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“We cannot take inclusive and equal TNE partnerships for granted”

**Southeast Asia-UK Partnerships and Exchanges
Baseline Research (PEER Project)**

28 June 2022, Bangkok



TNE Definitions

“All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is located”.

(Council of Europe 2002, para.28)

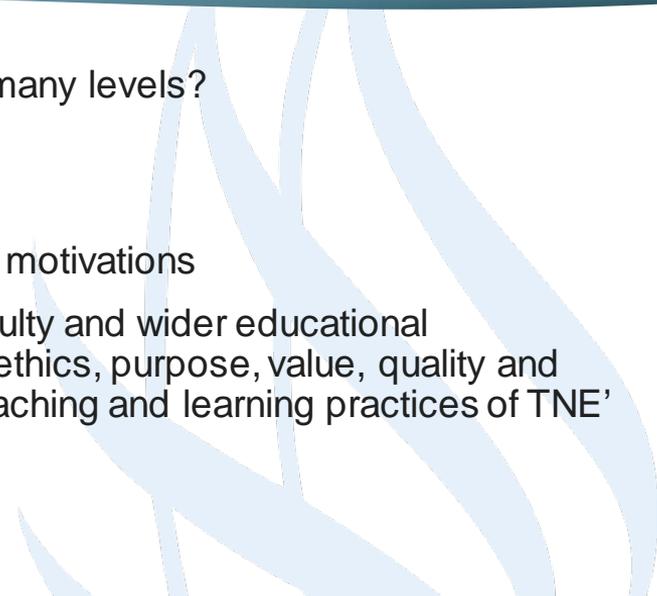
“Including, but not limited to, branch campuses, distance learning, online provision, joint and dual degree programmes, double awards, ‘fly-in’ faculty and mixed models, traditionally referred to as blended learning.”

(Universities UK International, 2020, p.5)



TNE and equal partnership?

- Mutual benefit and on how many levels?
- Soft power and influence
 - Government Strategy
- The specifics of institutional motivations
- 'It is not uncommon that faculty and wider educational stakeholders challenge the ethics, purpose, value, quality and relevance, as well as the teaching and learning practices of TNE' (Jean Francois, 2016, p.6)
- Student voice?





The landscape of TNE in Asia

Over 225 countries and territories host UK TNE students, with China (61,495), Malaysia (48,460), Singapore (27,875) and Hong Kong (22,480) being the top four Asian countries and territories hosting UK TNE students

([‘The scale of UK transnational education’](#) Universities UK International, YEAR)

In comparison to other regions, **collaborative provisions** represent the greatest proportional growth in Asia (and Africa), compared to other types of TNE provisions such as overseas campus, distance, flexible or distributed learning.

In 2018/2019, the percentage of UK HE TNE students from Asia enrolled in collaborative provisions exceeded **50%** of the total TNE student number for the first time ([UUKI, 2022](#))

Southeast Asia-UK TNE Case Study examples

Preliminary findings

Indonesia

Malaysia

Taiwan

Japan

China





Guiding Research Questions



- What are key motivations for TNE partnerships?
- What gives TNE partnerships life?
- How and by whom are inclusiveness and equality in TNE partnerships defined and implemented?
- What is being learnt and what emerging opportunities and ideas can sustain and drive Southeast Asia-UK TNE partnerships in a post-Covid era?



Indonesia-UK TNE

Motivations at the National level

- For a country of its size Indonesia is relatively late in embracing TNE
- Several types of TNE:
 - Branch campuses, Franchises, Articulation programs
- The Indonesian HE system is currently facing serious challenges regarding access, equity and quality
- TNE is proposed to improve quality
 - UK TNE in-country is increasing
 - Growing numbers of Indonesian students now studying in UK
 - UK Government is committed to helping build long term sustainable partnerships
- Concerns about a Two-Tier education system



Indonesia-UK TNE

Motivations at an institutional level

A pioneering Masters Degree in Transportation Logistics

- Top-down initiative with a business case to be extracted from a commercial entity
 - To support the development of the Indonesia transportation logistics industry, supported by adequate infrastructure, and skilled professionals with a high level of subject knowledge.
- Indonesian HEI keen to partner with the expertise and experience of the UK HEI - 'a stepwise change to local provision'
- The UK partner was keen to establish a TNE partnership with Indonesia as a country, a growth market and with a top university
- High-level strategic desire for this TNE programme to be successful

