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# Project Report

**Strengthening Leadership with Gender  
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity  
in Higher Education Institutions  
in South East Asia**

**Phase I: January 2022 to October 2023**

# Contents

<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Overview of the Project</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Key Facts</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Project Timeline and Activities</b>	<b>8</b>
1. Project Launch and Leadership Forum, 7 February 2022	9
2. Three-day Virtual Leadership Training, 7–9 March 2022	10
3. Series of Online Workshops, July–November 2022	11
4. UK-SEA Leadership Exchange Programmes	15
5. Stakeholder Forum and Policy Dialogue: Envisioning GEDI for Southeast Asian Higher Education, 9–10 October 2023	24
<b>Project Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Key Informants' Views on Benefits, Values, and Outcomes</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Conclusion and Phase II</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>35</b>
Appendix 1: List of Institutions, People, and Their Respective Positions	35
Appendix 2: Topic guide for key informant interviews	40

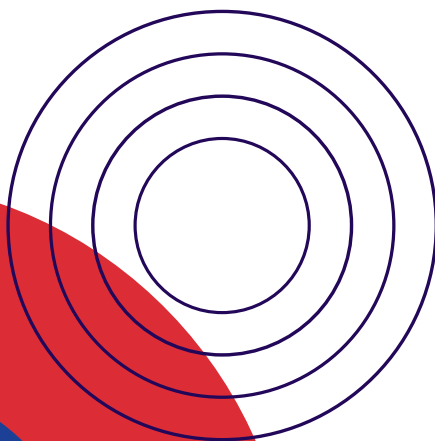
# Summary

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are central to the work of the British Council as a cultural relations organisation that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion as core values. In recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed on gender and inclusion, as reflected in Strategy 2025, aligning with the UK Government's commitment to reduce gender inequality through its overseas development assistance work. Higher education institutions are incubators for the thought-leaders and social leaders of the future and has some of the most powerful tools available to society to accelerate progress towards the equality and empowerment of women and girls everywhere. The British Council shares with others the desire to bring an intentional focus to higher education systems and practices and how they can be improved through attention to gender equality outcomes.

SEAMEO RIHED shares similar vision with the British Council in fostering leadership with Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity in Higher Education in South East Asia.

Working as strategic partners, the British Council and SEAMEO RIHED conducted Phase 1 of the Project which ran between January 2022 to October 2023 and included the following activities: a Project Launch and Leadership Forum, a three-day Virtual Leadership Training Programme, a series of five online workshops, the delivery of five UK-SEA Leadership Exchange Grants, and a final stakeholder forum.

Through the project, the British Council and SEAMEO RIHED reached a total of 40 HEIs from 12 different countries. Five universities based in the UK partnered with 35 universities (i.e., 7 HEIs each) from the following countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. The total list of HEI participants involved with the project, predominantly HEI leaders and, in some cases, GEDI experts, equated to 92 academics. These individuals were engaged in a variety of mostly online, but some face-to-face, webinars, workshops, and training sessions relating to Leadership with Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity in Higher Education Institutions.

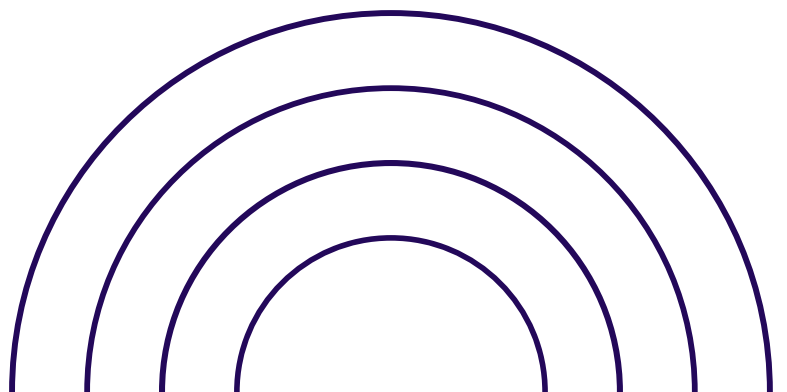


In addition to engagement with HEI leaders, the project embedded activities promoting the participation of government officials from South East Asia Region. The main output of the project was a White Paper advising on embedding GEDI in Higher Education Institutions for policymakers and HEIs. Two key stakeholder forums were held for HEI leaders and policymakers in South East Asia, attended by 60 individuals.

The majority of project participants who completed the end survey reported increased awareness, confidence, and capability in terms

of GEDI. The main perceived benefits and values of the project included opportunities for international networking, meaningful engagement, two-way knowledge exchange, learning about GEDI, and elevating the profile of GEDI at institutional, national, and regional levels. Key outcomes included the publication of the White Paper and the establishment, or initiation, of a new regional GEDI network, which encompasses HEIs committed to GEDI. Lastly, various strategic outcomes, reflecting the direct application of GEDI learning at both institutional and national levels in the UK and South East Asia, were documented.

**Overall, Phase I of the project was considered a success by key stakeholders, and the British Council and SEAMEO RIHED are jointly exploring the next steps for a second implementation phase.**



# Overview of the Project

The Strengthening Leadership with Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (GEDI) in Higher Education Institutions Project brought together leaders from Higher Education Institutes in South East Asia, policymakers, and UK academics. The aim of the project was to engage HEI leaders, provide platforms for sharing ideas and reflection, empower leaders with innovative ideas and knowledge, offer some practical suggestions stemming from initiatives and experiences, and strengthen university networks regarding GEDI to create a sustainable network of university leaders to promote gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in HEIs. This GEDI project was co-implemented by the British Council in partnership with SEAMEO RIHED. The project consultant was the Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

The project recognises contributions from the following South East Asia countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. It also acknowledges the crucial role of their HEIs in regional sustainable development as well as the importance of collective efforts towards a sustainable future for the South East Asian region.

Through the GEDI project, the British Council and SEAMEO RIHED engaged with 35 universities from 11 SEAMEO Member Countries (as presented above), nominated by their respective governments upon the request of SEAMEO RIHED for collaboration on this project. These universities partnered with 5 UK universities, selected through an open call process run by the British Council, This UK-South East Asia Leadership Exchange Grant was valued at £60,000.

The aim of the project was to establish a sustainable network of university leaders to promote gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity by creating a common space in which to share leadership tools and generate new ideas and initiatives on this theme. This network was envisaged to ultimately support the successful management of HEIs and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals, particularly SDG4 (Quality Education), SDG5 (Gender Equality), and SDG17 (Partnerships).

The overall project objectives were to:

1. Enhance GEDI in the governance and institutional management of university leaders towards an equal and sustainable community of higher education (HE).
2. Actively engage and provide platforms for leaders to share and reflect on gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity in HE leadership.
3. Empower university leaders with innovative leadership tools to embrace EDI in their policymaking, institutional operations, and building a sustainable community of HE.
4. Formulate and plan for practical initiatives to mainstream GEDI in HE leadership operations.
5. Strengthen university networks regarding GEDI in South East Asia.

Our approach to improve GEDI in higher education in Southeast Asia is to be highly culturally sensitive. Instead of imposing a framework for GEDI, the consultants work collaboratively with leaders in order to create their frameworks responding to their priorities and contexts.

# Key facts

During its implementation over the course of January 2022 to the end of October 2023, the project achieved the following:

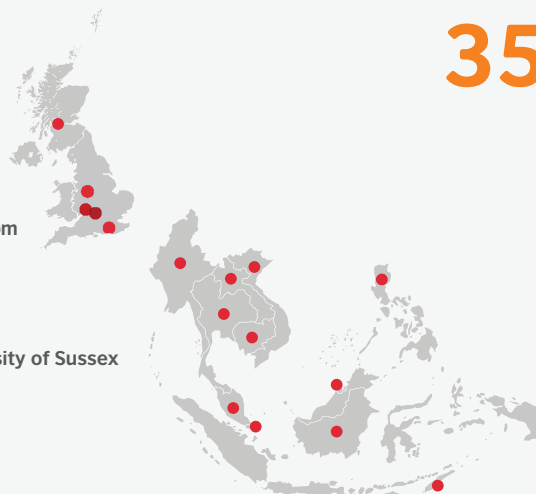
## Reach

**12** Countries involved

Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam, and the United Kingdom

**5** UK universities participated

- Institute of Development Studies (IDS) – University of Sussex  
*Consultant for implementation/UK grantee*
- Aston University
- University of Gloucestershire
- University of Oxford
- University of the West of Scotland



**35** South East Asian universities participated, spread as follows

- Brunei Darussalam: **2**
- Cambodia: **5**
- Indonesia: **2**
- Lao PDR: **4**
- Malaysia: **2**
- Myanmar: **4**
- The Philippines: **2**
- Singapore: **1**
- Thailand: **6**
- Timor-Leste: **3**
- Viet Nam: **4**

## Training and network

**6** Online leadership training and workshops on empowering GEDI leadership run by UK universities.



**299** Participants from South East Asia and UK

 institute of development studies	 UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND	 institute of development studies	 UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE	 UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD	 Aston University BIRMINGHAM UK
Leadership Workshop on Gender EDI in HEIs	Gender & EDI Essentials	Power & Power Relations	Building Inclusive Behaviours	Allyship	Action Planning
<b>1</b> March 2022	<b>2</b> July 2022	<b>3</b> August 2022	<b>4</b> September 2022	<b>5</b> October 2022	<b>6</b> November 2022



**2** Leadership Forums

Attended by:

**14**

senior government officials from South East Asia

**80**

university leaders from South East Asia

**12**

academics from UK universities

# Partnerships



**5** UK-South East Asia Leadership Exchange Grants Awarded



Total grant value:

**£60,000**

Grant duration:

**1 year**

The following partnerships were formed through the Exchange Grants.



