and offering capacity-building training and shadowing prior turnover for IROs to ensure smooth transitions and programme's sustainability.
 - **TOPIC 8: Activities to Enhance Cultural Learning Experiences**
Ideas included predeparture orientation, integrating social engagement with cultural immersion, joining student clubs, working with students support groups/buddies' system, and cultural exchange activities.
- 37 In the second part of the IRO and alumni breakout session, IROs and alumni provided input to the two key questions posed on [mentimeter](#): 1) How to make AIMS more attractive for students to pursue intra-regional mobility? 2) How to strengthen linkages and activities between IROs and students/alumni?
- 38 The group emphasised the importance of funding support for mobility initiatives, along with enhanced promotion of AIMS and the region through various channels. They highlighted the value of alumni sharing their experiences. To ensure a better mobility experience, application processes, credit transfers and recognition need to be streamlined and facilitated. Additionally, exploring opportunities such as internships, short-term mobility, summer programs, community service (USR), and the AIMS Award would be beneficial.
- 39 To strengthen linkages and activities between International Relations Offices (IROs) and students/alumni, various initiatives were suggested, including communication through social media, strengthen AIMS Alumni Network, develop AIMS Alumni Database and IRO networks, hosting sharing sessions, mentoring, and organising gatherings and networking events.
- 40 The inputs from the parallel session will be incorporated in the AIMS Operational Handbook and some matters will be discussed further at the 9th Steering Committee Meeting of the AIMS Programme in November 2023.
- 41 The Welcome Dinner was hosted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan, at the Hilton Hiroshima Hotel. Participants in their national and traditional attire enjoyed the evening that featured the traditional Wadaiko drum performances and a special tribute to Prof. Taiji Hotta, honoring his significant contributions to higher education in the region ahead of his retirement.

Students' Presentation from the AIMS Summer Intensive Programme and Reflections from participants

- 42 The AIMS Summer Intensive Programme: Future of Higher learning from Student Perspectives held from 1-8 August 2024, was organised by Hiroshima University with student nominations from AIMS member countries and facilitated by SEAMEO RIHED. A total of 27 students participated. On the final day of their programme, they presented their visions for future higher education learning to the participants. Prof. Taiji Hotta moderated the session.
- 43 The six groups focused on various ideas for the future of higher education including accessibility, inclusivity, the integration of AI, Big data, IOT, and technologies such as Virtual and Augmented Reality, flexible and personalized learning, mentorship, employability, bridging the university-to-work transition, and micro-credentials. The presentations are available as [Appendix 6](#).
- 44 The participants were interested to know how students in remote areas can gain access with limited technology. Suggestion included bringing students to universities where they can access the necessary technology and given the future outlook, technology could evolve within the next decade. Gradual implementation of small prototypes was recommended to ease the transition and facilitate change. Micro-credential courses were highlighted as a practical way to prepare students with job-ready skills. Students also shared that governments could support technology integration in education by providing office spaces, facilitating partnerships with companies for training and internships, and fostering a robust and supportive higher education infrastructure for aspiring educators.
- 45 Students reflected that participating in the AIMS Summer Intensive Programme has broadened their horizon. Collaborating with a diverse group, they learned to share ideas, gained valuable knowledge, and developed new perspectives to bring back and share with peers in their home countries. One student was particularly moved by her experience in Hiroshima, expressing admiration for the city's resilience and recovery from the devastating atomic bomb, portraying the indomitable human spirit.

Closing Ceremony

- 46 Asst. Prof. Dr. Romyen Kosaikanont, SEAMEO RIHED Centre Director, congratulated the students of the AIMS Summer Intensive Programme for their teamwork in addressing challenges for both their countries and the region. The 18th Annual Review Meeting held in Hiroshima, focused on the theme "Reimagining Mobility for Peace and Sustainability" and explored the future of AIMS. During the keynote session, micro-credentials were highlighted as one of several tools that can shape the future of higher education. Government representatives discussed supporting micro-credentials, with plans to revisit the topic at the 9th Steering Committee Meeting in November. Faculty, IROs, and alumni also shared ideas to enhance AIMS and contribute to its growth.
- 47 She highlighted the diversity within AIMS as a strength but noted that harmonising efforts require mutual understanding of the differences among its members. She stressed the need to collaborate within AIMS as well as with other stakeholders, including the private sector, as key to the harmonisation process. Dr. Romyen expressed gratitude to MEXT Japan, Hiroshima University, participants, alumni, and the RIHED team for their contributions during the meeting.
- 48 Dr. Kazuhiko Koike, Vice President of Hiroshima University, commended the students for their insightful presentations on the future of higher education. Reflecting on his involvement with the AIMS Programme since Japan joined in 2013, he cherished the opportunity to reconnect with old friends as well as meet new friends, which further inspired his commitment to support student exchanges in AIMS.
- 49 This year's meeting in Hiroshima during the Peace Memorial Day served as a reminder of the destructive power of conflict, underscoring the crucial need for understanding and cooperation

among people, nations, and regions. He emphasised that education, through promoting student exchanges, plays a vital role in fostering peace and enhancing students' appreciation of diverse cultures and perspectives. He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all participants and was confident that the discussions from the past two days would have a lasting impact on the future of the AIMS Programme.

- 50 Mr. Hiroshi Ando, Minister's Secretariat of MEXT Japan, congratulated the participants on a successful meeting. He highlighted the productive roundtable discussion on the role of higher education policies in advancing the SDGs and the future development of AIMS initiatives in the region. The parallel sessions also fostered constructive dialogues on key issues such as international student mobility, promotion, and emerging trends such as micro-credentials.
- 51 He was impressed by the students' presentations, which affirmed his confidence in the bright future of the region's younger generations. He expressed hope for the continued development of AIMS and encouraged participants to maximise these opportunities. He concluded by extending his heartfelt gratitude to all attendees who contributed to the meeting's success.

Venue of the 19th Annual Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme

- 52 The venue of the 19th Annual Review Meeting was announced as Malaysia.
- 53 The Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia and AIMS Malaysia warmly welcomed all participants to join the 19th Annual Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme in Penang, Malaysia on 4-6 November 2024.

Cultural visit: Miyajima Island

- 54 Hiroshima University organised a cultural visit to Miyajima Island, where participants had the opportunity to enjoy local delicacies and explore the island's rich cultural heritage.