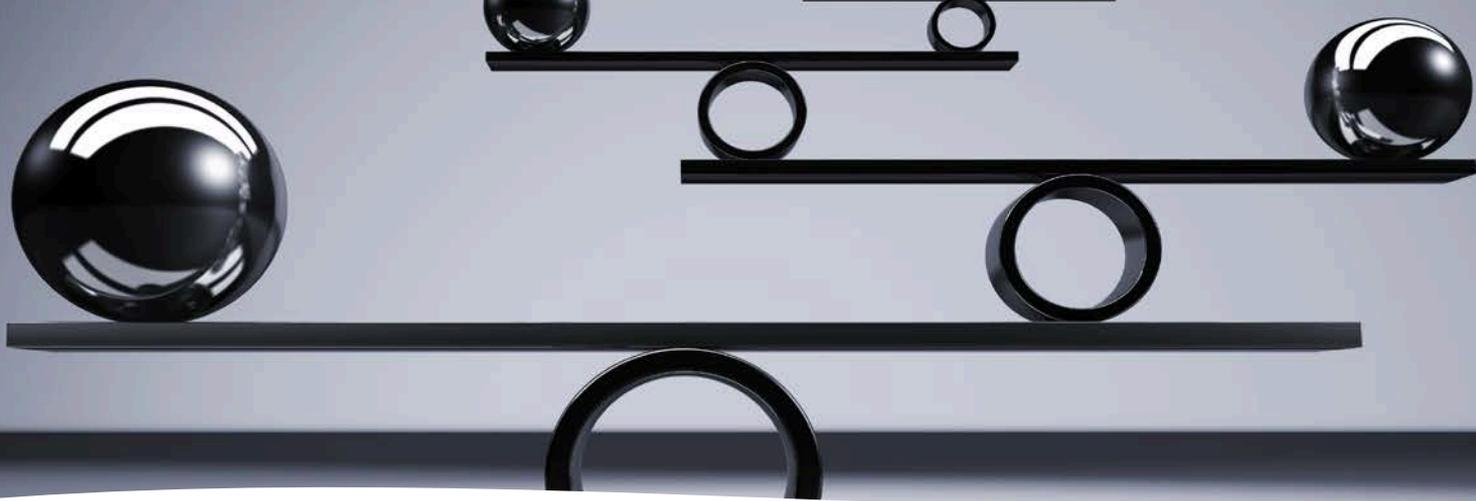


Indonesia-UK TNE

Motivations at institutional level



- A partnership on both sides to help improve international ranking
- Top-down approach
 - “descending from the university to faculty and then to the program level..”
- A Joint programme – 2 Masters courses running in parallel which were exchanging credit, with at one stage both programmes aiming to be validated
 - Targeting the working professional market
 - Students would benefit from international exposure without travelling overseas



What gives the partnership strife/life?

Negotiations and Quality Assurance

- Negotiating the ‘business case’ and pipeline of students to make the venture financially viable.
 - The minimum required was a financial calculation
- Negotiating regulations
 - Alignment of study credits, CVs of the lecturers
- Negotiations with the industry partner
 - Marketing, student pipeline, industry requirements



Student experience

- Recruitment, admissions and IELTS
- A local and global outlook in-built
- International diversity and from a diverse group of academics
- “Local tutors offered opportunity for ‘translanguaging’ which was valued”
- Separate versus combined delivery





Malaysia-UK

TNE Motivations at the National level

- Malaysia's overarching vision is that of becoming a regional hub for the private HE market
- TNE is closely linked with the country's colonial history with large numbers of Malaysian students studying in UK or locally through agreements with British providers
- Second-largest host country for UK TNE, with more than a half of all non-local programmes in Malaysian TNE leading to a UK qualification
- In 2019 the country's respective HE quality assurance agencies (QAA and MQA) signed a MoU committing to a strengthened cooperation and efficiency in the assessment of UK TNE
- Franchised most established model but interestingly through this more Dual Award programmes
- Issues of 'sameness' (tension between contextualising learning and brand identity)
- More recently "TITAS" (Islamic and Asian Civilisation) modules



Malaysia-UK TNE Motivations at the Institutional level

Dual Awards programmes with several UK partners at undergraduate level across varied disciplines