- Universiti Malaya (UM)<sup>8</sup>
- Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia<sup>8</sup>
- Philippine Normal University<sup>11</sup>
- Savannakhet University<sup>2</sup>
- Vietnam National University of Agriculture<sup>5</sup>
- National University of Laos<sup>2</sup>
- Svay Rieng University<sup>1</sup>

A face-to-face workshop was conducted at IDS in the UK.



- Universiti Brunei Darussalam<sup>7</sup>
- National University of Battambang<sup>1</sup>
- Yadanabon University<sup>3</sup>
- Kasetsart University<sup>4</sup>
- King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi<sup>4</sup>
- Thammasat University<sup>4</sup>
- Institute of Business<sup>6</sup>



- Universiti Teknologi Brunei<sup>7</sup>
- Chea Sim University of Kamchaymea<sup>1</sup>
- Royal University of Law and Economics<sup>1</sup>
- Royal University of Phnom Penh<sup>1</sup>
- Souphanouvong University<sup>2</sup>
- Yenanchaung University<sup>3</sup>
- Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University<sup>4</sup>



- Champasack University<sup>2</sup>
- East Yangon University<sup>3</sup>
- Cavite State University<sup>11</sup>
- Mae Fah Luang University<sup>4</sup>
- Dili Institute of Technology<sup>5</sup>
- Hue University<sup>5</sup>
- Thuyloi University<sup>5</sup>

\*A face-to-face workshop was conducted at SEAMEO RIHED office in Bangkok, Thailand.



- Universitas Gadjah Mada<sup>9</sup>
- Sebelas Maret University<sup>9</sup>
- Myeik University<sup>3</sup>
- Chiang Rai Rajabhat University<sup>4</sup>
- Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e<sup>6</sup>
- University of Transport and Communication<sup>5</sup>
- Nanyang Technological University<sup>10</sup>

1 - Cambodia; 2 - Lao PDR; 3 - Myanmar; 4 - Thailand; 5 - Vietnam; 6 - Timor-Leste; 7 - Brunei; 8 - Malaysia; 9 - Indonesia; 10 - Singapore; 11 - The Philippines

# Policy Engagement

**1** Development of a White Paper advising on embedding gender EDI in HEIs for policymakers and HEIs

**2** Key stakeholder forums held for HEI leaders and policymakers in South East Asia

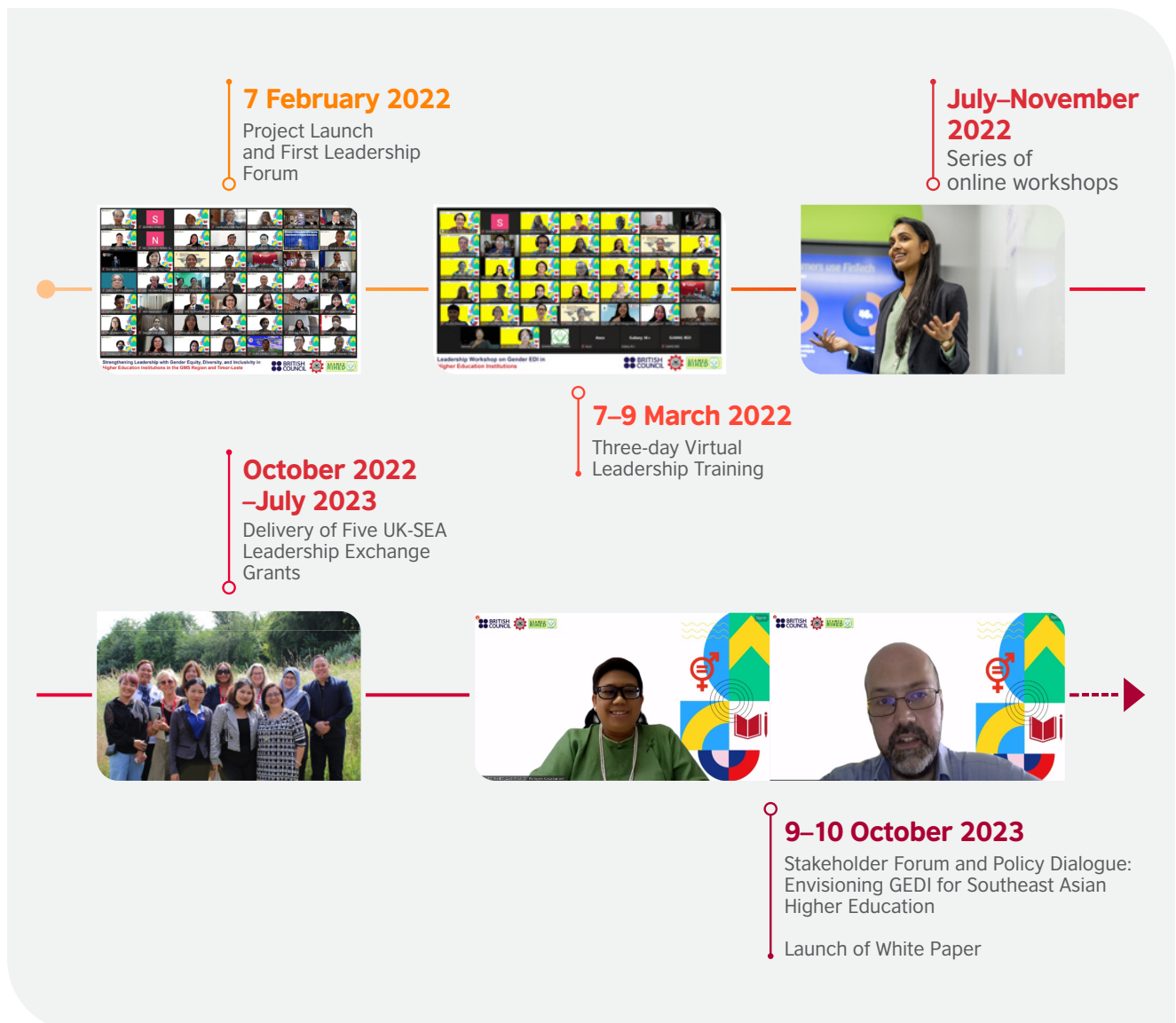
**60**

HEI leaders and policymakers from South East Asia attended the key stakeholder forums, including:

- Commissioner, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Philippines
- Director General, Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia
- Deputy Director, Centre for Leadership Sustainability (CLS), Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT), Malaysia

# Project Timeline and Activities

Phase I of the project began in January 2022 and concluded in October 2023, with several events taking place during this period as outlined in the following timeline:





## 1. Project Launch and Leadership Forum, 7 February 2022

The “Project Launch and Leadership Forum: Pathway towards Leadership with Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity in Higher Education” was organised as an online kick-off event for the project. The event included a presentation on the overview of the project and its objectives. The forum was hosted to discuss a pathway towards leadership with GEDI in HEIs and included a moment when all parties reaffirmed their commitment towards the project and its goals.

The keynote address, delivered by Prof. Chalidaporn Songsamphan, co-president of the Asian Association of Women’s Studies, reminded the forum that achieving an equal ratio between males and females should not always be considered a victory for gender equity and increasing the number of women represented in any area alone would not solve the inclusivity challenge. The perspectives on gender equity expressed by both Thai and UK speakers further demonstrated that gender equity and inclusivity remain global as well as regional challenges.

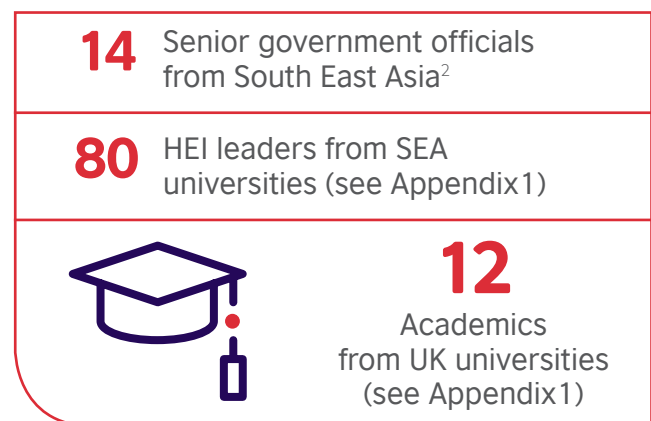
The address was followed by a panel discussion on “Leadership for Gender EDI: Challenges, Needs and Ways Forward” between H.E. Mr. Mak Ngoy, SEAMEO RIHED Governing Board Member and Director General, Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia; Assoc Prof. Yazrina Binti Yahya, SEAMEO RIHED Governing Board Member and Deputy Director, Centre for Leadership Sustainability (CLS), Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT), Malaysia; and Dr Aldrin Arenas Darilag, RMT, RN, CHRP, Commissioner, Commission on Higher Education, the Philippines.

During the launch and forum event, participants were asked to reflect on their HEIs’ commitment to gender equality and rank this alongside other inequalities and exclusions relating to ethnic and disability diversity. This exercise

revealed that, on average, participants (who engaged with the online Mentimeter survey tool)<sup>1</sup> found themselves at the start of the project (early 2022) with tentative but committed progress towards gender equality (scoring 3.6 out of 5). This was found to be marginally better than their awareness of ethnic or disability diversity (scoring 2.7 out of 5) and disability diversity (scoring 2 out of 5).

The event concluded with participants committing to the project and working towards more equitable, diverse, and inclusive leadership in HE.

The launch and forum event were attended by the following groups of participants:



Overall, the event was considered successful, as described specifically by one of the project partners:



**We believe that the Leadership Forum provided a platform for all university leaders and other stakeholders to gain a collective understanding of gender EDI landscapes in higher education, share government policies and perspectives on gender EDI in the South East Asian region as well as communicate the expectations of the project.**

**SEAMEO RIHED representative**

<sup>1</sup> Number of respondents completing the rating exercise not reported by IDS in the submitted M&E paper.

