

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

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.

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

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.

[Read the full White Paper here](#)