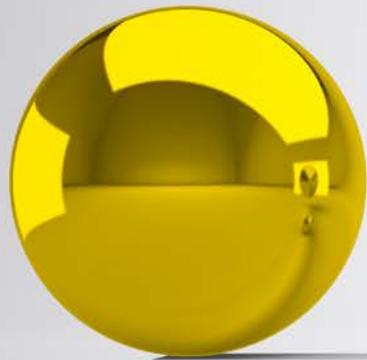
- A Malaysian HEI part of a multinational corporation, representative of Malaysia's national strategy
- Strongly networked with other HE institutions
 - Programmes with UK HEIs in diverse subjects (Accountancy to Psychology) as well as related disciplines (Interior Design and Fashion)
- Key characteristics
 - Syllabus & assessment designed by UK with some subjects designed by Malaysian counterpart including elements of context and morality aligned with Malaysian experiences, values and regulations



What gives this partnership life?

- The shared history of the two countries.
- Wide acceptance and high reputation of the UK education system in Malaysia.
- The overall view of the Malaysian population is that UK degrees are relatively more prestigious than others.
- Collaboration between UK and Malaysia is easy and widespread in the respective TNE landscapes.
- Excellent outcomes in terms of employability.
- Open communication, albeit currently more of a UK-design but moving towards enhanced autonomy.





Taiwan-UK TNE

- HEIs in Taiwan have faced a need for reform
- A clear internationalisation agenda for TNE
 - 'Higher Education Sprout Project' (HESP) (2000) Department of Education
 - Dual degrees, MOUs, international conference attendance, training
- Also, a social perspective and call for localisation (莊坤良 2012)
- Focus on quality
 - Offshore educational programs have strict regulations
 - Excellence must never be compromised to meet demands

Motivations at the Institutional level

A Dual Award PhD programme established formally in 2012 (with an MOU)

- Started with an informal link between two professors
 - Universities with similar academic achievements
 - “Men-dang-hu-dui”
 - similar to marriage, two people get married from similar backgrounds”
- Started with bi-lateral workshops so professors and early career researchers have opportunities to exchange and share ideas