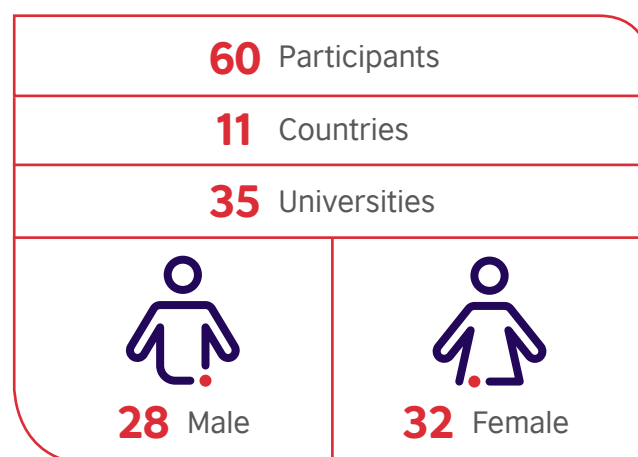
<sup>2</sup> This included representatives from the Ministries of Education in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Singapore; the Lao PDR Ministry of Education and Sports; the Ministries of Higher Education in Malaysia, Thailand, and Timor Lest; the Philippines Commission on Higher Education; and the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training.

## 2. Three-day Virtual Leadership Training, 7–9 March 2022

A three-day online Leadership Workshop on Gender EDI in HEIs took place in early March 2022 and was run by IDS. Despite being online, the workshop employed participatory and peer learning approaches, focusing on gender EDI definitions, strategies, and practices; future plans for improving gender EDI in South East Asian higher education leadership; and impact monitoring.

The training was designed to forge a common understanding among participants by highlighting the complexities of GEDI and

introducing the structural, occupational, organisational, interpersonal, and individual aspects involved in the exclusion of women. The intersectionality of gender equality with other areas of diversity, including race, ability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and geographical location, were also addressed. The workshop primarily focused on dialogue, resulting in improved awareness among all participants. Participants identified three “do-able” activities within their own institutions and/or remit: creating awareness of GEDI issues, undertaking GEDI-related research, and expanding access to HEIs.



### 3. Series of Online Workshops, July–November 2022

The five UK institutions hosted a series of online workshops (Figure 1) on key themes relating to GEDI and leadership. These overarching workshops were open to all partners under the GEDI project and offered in addition to the training directly provided through the UK-SEA Leadership Exchange Grant partnerships.



Figure 1: Overview of the Online Training Workshops

These five workshops offered UK partners the opportunity to share GEDI expertise on HEIs and compare their approaches to those of other UK HEIs, as well as South East Asian partners in the project, to gain exposure to new ideas and learn from each other. Table 1 provides further details of the workshops.

All five online workshops involved participants being divided into small groups to undertake thinking exercises and become familiar with the material presented.

This type of knowledge exchange (two-way learning) was invaluable to the GEDI project (see more in the section: Project outputs, outcomes, and impact). It was recognised and appreciated not just for its benefit to

South East Asian partners but also for the UK leads of these workshops, as clearly articulated during an interview post-project with a key informant:

*“From an EDI practice point of view for us at Aston, I think having that cultural context and learning about how gender equality issues play out within different social, cultural, political, and religious contexts is really valuable for us as an organisation with an international profile and international students. It helps to tailor our activities to suit the broader needs of our very diverse student population.”*

(UK HEI representative, during the post-project key informant interview)

Table 1: Overview of Online Training Workshops

Online workshops		Number of Attendees
<p>University of the West of Scotland, 22 July 2022</p>	<p><b>Workshop 1: Gender and EDI Essentials</b>                      Introductions to GEDI, including an overview of the UK context, Equality Act 2010; Protected Characteristics and Duties. This workshop explored leadership and governance at UWS, looking specifically at the EDI Human Rights Code and its implications for UWS. Finally, the Equality Impact Assessments were reviewed from the Framework/Tool/Aids decision-making perspective.</p> <p>A survey sent out after this workshop revealed that 90% of the participants felt they had increased their knowledge of gender balance in EDIs. This was exemplified through the following survey entry by a workshop participant: <i>“Equal participation of men and women hides other marginalisations around low income, culture, and religion.”</i> (from the post-workshop survey)</p>	<p><b>80 people</b>                      33% M                      67% F</p>
<p>IDS, 10 August 2022</p>	<p><b>Workshop 2: Power and Power Relations</b>                      This session explored the power dynamics in organisational leadership, practice, and policy. The various meanings of “power” [itself] were examined, useful power analysis frameworks introduced, and assumptions explored concerning how power is reproduced or changes occur in society and institutions. Finally, the workshop identified practical strategies and implications for addressing power dynamics [imbalances] and achieving gender and EDI outcomes in HEIs.</p> <p>The core message of the workshop is exemplified through this quote by a workshop participant: <i>“Power relations are always unfinished business. One must always monitor these.”</i> (from the post-workshop survey)</p> <p>From the Power and Power Relations workshop, 90% of participants expressed that their expectations had been met.</p>	<p><b>49 people</b>                      25% M                      75% F</p>
<p>University of Gloucestershire, 6 September 2022</p>	<p><b>Workshop 3: Building Inclusive Behaviours</b>                      Designed by the University’s Equality team in collaboration with an external consultant, this workshop was designed to help participants understand how unconscious bias can play out in interactions with staff and students. Strategies and techniques for mitigating the impact of unconscious bias and acquiring additional confidence and skills in honing and developing inclusive behaviours were discussed, including how to intervene when experiencing or witnessing problematic behaviour.</p>	<p><b>27 people</b>                      33% M                      50% F                      17% gender not declared</p>

	<p>Participants were encouraged to complete the pre-work ahead of the workshop, enabling them to discuss and share their learning. Follow-on work was provided to further enhance and develop learning.</p> <p>After the workshop, one participant commented: <i>“I am more conscious of crafting a sense of belonging, not just verbally but also using non-verbal clues.”</i> (from the post-workshop survey)</p>	
<p>Oxford University, 7 November 2022</p>	<p><b>Workshop 4: Intersectional Allyship</b> Designed by the Equality and Diversity team at the university and tailored to senior leaders, this session offered the opportunity for a reflection/discussion around one's personal experience of diversity and inclusion and how to collaborate with someone else with a different personal experience, serving as an ally.</p> <p>The underlying message was that the GEDI task involves everyone, and individuals and groups can work together despite their differences by negotiating roles and alternating between playing a protagonist role and supporting role (allyship) in the various struggles for GEDI based on one's own identity/positionality/group.</p> <p>This message was interpreted by one of the participants as: <i>“People who have power and privilege have a duty to think about what they can do to help others.”</i> (from the post-workshop survey)</p>	<p><b>55 people</b></p> <p>Gender not recorded</p>
<p>Aston University, 25 November 2022</p>	<p><b>Workshop 5: Action Planning</b> The Aston team, experienced in designing SMART Equality Charter action plans delivered this session. Delegates from South East Asian HEIs were encouraged to attend the session with an example EDI issue relevant to their context.</p> <p>During the session, delegates had the opportunity to think through the issue, evidencing quantitative and qualitative data, exploring and designing interventions, measuring impact, and ensuring accountability.</p>	<p><b>28 people</b></p> <p>At least 50% of attendees were women</p>

Figure 2 summarises the challenges to women's participation in HEIs, identified through group work in the Online Gender Essentials workshop delivered by the UWS. A useful overview is presented on the gendered norms in the

region and the ways in which women are excluded from HEIs through cultural norms, structural processes, and economic needs, highlighting the enormity of the challenge involved in bringing about change.

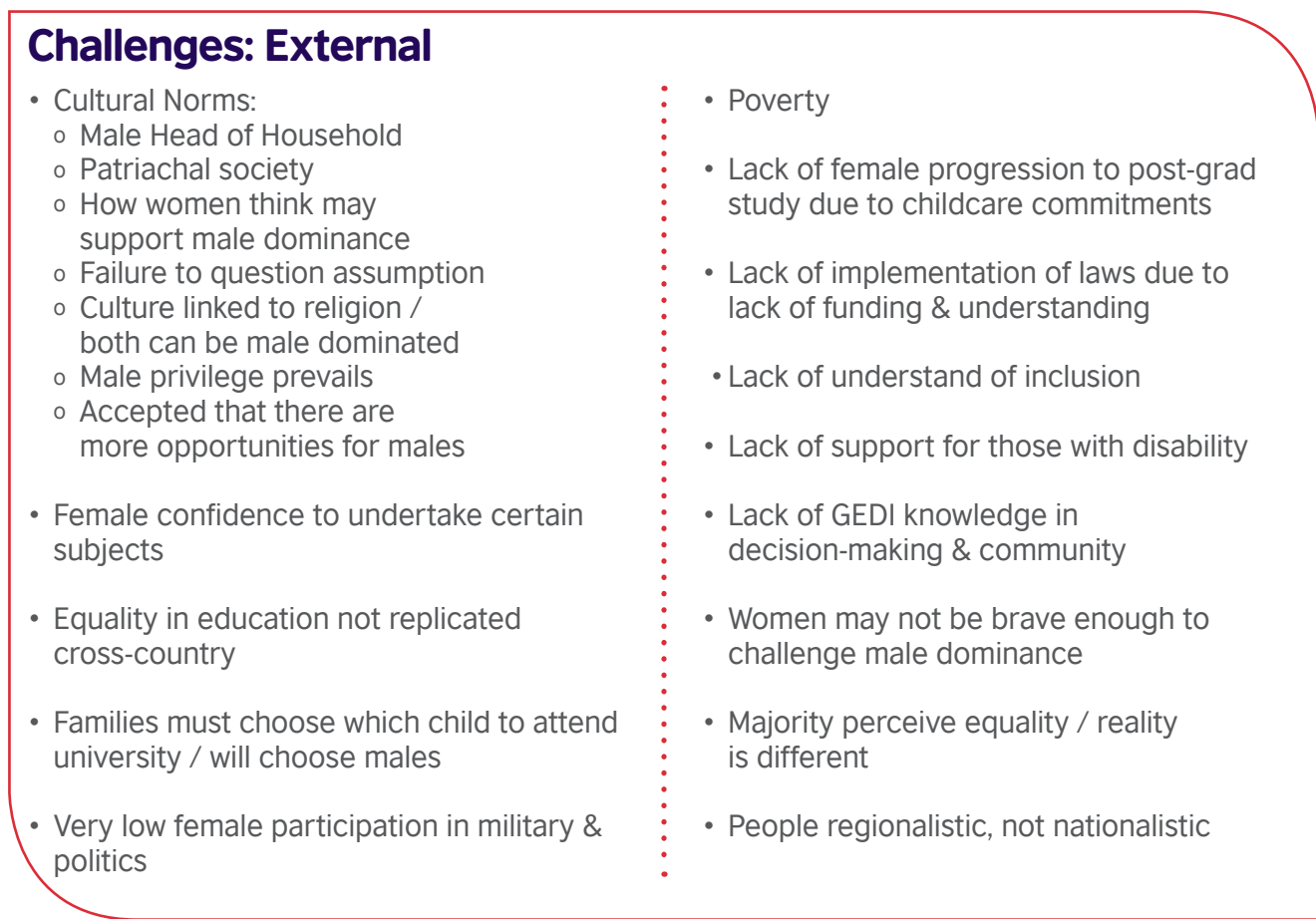


Figure 2: Group thinking exercise in this online workshop.

## 4. UK-SEA Leadership Exchange Grant

As part of the UK-SEA Leadership Exchange Grant, five UK universities provided direct training to leaders from the seven South East Asian HEIs they are matched with (Figure 3). Overviews of these five projects are presented in the following sections (Tables 2–6) and include information provided in the grantees' end-of-project reports submitted to the British Council.



Figure 3: UK and South East Asia Partnerships

## Details of the UK-SEA Leadership Exchange Grants

Institute of Development Studies	
<b>South East Asian partners</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. National University of Laos (Lao PDR)</li> <li>2. Philippine Normal University (The Philippines)</li> <li>3. Savannakhet University (Lao PDR)</li> <li>4. Svay Rieng University (Cambodia)</li> <li>5. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia</li> <li>6. Universiti Malaya</li> <li>7. Vietnam National University of Agriculture (Vietnam)</li> </ol>
<b>Grant amount</b>	£12,000 from the British Council
<b>Project start</b>	June 2022
<b>Project purpose (as per the proposal form)</b>	The aim is to engage university leaders in a reflection and analysis of their own respective scenarios, providing a common space for sharing futuristic leadership tools to promote gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity.
<b>Project summary/ activities</b>	<p>To achieve this aim, and after consultation with the seven participant universities, IDS considered that a short, intensive period of face-to-face meetings with team members, universities in this group, and key faculty both at IDS and Sussex University would best respond to the needs of the different universities involved. This would offer a period of total immersion to supplement the online elements of the exchange grant and this overall programme. To that end, an exchange event for South East Asian HEI leaders was hosted in the UK.</p> <p>The main project activities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A face-to-face immersive workshop was hosted at IDS in the UK from 26–30 June 2023, attended by seven SEA HEI Leaders. The workshop covered the following topics:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o EDI units at IDS and Sussex universities.</li> <li>o Senior managers at IDS and Sussex universities.</li> <li>o The design and delivery of relevant curricula by faculty members.</li> <li>o Senior researchers working in the area of GEDI.</li> <li>o Relevant neighbouring or partner institutions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A joint reflection on the content of the White Paper (included in the workshop agenda).</li> </ul> <p>(In addition, IDS contributed to a project-wide workshop on Power and Power Relations in HEIs. See section 3. Series of online workshops.)</p>



<p><b>Project outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Knowledge exchange event</b> in the form of a five-day face-to-face event hosted at IDS in the UK and attended by seven South East Asian HEI Leaders (i.e., local to UK mobility).</li> <li>• <b>Joint research:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Common research areas were identified with partner institutions (a wide variety of GEDI-related topics were listed).</li> <li>o Joint publication of a blog and plans underway to work on an edited book.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Knowledge exchange session</b> to feed into the White Paper (overall GEDI project outcome, led by IDS).</li> <li>• <b>Action plans under development:</b> during the immersive workshop, the seven South East Asian HEI leaders identified specific intentions they feel able to undertake in their respective institutions.</li> </ul>
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### Aston University

<p><b>South East Asian partners</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chiang Rai Rajabhat University (Thailand)</li> <li>2. Myeik University (Myanmar)</li> <li>3. Sebelas Maret University (Indonesia)</li> <li>4. Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e (UNTL) (Timor-Leste)</li> <li>5. Universitas Gadjah Mada (Indonesia)</li> <li>6. University of Transport and Communication (Vietnam)</li> </ol> <p>(Nanyang Technological University (Singapore))</p>
<p><b>Grant amount</b></p>	<p>£12,000 from the British Council</p>
<p><b>Project start</b></p>	<p>June 2022</p>
<p><b>Project purpose (as per proposal form)</b></p>	<p>The aim is to engage university leaders in reflection and analysis of their own respective scenarios providing a common space for sharing futuristic leadership tools to promote gender equity, diversity and inclusivity.</p>
<p><b>Project summary/ activities</b></p>	<p>Aston University delivered various activities and worked towards progressing others as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Acquisition and analysis of available data within each institution:</b> provided by two partners and presented during the workshop (although attendance was low). Key issues were captured and shared with SEAMEO RIHED.</li> <li>• <b>Development of research collaborations to formalise and extend partnerships:</b> Aston staff hosted a symposium on International Gender Equality in Higher Education in September 2022, bringing together 72 researchers from the UK, Indonesia, India, Russia, Brazil, Thailand, Cambodia, Germany, and Uzbekistan to share ideas and best practices. One of the partners of Aston and the representative from Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia presented at this conference.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SMART action plans discussed:</b> A project-wide workshop was delivered on Action Planning (see section 3. Series of online workshops). Following this, action plans were discussed, but the Aston partners have not been able to fully develop these due to the lack of data within their institutions, senior support for the work, and resources.</li> <li>• <b>Mentorship relationships/shadowing of UK EDI leaders facilitated:</b> it took a while for Aston to engage partners, but at the end of the project, they were at the stage of exploring travel options for two HEI leaders from two partner universities to come to the UK, as well as to run another symposium on International Gender Equality in HE later in 2023.</li> </ul>
<b>Project outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aston University reported <b>increased insight into the EDI and gender equality</b> challenges faced by different regions of the world, and South East Asia specifically, through this project.</li> <li>• <b>Joint research:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Common research areas were identified with partner institutions. Specifically, gender equality in leadership and safe and inclusive campuses.</li> <li>o Discussion on continued research and project collaboration with Sebelas Maret University relating to safe and inclusive campuses in Indonesia. (This is already taking place with a non-GEDI project HEI in the country, namely Airlangga University.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The acquisition and analysis of available quantitative/qualitative equality data within each institution, appropriate to the institutional context, was achieved by two partner HEIs.</li> <li>• New resources were developed to explore GEDI in HEIs: Aston created a Padlet for the partners to discuss EDI leadership issues, as well as an online video resource to support them in addressing key EDI challenges in HE.</li> <li>• One knowledge exchange event, Gender Equality in Higher Education Symposium, was hosted with a second planned.</li> </ul>

## University of Gloucestershire

<b>South East Asian partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universiti Teknologi Brunei</li> <li>• Chea Sim University of Kamchaymear</li> <li>• Royal University of Law and Economics</li> <li>• Royal University of Phnom Penh</li> <li>• Souphanouvong University</li> <li>• Yenanchaung University</li> <li>• Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University</li> </ul>
<b>Grant amount</b>	£11,990 from the British Council
<b>Project start</b>	June 2022

<p><b>Project purpose (as per proposal form)</b></p>	<p>Leaders in HEIs, whilst often experts in their academic or professional area, often lack knowledge of GEDI issues and need support when acting on them. The project will provide leaders with necessary support through 1) Building Inclusive Behaviours Workshop 2) Action Learning Sets (ALS) 3) Mentoring of Leaders 4) Reciprocal Mentoring</p>
<p><b>Project summary/ activities</b></p>	<p>Leaders in HEIs, whilst often experts in their academic or professional area, often lack knowledge of GEDI issues and need support when acting on them. The partners propose 4 elements to the project:</p> <p><b>Building Inclusive Behaviours Workshop</b> The partners develop an interactive workshop to introduce the concept of inclusive behaviours and the tools that leaders can use to measure, promote and embed them. A 3-hour workshop is delivered online with all 35 institutions that are part of the wider network. Each of the partner HEIs run versions of the workshops for staff and students.</p> <p><b>Action Learning Sets (ALS)</b> An online ALS is constituted comprising seven leaders (one per partner) and facilitators from UOG. The first meeting sets up the operation of the ALS and asks the participants – using the GROW methodology – to identify their GEDI issue and the action they commit to taking before the next meeting. Five more ALS meetings are run.</p> <p><b>Mentoring of Leaders</b> One-to-one mentoring supports leaders in developing and implementing initiatives for GEDI in their institutions. Each leader receives 45-minute mentoring sessions (10 in total) with their UOG facilitator between the ALS meetings. Each focuses in detail on how the leader can drive forward their GEDI agenda. The project will fund the travel and subsistence of the three leaders who have engaged the most with the project / mentoring to attend UOG for a 5-day programme of networking arranged with staff and students.</p> <p><b>Reciprocal Mentoring</b> Each of the 7 HE leaders set up a pilot reciprocal mentoring programme at their HEI. At each HEI 8 senior leaders are paired with staff or students from underrepresented groups in order to better understand the challenges faced by them. Staff members and students are supported by the senior leaders to help them take more value from the institution.</p>