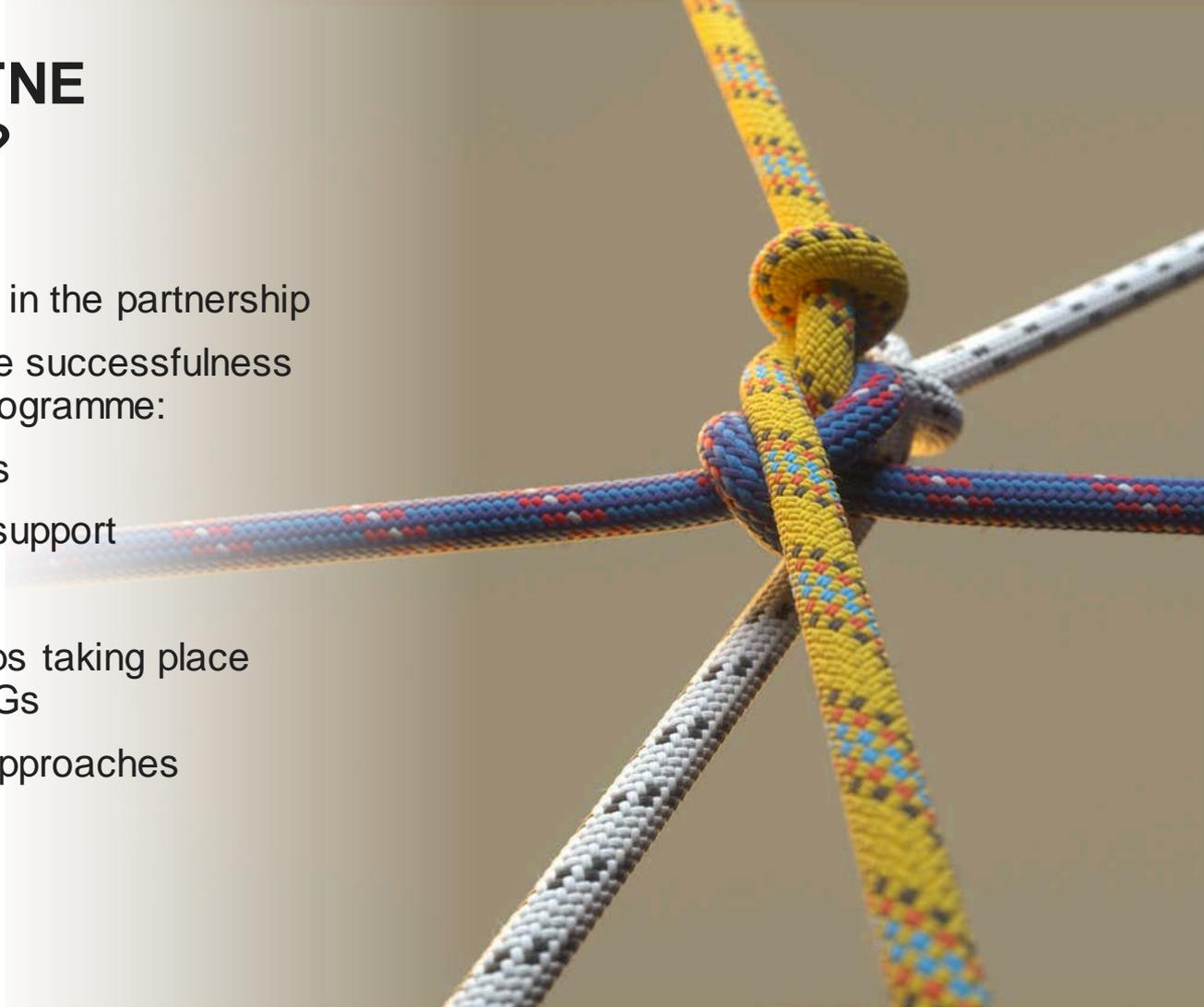


What gives this TNE partnerships life?

Sincerity is the crucial role in the partnership

Five factors that enable the successfulness and sustainability of the programme:

1. Well matched institutes
2. Strong administration support
3. Tuition fee waiver
4. Bilateral joint workshops taking place annually based on SDGs
5. Effective recruitment approaches





Japan-UK TNE Motivations at the National level

- Among various TNE forms the Japanese government attaches importance to double and joint degree programs as an important focus for HE internationalisation
- Overall, the government encourages Japanese students to study abroad, while the number of such students has been stagnant in the past decade
- The government seeks to broaden a horizon of inward-looking students through TNE



Japan-UK TNE

Motivations at the institutional level

A pioneering Dual Degree Award at Masters level

- Students could benefit from the combined resources of two of the world's leading institutions in Japanese Studies, located in two major global cities - and the only one with a UK institution
- Opportunity for the Japan partner to move into a new stage of internationalisation
- A response to the government's call for internationalisation and higher education reform in Japan towards strengthening institutional international competitiveness, through funding to a small number of selected universities (enabling scholarships)



What gives the partnerships life?

- Many considerations around international relations
- Mutual trust and high-quality personnel required including the role of the ‘boundary spanner’
- A combination of top-down and bottom-up strategy
“The director of the university will consult on the university internationalisation strategies with schools and departments”
- Inclusion of faculties within the university to help infiltrate internationalisation
- Inclusion of students by offering scholarships – the Japan HEI offered special scholarships exclusive to students that exempts a large part of tuition fees



Overview of TNE Development in China

- Transnational education and research collaboration began in 2001 when China entered World Trade Organisation and committed to the General Agreement on Trade in Services
- Inconsistent and largely dependent on national policies and government directions – TNE suspension during 2006 and 2010
- Around 250 approved joint/dual degree programmes between the UK and China by 2019
- Recent Chinese government anti-globalisation direction discouraged transnational education collaboration and participation of world ranking