<p><b>Project outcomes</b></p>	<p>The activity below has been conducted with the following outcomes:</p> <p>Virtual Workshop on Building Inclusive Behaviours (6 September 2022)</p> <p>Designed by the University’s Equality Team in collaboration with an external consultant, this facilitated workshop helps participants understand how unconscious bias can play out in interactions with staff and students; develops strategies and techniques for mitigating the impact of unconscious bias, and acquire additional confidence and skills in honing and developing inclusive behaviours, including how to intervene when they experience or witness problematic behaviours. Participants are encouraged to complete the pre-work ahead of attending the workshop, enabling them to discuss and share their learning. Follow-on work is provided to further enhance and develop learning.</p>
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**University of Oxford**

<p><b>South East Asian partners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Champasack University</li> <li>• East Yangon University</li> <li>• Mae Fah Luang University</li> <li>• Hue University</li> <li>• Thuyloi University</li> <li>• Dili Institute of Technology</li> <li>• Cavite State University</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grant amount</b></p>	<p>£12,000</p>
<p><b>Project start</b></p>	<p>June 2022</p>
<p><b>Project purpose (as per proposal form)</b></p>	<p>The project aims to mentor selected institutional leaders in GEDI for advancing curriculum development and training resource, form community of practice among institutional leaders, and form GEDI regional trainers at a Regional Gathering in a partner country.</p>
<p><b>Project summary/ activities</b></p>	<p>The project will join a collaborative effort between the five UK universities and 35 South East Asian universities for the joint provision of remote training in EDI courses offered throughout the project period as agreed by all partners. The specific activities agreed between the University of Oxford and the seven partners (select South East Asian universities across six countries) will involve:</p> <p>1) Consulting and mentoring of select institutional leaders in gender EDI for advancing curriculum development and training resource for each partner. This will be conducted remotely supported by the organisations involved and aims at strengthening leadership at an organisational level.</p>

	<p>2) Forming and facilitating a Community of Practice (CoP) among select institutional leaders in gender EDI for exchange of experiences and mutual learning across the partner organisations. These remote meetings aim at strengthening leadership for influencing national policy on GEDI and participating in regional collaboration.</p> <p>3) Forming regional trainers of GEDI at a Regional Gathering at one of the partner countries. Delegates will attend in person. Additional participants will attend remotely. This workshop offered in hybrid format (in-person and remotely) aims to facilitate the formation of a cohort of regionally-oriented trainers in GEDI for higher education institutions to collaborate around a regional training hub.</p>
<p><b>Project outcomes</b></p>	<p>Two activities were held with the following outcomes:</p> <p>1. Virtual Workshop on Allyship (7 November 2022)</p> <p>Designed at the central university Equality and Diversity team and tailored at senior leaders, this session offers an opportunity for a facilitated reflection/discussion around one's own personal experience as diversity and inclusion are concerned and on how to collaborate with and serve as an ally with someone else with a different personal experience.</p> <p>The underlying message is that GEDI is a task for all and everyone and that different individuals and groups can work together by negotiating roles and alternately playing sometimes a more protagonist role and sometimes a more supporting role (allyship) on the various struggles for GEDI based on one's own identity/positionality/group.</p> <p>2. Curriculum Development Action Plan Workshop (2-3 May 2023) Bangkok, Thailand</p> <p>The two-day Curriculum Development Action Plan Workshop is one of the activities, organised by University of Oxford under SEA-UK Exchange Programme. The institutional leaders from seven partner universities of 6 South East Asian countries including Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam will facilitate the implementation of the curriculum development action plan and report to their university community on the implementation experience. With this, the project aims to formulate a Community of Practice (CoP) among institutional leaders in gender EDI. This bottom-up process will enhance gender EDI in Higher Education Institutions in the Southeast Asia region.</p> <p>Following the on-site workshop in Bangkok, the Oxford team also had an online follow-up session with representatives from 7 partner universities to consult the continuation of curriculum action plans in respective partner university.</p>

## University of the West of Scotland

<b>South East Asian partners</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Institute of Business (IOB) (Timor-Leste)</li> <li>2. Kasetsart University (Thailand)</li> <li>3. King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (Thailand)</li> <li>4. National University of Battambang (Cambodia)</li> <li>5. Thammasat University (Thailand)</li> <li>6. University Brunei Darussalam</li> <li>7. Yadanabon University (Myanmar)</li> </ol>
<b>Grant amount</b>	<p>£12,000 from the British Council</p> <p>With additional in-kind support from UWS valued at £16,243</p>
<b>Project start</b>	<p>June 2022</p>
<b>Project purpose (as per the proposal form)</b>	<p>Through this project, UWS aimed to engage in knowledge exchange and share best practices in GEDI leadership. UWS will lead the establishment of an international network for longitudinal support and networking, driving transformational practice for each of the participating members.</p>
<b>Project summary/ activities</b>	<p>A total of <b>five online workshops</b> were delivered to the South East Asian partner HEIs, covering the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Leadership:</b> Theory &amp; Practice (Leadership in HE linked to GEDI)</li> <li>• <b>Action Planning</b> (Explanation of the process/experience of Athena Swan/Reflection for each institution)</li> <li>• <b>Situational Analysis</b> (Models (PESTLE/SWOT/Hofstede)/ Global trends in HE/Application to individual institutions/ pre-mortem discussion)</li> <li>• <b>Unconscious Bias</b> (Scene-setting/perceptions of partner organisations. Critical reflection of constructs involved in UB/Discuss in a culturally-sensitive way/ Apply to individual situation/Explanation of action learning)</li> <li>• <b>Gender &amp; Leadership</b> (Servant-leadership, feminism, and gender wholeness: How leaders transcend global inequities. Women in leadership development programmes)</li> </ul> <p>These workshops were recorded, uploaded online with audio captions (YouTube), and distributed after sessions. The degree of participation varied per institution and declined after the first session (with some HEIs dropping out completely).</p> <p>Workshops were designed to equip participants with the information required for them to develop a gender action plan for their own institutions. After the final workshop in December, participants were offered a 30-minute one-to-one session with members of the team, including the Dean and Principal, to gain feedback on their plan. Finally, partners were invited to present these plans to the entire group in the last session. Partners from four institutions attended, and three presented their plans for feedback.</p>

<b>Project outcomes</b>	<p>(In addition, UWS contributed to project-wide workshops. See section 3. Series of online workshops.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff Training and Knowledge Exchange Forum in the form of <b>five online workshops</b> (including recording and audio captions, which remained online).</li><li>• <b>Three gender action plans</b> were developed by participating South East Asian HE institutions and presented for feedback by all partners.</li><li>• Although this is still very much in the exploratory stage, UWS and the seven partner HEIs are committed to maintaining a network for ongoing sharing, learning, exchanging knowledge, and potential research collaboration. To this end, online workspaces remain open (e.g., Teams, Google folders, etc.).</li></ul>
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## 5. Stakeholder Forum and Policy Dialogue: Envisioning GEDI for Southeast Asian Higher Education, 9–10 October 2023

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**The concluding event of the GEDI project was a two-day online stakeholder forum and policy dialogue to share learning from the project and to jointly reflect on the White Paper and its policy recommendations.**

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Day one of the stakeholder forum commenced with introductory and welcome remarks by SEAMEO RIHED and the British Council, followed by a keynote address on the “Journey of GEDI in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia” by Prof. Sity Daud. Subsequently, there was a presentation on “UK-SEA Collaborative Efforts Towards GEDI” by representatives from four UK HEIs (Aston University, IDS, UQS, and University of Oxford). A representative from each UK institution in the SEA-UK Leadership Exchange Programme shared their collaborative efforts and experiences of creating a sustainable network to address gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity issues in HEIs in the South East Asia region. Day one of the event concluded with a panel discussion on “Challenges, Actions, and Achievements: Collective Learning towards GEDI in Higher Education”.

The panel consisted of three representatives from South East Asian HEIs: Dr. Bert J Tuga (Philippine Normal University, the Philippines), Dr. Lai Suat Yan (Universiti Malaya, Malaysia), and Prof. Wening Udasmoro (Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia), and was moderated by Dr. Juliet Millican from IDS.



Day two of the event focused on a policy dialogue with the White Paper at the core of the discussions. The White Paper outlines our efforts to encourage leaderships in higher education that truly brings equality and inclusion from aspirations into realities. It synthesises the insights gathered, challenges identified, and opportunities uncovered to pave a path forward for the continuous advancement of GEDI. Recommendation for actions for higher education institutions, governments, and regional organisations were presented (see figure 4 below). The White Paper was presented by its main author Dr. Linda Waldman (from IDS), followed by a policy dialogue on the paper between 3 government representatives

(Dr. Aldrin Arenas Darilag, RMT, RN, CHRP, Commissioner, Commission on Higher Education, the Philippines; H.E. Ms. Rinna Bunry, Chief of the Policy and Curriculum Office, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia; Asst. Prof. Romyen Kosaikanont Centre Director, SEAMEO RIHED (moderator) Asst. Prof. Ariya Svetamra, Department of Women’s Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Thailand). The final presentation was delivered by Ms. Christelle Agustin, Programme Officer at SEAMEO RIHED, who introduced RIHED-SHARE, speaking about “Seamless Engagement: Amplifying the Impact via an Online Community.”

Read the full White Paper [here](#)



In partnership



# White Paper Summary

## Envisioning Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (GEDI) for Southeast Asian Higher Education

### Overview

#### Background

The White Paper delves into the role of Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (GEDI) in higher education leadership in Southeast Asia. It leverages insights from the project on “Strengthening Leadership with Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity in Higher Education Institutions in Southeast Asia” funded by the British Council in collaboration with SEAMEO RIHED and the Institute of Development Studies.

#### Purpose

The aim is to provide recommendations for higher education institutions, governments, and regional bodies to address persistent challenges in the region. The focus is on the intersectionality of gender with other social markers, emphasising the need for continuous data collection, rigorous self-assessment, and collaborative efforts.

#### Utilisation

This White Paper is a valuable resource for reviewing theories, assessing progress and challenges in addressing gender disparities in higher education, and serving as a benchmark for policies and practices. It advocates for ongoing collaborative initiatives to bring about lasting change in the sector.

#### GEDI context in South East Asian Higher Education

This White Paper marks the inaugural attempt to address GEDI comprehensively in the diverse Southeast Asian region, extending beyond gender to embrace wider inclusivity. Summarising the context of GEDI in Southeast Asian higher education is challenging due to diverse cultural and political contexts. Commonalities include limited access for women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities in leadership roles. Enrollment often aligns with gender-stereotyped fields. GEDI policies vary, resulting in disparities. Some countries implement positive measures like affirmative action and flexible working arrangements, but further research is needed to assess their impact.

## Recommendations for action

The recommendations below suggest concrete actions that higher education institutions (HEIs), governments and regional organisations could put in place.

### Institutional Level

- 1 Review and Evaluate Policies:** HEIs should assess existing policies, emphasising GEDI.
- 2 Create a GEDI Network within and across institutions:** Establish collaborative networks among HEIs, identifying and supporting GEDI champions for effective data-driven analysis.
- 3 Support Research:** Identify funding for GEDI-related research, encourage departmental studies, and advocate for GEDI in major research calls.
- 4 Capacity Building for Teachers and Peers:** Cultivate inclusivity through peer learning workshops and collaboration with teacher training departments to challenge biases in curricula.
- 5 Mainstreaming GEDI:** Collaborate with communication departments to enhance inclusivity in university publicity, promoting diverse messages.

### National Level

- 1 Institutionalise GEDI Policies:** Recommend nationwide policies in higher education for GEDI, emphasising mobilisation of resources and vigilant implementation.
- 2 Identify GEDI Champions:** Advocate for protective mechanisms and encouragement for staff as change makers, promoting gender-inclusive allyship.
- 3 Promote Women in STEM:** Call for national guidelines supporting women's and marginalised group recruitment in STEM. Update science curricula to address gender issues and integrate women-centric examples, exploring GEDI theory in STEM education.
- 4 Foster Community-University Partnerships:** Encourage university collaboration with civil society for broader GEDI awareness. Collaborate to gain insights into discriminatory actions and foster mutual learning.

### Regional Level

- 1 Host Annual GEDI Conference:** Recommend establishing an annual GEDI conference in the region to strengthen practitioner relationships and share research findings.
- 2 Award Outstanding Research:** Suggest recognising and awarding prizes for exceptional research, with a focus on action or policy-based advancement in GEDI in HEIs.
- 3 Data Capacity Enhancement Workshops:** Advocate for practical workshops to enhance regional data capabilities, supporting progress tracking and fostering cross-university collaboration.
- 4 Create a Common Space for Dialogue:** Propose a regional space for dialogue, encouraging involvement from governments and organisations to promote GEDI development for example the SEAMEO RIHED Inter-Regional Research Symposium.

Note: This document was produced in November 2023. There might have been updates or changes to the information contained herein after this date.

Figure 4: White Paper Summary with Recommendation for Actions

# Project Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact

As part of an evaluation of the GEDI project, the UK lead grantee (IDS) ran a pre- and post-project survey, which yielded information relating to progress against project objectives this report. Furthermore, the British Council commissioned an external MEL consultant<sup>3</sup> to conduct key informant interviews with stakeholders to reflect on the overall project. Findings from both these approaches showcasing outputs, outcomes, and impact are presented in the following two sections of the report.

## Key Achievements from the Survey Findings

The survey revealed that the majority of participants who completed the end survey expressed increased awareness, confidence, and capability in terms of GEDI, as presented in Figure 5<sup>4</sup>

### Project results: increased awareness, confidence and capability

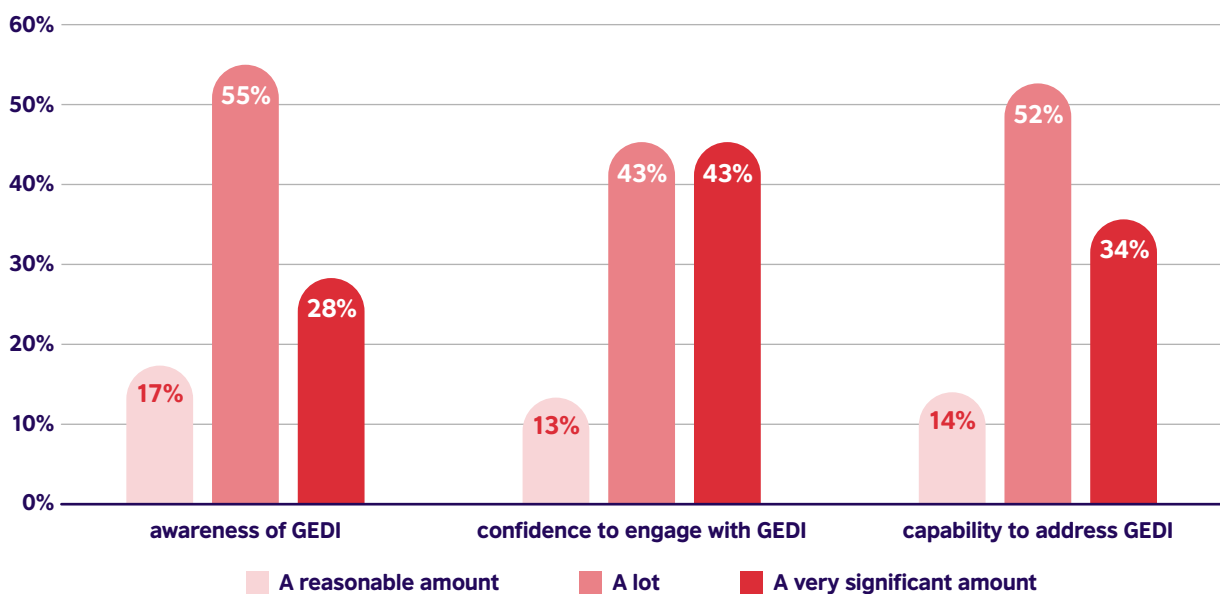


Figure 5: End of survey responses relating to increased awareness, confidence, and capability in GEDI.

<sup>3</sup> Ms. Willemijn de Bruin, independent MEL consultant on behalf of INTRAC in the UK ([www.intrac.org](http://www.intrac.org)).

<sup>4</sup> This survey was administered and analysed by IDS, rather than the British Council. Data and figures have been copied directly. The total number of respondents for the survey was n=39 but the number of answers fluctuated according to the survey question.

Various open-text survey responses support this finding, for example:






**This project has significantly boosted our confidence in engaging with gender equality, diversity, and inclusion at HEIs. Through various activities and experiences, we have developed a deeper understanding towards the importance and impact of GEDI, which has empowered us to take meaningful action and drive positive change. Project participant**

In terms of progress against the project objectives, the following achievements and supportive evidence were reported from the end of the project survey:

Project Objectives	Achievements	Feedback from Participants
To enhance gender EDI in the governance and institutional management of university leaders towards an equal and sustainable community of HE.	<b>50%</b> of participants believed GEDI to be important or very significant to their HEIs and leadership.	<p><i>“GEDI is very important, particularly in terms of the ranking of universities that include SDG5.”</i></p> <p><i>“We recognise that promoting gender EDI is not only a matter of social justice but also crucial for the overall success and growth of our community.”</i></p>
To actively engage and provide a platform for leaders to share and reflect on gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity in HE leadership.	<b>86%</b> of participants believed that their confidence to engage with GEDI had increased as a result of this project.	<i>“Before, I could not see GEDI as being a problem. Now, my GEDI team and I have become more aware through the multiple workshops provided.”</i>
To empower university leaders with innovative and leadership tools to embrace EDI in their policymaking, institutional operation, and building a sustainable community of HE.	<p><b>83%</b> of participants believed that their awareness of GEDI had increased as a result of the project.</p> <p><b>86%</b> stated that their capacity to address GEDI issues in HEIs had improved.</p>	<p><i>“This project has significantly boosted our confidence in engaging with Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) at HEIs.”</i></p> <p><i>“Through various activities and experiences, we have developed a deeper understanding of the importance and impact of gender EDI, which has empowered us to take meaningful action and drive positive change.”</i></p>

<p>To formulate and plan for practical initiatives to mainstream gender and EDI in HE leadership operations.</p>	<p>At the end of the project, senior HEI leaders identified valuable activities as the next steps their HEIs could take in addressing gender EDI issues, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowing the profile of GEDI at their institutions, promoting more gender-sensitive leaders;</li> <li>• addressing the issue of persons with disabilities in a more comprehensive manner;</li> <li>• continuing to practice inclusivity and influence external clients to replicate this;</li> <li>• organising GEDI seminars/ workshops to improve staff awareness;</li> <li>• improve the policies of HEIs on gender; mainstreaming and advocating GEDI;</li> <li>• creating GEDI committees within HEIs;</li> <li>• integrating gender education into the curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p><i>“An example of how my capacity (knowledge and skills) has improved to better address gender EDI at HEIs as a result of this project is that whatever I have to do or decide, I am always aware of gender EDI issues.”</i></p>
<p>To strengthen university networks regarding gender and EDI in South East Asia.</p>	<p>Networking has been a valuable component of this project, both in terms of learning and additional benefits. Networking enabled participants to establish relationships with other academics in their own countries, regionally and internationally, who are also interested in GEDI, to build trust and share ideas.</p>	<p><i>“My perspectives have changed entirely after the project. Hearing other participants on the issues affecting them and the challenges they have encountered and are still encountering has allowed me to shift my own gender lens towards limitless possibilities.”</i></p>