UK-China

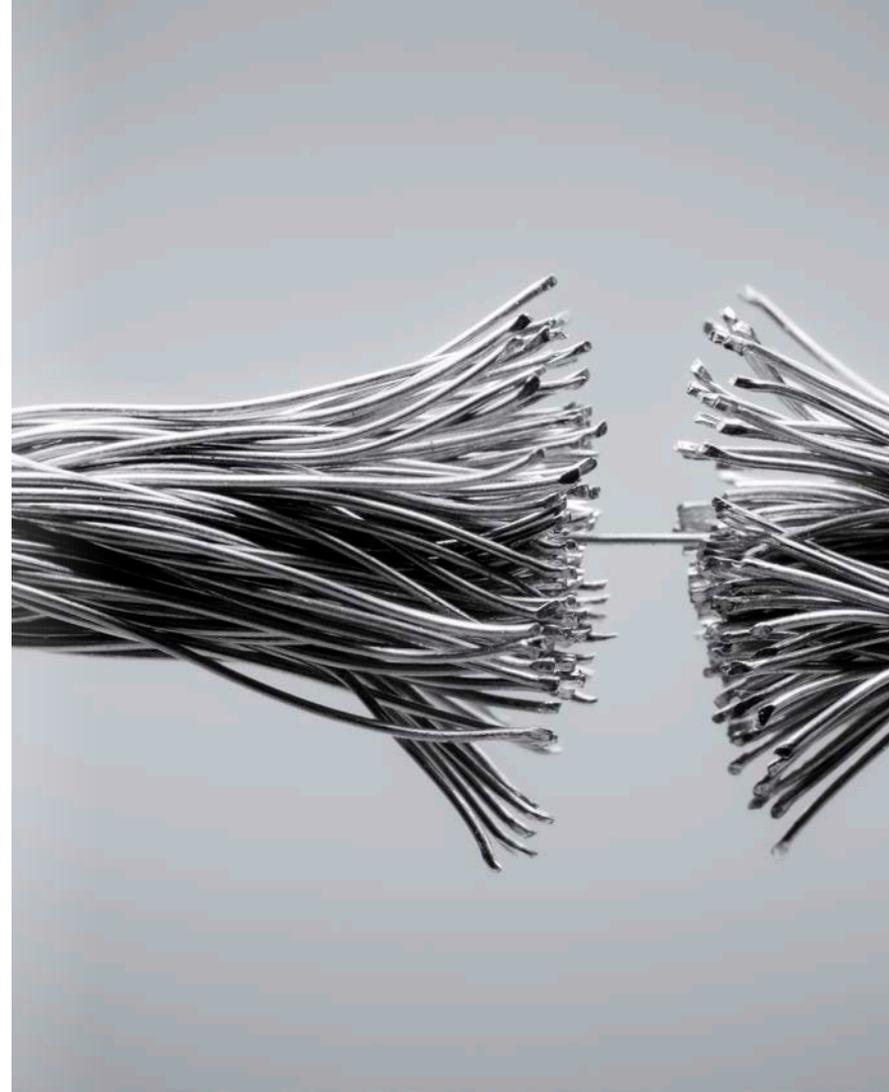
TNE Motivations at the Institutional level

- Joint Education Programme (JEP) approved by Chinese Ministry of Education (MoE)
- Chinese students can register to switch to the dual degree programme from Year 2
- Admission is based on students' academic performance as agreed by UK partner
- Students only receive the dual degree if they complete their final year at the UK partner
- COVID significantly impacted student numbers on the programme, e.g., only 4 students came to a UK institution in 2021 as compared to the previous year **xx** students



Why are there complications in building inclusive and equal TNE partnerships?

- BREXIT and Covid and wider countries border controls
- Public concern about immigration, restrictive visa requirements
- Demand for more vocational education which does not require overseas study also resulting in TNE losing ground
- Different education structures may lead to a better 'fit' for one side of the partnership than the other
- Imbalanced tuition fees between the UK and Asian institutions leads to excluding those students with financial struggles





Why are there complications in building inclusive and equal TNE partnerships?

- Inadequate programme mapping
- Student experience more 'study abroad' than 'study' experiences abroad
- International engagements may have few incentives (job security or promotion for faculty)
- Inequality in beliefs (and national policy)
- English as a lingua franca
- Risk for partnership when 'key' people move affecting sustainably
- Inflexible business cases can make programmes unviable



What will give more life to inclusive and equal TNE partnerships between East Asia and UK?

Motivations & priorities

- Mutually beneficial educational (degree and credit) and fee structures between UK and Asian institutions
- Reviewing what constitutes effective TNE teaching - developing interactive teaching across both institutions and more diverse faculty interaction
- Reviewing quality regulators in the host countries, requirements around contact hours, staff experience/qualifications
- Providing tangible benefits linked to academics' career development to encourage academics' international engagement



What will give more life to inclusive and equal TNE partnerships between East Asia and UK?

Motivations, priorities, impacts

- Covid has brought its challenges but also key lessons to enable bold moves forward
- Growth areas in collaborative (joint degree and franchise) partnerships
- “Lower volume, higher return, ‘quality’ partnerships” (Bennell, 2019 p.39)
- A call for sending and host countries to work together to develop [and fulfil] robust TNE partnership definitions (British Council, Going Global report, 2013:15)
- Accessing and responding to students (and Alumni) voice



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Thank you

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