IDS, as the lead grantee/consultant for project implementation, presented the following key achievements (outputs and outcomes) at the end of the project:

<b>Key outputs</b>	
<p><b>2 Surveys were administered</b> to collect data on GEDI in HEIs, providing them with valuable baseline data as a future indication of the degree of GEDI awareness and activity within South East Asia HEIs, capturing a moment in time against which to measure change and progress.</p>	 <p><b>6 Online training workshops</b> delivered for partner (UK and South East Asian) universities contributing towards shared knowledge within and beyond the region.</p>
<p><b>5 UK-South East Asian partnership projects were completed</b> involving representatives from five UK universities and 35 South East Asian universities, expanding knowledge as well as building national, regional, and international networks.</p>	<p><b>1 White Paper/ policy paper</b> developed summarising the context and advising on future pathways.</p> 
<b>Strategic outcomes</b>	
<p><b>One HEI from the Philippines has</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• updated its Strategic Development Plan 2022–2032, SDP No. 5 Social Development and Advocacy, with a strategic GEDI component;</li> <li>• reframed/re-organised its University Centre for Gender and Development to become the University Centre for GEDI.</li> </ul>	 <p>One HEI is establishing a <b>female leadership centre</b> in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development and related agencies.</p>
<p>One HEI is collaborating with the Association of Pacific Rim Universities to provide <b>mentoring for female academic staff</b>.</p>	<p>One HEI is working with the Association for Development of Women and Legal Education to promote activities for gender roles and <b>combat violence against women</b> and children.</p>
<p>A Vietnamese HEI is collaborating with Aberdeen University in the UK to <b>implement a project</b> entitled Cross-Sector Partnerships to Improve Transnational Education and Gender Equity in Traffic Safety.</p>	

## Academic outputs

One partner submitted an **abstract** to a national journal on the topic of “The future of Teaching Gender and Development” Sept 2022, entitled “Teaching GAD in Malaysia Beyond 2022: Critical Engagements with the Global & Local”.

A small group of project partners are working on a **book proposal** on GEDI and higher education in South East Asia.



## Communications outputs

At least three **blogs and a Facebook entry** were published on the project by participants. These constitute important public statements about the commitment of HEIs to address GEDI in their respective institutions. In the future, these blogs can help to hold HEIs to account in relation to GEDI.



At least two **press releases** were posted by SEAMEO RIHED, one of which has had over **1,600** visits. A blog about the Exchange Programme written by consultants from IDS, 5 SEA university leaders and the SEAMEO RIHED Coordinator was also posted on IDS Website.

## Cascaded training

The information about the Exchange Programmes and the Project were shared through RIHED-SHARE platform.



The SEAMEO RIHED coordinator who attended the IDS workshop **delivered a presentation** at their head office on learning from the experience.

Insights generated through this project have helped one project member in guiding her **PhD supervision**. This supervision is focused on a researcher who is developing a mentoring system for female activist students, addressing their shared experiences of discrimination and gender-based challenges. This is indicative of the wider receptivity of the GEDI work and the value of the training offered.

# Key Informants' Views on Benefits, Values, and Outcomes

Following the end of the GEDI project (October 2023), interviews were conducted with nine key informants to gather reflections on the stakeholders' overall experience of the project, main benefits and value, as well as challenges and learning. Furthermore, these discussions were used to obtain their views on the recommendations from the White Paper as presented and discussed during the final stakeholder forum held in October 2023. The last topic of discussion related to the next steps and included reflections by those participating in Phase II of the project as well as external stakeholders from HEIs and governments who do not yet know about Phase II and may not be involved. In such cases, there were more general reflections on the next steps towards GEDI initiatives. See Appendix 2 for the topic guide and list of key informants.

All discussions were led and analysed by an external evaluation consultant commissioned by the British Council to ensure stakeholders felt free to reflect on both the positive aspects and challenges of Phase I of the GEDI project, to safeguard anonymity and confidentiality, and provide constructive feedback, learning, and reflections for the lead parties.

Findings from these key informant interviews have been integrated into a full report and presentation for the internal learning purposes of the British Council and SEAMEO RIHED, with the main aim of feeding them into Phase II planning. However, elements of the results, particularly those relating to benefits, value, and outcomes, have also been embedded in this project report as outlined in the following sub-sections:

## Benefits and Value

When discussing the tangible benefits of this project to date for the informants' own respective organisations as well as the main value of the international collaboration, a few clear benefits arose. In some cases, this also resulted in reflections on actual outputs, outcomes, and, to some extent, impact (see next sub-heading).

One of the tangible benefits clearly stated by most informants was the international networking opportunities provided through the GEDI project and the chance for institutions to establish new relationships. Informants from the UK (including the British Council itself) reflected on the value of establishing new partnerships and relations in the South East Asian region, while South East Asian representatives mostly spoke about bringing together organisations interested in GEDI from within the region and, to some extent, the opportunity to learn from UK partners and present on a global platform.

In addition to networking being a benefit and adding value, most informants also reflected on the opportunity for meaningful engagement and two-way knowledge exchange and learning on GEDI in a safe environment. This is illustrated through the following quote:



**I think through this very important project we were engaged in, we have been able to exchange notes with other stakeholders all over the South East Asia region and even throughout the world. We tend to internationalise our GEDI practices and approaches and have been able to present to others what is being implemented in the Philippines and come up with a more innovative way of implementing GEDI through our learning and from the different experiences of our partners abroad.**

### South East Asia Government representative

Some representatives from South East Asia also reflected that the project gave them the opportunity to raise the profile of GEDI on the agenda at institutional, national, and regional levels, stressing the importance of GEDI in the overall development of the region.

## Outcomes

Although the key informant topic guide did not include a specific question on outcomes, various were listed by informants during the discussion. There was no dedicated interview question to collate outcomes, yet various emerged.

The main outcome of the entire project, according to the informants, is the publication of the **White Paper**. This document is technically an output but is seen by many to be a short-term outcome, forming the basis for follow-up work on GEDI. It can be used to progress the work that has taken place to date, i.e., direct follow-up on recommendations, cascade learning at various levels, and grow the GEDI network/engage other HEIs.

Another clear outcome of the project is the **establishment of the new regional GEDI network**, or at least the start of it, which includes HEIs interested in GEDI and committed to prioritising and advancing GEDI in HE in the South East Asia region, plus UK partners who are keen to be part of this journey.

A third outcome, reflected on by various key informants, is the direct **application of GEDI learning** at institutional and national levels both in the UK and South East Asia. Examples derived from the interviews include:

- Progress in the Philippines was reported by the president of the Philippine Normal University. At the institutional level, they have made progress with a new diploma in Gender and Development Studies and an extension of the gender and development office to fully cover GEDI. He also reflected on national progress, explaining that PNU has a future collaboration planned with the national accreditation body to enhance the GEDI accreditation criteria for the entire country and plans to design and deliver national cascade training, which is an executive leadership programme on GEDI by their own institution together with the Philippines Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and IDS in the UK.
- An informant from Malaysia, from Universiti Malaya (UM), mentioned that at her HEI, they are planning a faculty-wide learning session on GEDI (cascade training at UM) as well as a national GEDI workshop.
- Learning was also applied by UK HEIs, with informants mentioning updated institutional GEDI policies (at Aston) and applying this knowledge to other British Council GEDI projects (delivered by UWS).



The final outcome arising from the key informant interviews was the follow-up work with the British Council on GEDI (including applications for direct grants by supported HEIs or GEDI work in other regions). One informant expressed:



**We have just submitted another gender equality partnership grant application to the British Council with one of our partners in Indonesia (Sebelas Maret University), which, if successful, would be a very tangible benefit. [...] I am really pleased to say that the lead applicants were all women. UK HEI representative**

# Conclusions and Phase II

The separate activities of the GEDI project and related outputs, outcomes, and impact presented in this report evidence the project's success, showcasing progress towards strengthening leadership with GEDI in HEIs in the South East Asian Region. However, there is more work to be done, and Phase I of the project was generally considered to be only the start of a longer journey, as clearly articulated by IDS:



**There's no easy tick box to solve GEDI challenges, it's a journey [...] As with all journeys, however, there is more work to be done and further directions to travel.**

**Dr. Linda Waldman, IDS**

Based on the feedback and insights from Phase I of the project, it is evident that there is an ongoing need to enhance the understanding, awareness, and tools for achieving GEDI goals, making effective use of data and data collection, and creating a platform to continue to share, exchange, and reflect on ideas. Additionally, interest was expressed, and recommendations were made on providing small challenge grants and encouraging collaborative efforts between the UK and South East Asian universities to effectively address GEDI-related issues and themes that could feed into institutional policy recommendations.

In response to the recommendations, the British Council and SEAMEO RIHED are preparing for Phase II of the GEDI project. Learning points derived and presented in this report, as well as from internal MEL documents held by the British Council, will be used to further strengthen and develop plans for Phase II. As it stands, this second phase will aim to advance discussions and dialogue on GEDI among South East Asia higher education leaders and policymakers. The core objective is to sustain interest in GEDI within the policy and planning departments of institutions through a regular regional higher education platform run by SEAMEO RIHED. The Annual Inter-Regional Research Symposium is a platform where higher education leaders can work together towards sustainable development goals. Additionally, Phase II seeks to take a deep dive into research questions relating to the context and implications of GEDI. Moreover, Phase II of the project will establish a knowledge exchange platform through workshops and online discussions, fostering cross-cultural exchanges between institutions in the UK and South East Asia to complement the Annual Inter-Regional Research Symposium.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: List of Institutions, People, and Their Respective Positions

### South East Asian institutions

Institution	Full Name & Position
<b>Brunei Darussalam</b>	
1. Universiti Brunei Darussalam	Dr. Rosmawijah binti Jawawi from Sultan, Hassan Bolkiah, Institute of Education
2. Universiti Teknologi Brunei	Pg. Dr. Rafidah Pg. Hj Petra, Deputy Director of Corporate Communications Office/Assistant Professor Faculty of Engineering
<b>Cambodia</b>	
3. Chea Sim University of Kamchaymear	Mr. Yean Sambo, Vice-Rector
4. Royal University of Phnom Penh	H.E. Dr. Chet Chealy, Rector
	Mr. Chorvy Vong, Director, International Relations Office
	Dr. Oum Ravy, Vice-Rector, International Relations
	Dr. Rath Sethik, Dean, Faculty of Development Studies (Focal Point)
5. Svay Rieng University	H.E. Mr. Tum Saravuth, Rector
6. National University of Battambang	H.E. Sok Khorn, Rector
	Dr. Sam Rany, Vice-Rector of International Relations and Projects (Focal Point)
7. Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE)	Mr. Laurent Mesmann, Special Advisor to the Rector
<b>Indonesia</b>	
8. Universitas Gadjah Mada	Prof. Wening Udasmoro, SS, M.Hum., DEA, Dean, Faculty of Cultural Sciences
9. Sebelas Maret University	Dr. Irwan Trinugroho, Director at Directorate of Partnership, Development and International
	Prof. Dr. Jamal Wiwoho, S. H.,M. Hum., Rector

<b>Lao PDR</b>	
10. National University of Laos	Dr. Kaisone Phengsopha, Deputy Director of the Postgraduate Study Office (Focal Point)
11. Savannakhet University	Dr. Bounheuang Ninchaleune, Vice President for Academic Affairs
	Thanousone Sangthongphet, International Relations Officer (Focal Point)
	Ms. Phetsavanh Somsivilay, Head of International Office (Focal point)
12. Champasack University	Dr. Phonesavanh Thepphasoulithone, Vice President
	Mr. Jokky Phonthep, Vice Director for International Cooperation and Planning (Focal Point)
13. Souphanouvong University	Assoc. Prof. Vixay Chansavang, Acting President
	Mr. Thavone Panmanivong, International Relations Office (Focal Point)
<b>Malaysia</b>	
14. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	Prof .Sity Daud, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities
15. Universiti Malaya (UM)	Dr. Lai Suat Yan, Senior Lecturer, Gender Studies Program, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
<b>Myanmar</b>	
16. East Yangon University	Prof. Nay Win Oo, Rector
	Prof. Thi Thi Lwin, Head of Department of Law
17. Myeik University	Prof. Win Win Than, Rector
18. Yadanabon University	Prof. Tint Moe Thuzar, Pro Rector
19. Yenanchaung University	Dr. Cho Cho Myint, Rector
	Dr. Aye Thandar Win, (Focal Point)

<b>The Philippines</b>	
20. Philippine Normal University	Dr. Bert J. Tuga, President
21. Cavite State University	Dr. Hernando D. Robles, President
	Dr. Maria Soledad M. Lising Dean, College of Economics, Management and Development Studies
<b>Singapore</b>	
22. Nanyang Technological University	Prof. Tim White, Associate Vice President-Infrastructure and Programmes
	Ms. Wanda Preiser, Head, Office of International Affairs, President's Office (Focal Point)
<b>Thailand</b>	
23. Chiang Rai Rajabhat University	Asst. Prof. Sornchai Mungthaisong, President
	Dr. Natthaphon Santhi, Assistant to President for International Affairs (Focal Point)
24. Kasetsart University	Dr. Chongrak Wachrinrat, Acting President
	Assoc. Prof. Soysuda Na Ranong, Acting Assistant to President for Academic Affairs and Acting Head of the International Studies Center
	Ms. Araya Bijaphala, Head of International Cooperation, International Affairs Division (Focal Point)
25. King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi	Assoc. Prof. Suvit Tia, President
	Assoc. Prof. Pornapit Darasawang, Vice President for Internationalization (Focal Point)
26. Mae Fah Luang University	Assoc. Prof. Chayaporn Wattanasiri, Former President
	Assoc. Prof. Nantana Gajaseni, Vice President
	Ms. Maya Dania, Lecturer at the School of Social Innovation
	Dr. Yuki Miyake, Lecturer at the School of Social Innovation
	Dr. Warunee Kaewbunrueng (Focal Point)
	Asst. Prof. Dr.Matchima Naradisorn, President

27. Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University	Assoc. Prof. Chutikarn Sriviboon, President
	Asst. Prof. Anantachai Aeka, Assistant to the President for International Affairs
	Asst. Prof. Jetsarit Angsukanjanakul, Vice President for Student Affairs, International Affairs Office (Focal Point)
28. Thammasat University	Assoc. Prof. Gasinee Witoonchart, Rector
	Dr. Nitinant Wisawaisuan, Dean, Puey Ungphakorn School of Development Studies
	Ms. Surussawadee Artnonla, Director of International Affairs (Focal Point)
<b>Timor-Leste</b>	
29. Institute of Business (IOB)	Prof. Pedro Ximenes, Rector
30. Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e (UNTL)	Prof. Samuel Venancio de Sousa Freitas, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance
31. Dili Institute of Technology (DIT)	Prof. Edio da Costa, Rector
	Dr. Helio Brites da Silva, Lecturer, Research Unit
	Ms. Emilia Freitas Pereira, Coordinator for Evaluation Quality Assurance
<b>Vietnam</b>	
32. Hue University	Prof. Dr. Le Anh Phuong, President
	Dr. Nguyen Xuan Huy Vice Director, Department of Science, Technology and International Relations
	Dr. Nguyen Thi Thuy, lecturer, Department of Physics
33. University of Transport and Communication	Prof. Nguyen Ngoc Long, Rector
	Dr. Trinh Quang Khai, Director, Department of Development Study (Focal Point)
34. Vietnam National University of Agriculture	Ms. Le Thi Bich Lien, Vice Director of International Cooperation Office
	Ms. Le Huynh Thanh Phuong, Head of Science and Technology Department
35. Thuyloi University	Assoc. Prof. Nguyen Mai Dang, Director of the Center for International Education
	Ms. Le Thi Thanh Hue, Vice Director of International Education Center

## UK institutions

Institution	Full Name & Position
1. IDS	Dr. Linda Waldman, Director of Teaching and Learning
	Dr. Juliet Millican, Research Associate
	Dr. Violet Barassa, Senior Tutor
2. Aston University	Prof. Hannah Bartlett, Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor for Diversity & Inclusion Health and Life Science, Business and Social Science and Engineering and Physical Science
3. University of Gloucestershire	Dr. David Dawson, Reader in Leadership, Business School
	Dr. Clare Peterson, Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
4. University of Oxford	Dr. Roger Nascimento, Teaching Associate, Nuffield Department of Medicine
	Dr. Aronrag Meeyai, Senior Medical Statistician, Centre for Tropical Medicine & Global Health, Nuffield of Medicine, University of Oxford
5. University of the West of Scotland	Dr. Lucy Meredith, Principal and Vice Chancellor
	Dr. Laura Grahamm, Lecturer, School of Health and Life Sciences

## Appendix 2

### Topic guide for key informant interviews:

- Brief introductions and consent (five minutes)
  - Voluntary – your participation is voluntary. You do not have to comment/answer if you do not wish to. Also, you may request to withdraw your input at any stage (by contacting INTRAC directly).
  - Confidential – the conversation we have today is confidential, key information stays with INTRAC/British Council, and the feedback integrated into the case study will be aggregated and anonymised where necessary.
  - Constructive – the purpose is MEL and feeding into future planning: concerns, challenges, and questions are very welcome.
  - Permission to record the conversation.
- Overall experience (five minutes)
  - Please tell me briefly about your overall experience with the project and level of engagement.
- Benefits and value (10 minutes)
  - What have been the tangible benefits of this project to date for your own organisation?\*
  - What do you see as the main value of the international collaboration that took place? Specifically, how does bringing together various regional actors compare to having standalone GEDI initiatives in separate countries and with separate institutions?
- Challenges and learning (10 minutes)
  - What have been the main challenges for your own organisation when reflecting on the project?
  - How can we ensure the right level of engagement within your organisation?
    - Especially for informants from participating HEIs (from SEA), it would be useful to reflect on the challenge of keeping senior staff and decision-makers engaged over time.
  - What was the main learning and/or takeaway from this project for your organisation?
- Reflection on the recommendations (10 minutes)
  - Could you please reflect on the recommendations presented in the White Paper and discussed during the workshops on 9 and 10 October, and tell me a bit more about the following:
    - Are the recommendations helpful?
    - What do you consider useful, valuable, and/or important about them?
    - What do you consider to be the weaker aspects or foreseeable challenges for implementation?
- Next steps (five minutes – only if sufficient time is left)
  - What would you like to see happen moving forward? Please reflect on:
    - Priorities for further collaboration in this space.
    - Specific barriers to overcome.

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\* Please note that the selected sample of key informants for this case study represents a variety of stakeholders involved in the project, so when you read “your organisation” in the topic guide, this could be an implementing party, any of the participating HEIs (UK and SEA), a government entity at the national or regional level, or other.



**List of key informants interviewed:**

<b>Name of Informant</b>	<b>Institution</b>
Prof. Hannah Bartlett	Aston University, UK
Commissioner Dr. Aldrin Arenas Darilag, RMT, RN, CHRP	Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Philippines
Mr. Leighton Ernsberger	British Council
Dr. Laura Graham	University of the West of Scotland, UK
Asst. Prof. Romyen Kosaikanont	SEAMEO RIHED, Thailand/SEA region
Ms. Su Myat Noe	SEAMEO RIHED, Thailand/SEA region
Dr. Bert J.Tuga	President of Philippine Normal University, the Philippines
Dr. Linda Waldman	Institute for Development Studies (IDS), UK
Dr. Lai Suat Yan	Universiti Malaya, Malaysia

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