



ASEM Education Action Plan 2030 Workshop 2: “Enhancing Connectivity between Asia and Europe by Boosting Inclusive and Balanced Mobility and Exchanges”

**Regional Student Mobility in the Face of the COVID-19 Pandemic:
SEAMEO RIHED’s AIMS Programme**

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SEAMEO RIHED



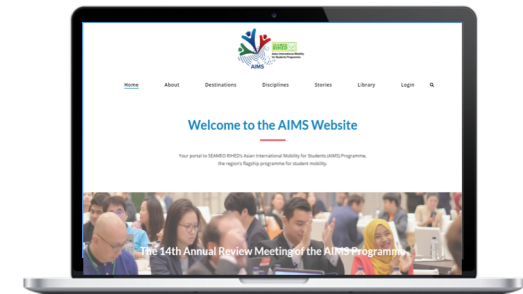
- The Regional Institute for Higher Education and Development (RIHED) is originally conceived in 1959 and founded in Singapore by UNESCO and IAU in collaboration with the Ford Foundation.
- Through coordinated efforts, approval was obtained by the Royal Thai government to host RIHED under the umbrella of SEAMEO in Bangkok, Thailand, where we were re-established in 1993 as the SEAMEO Centre specializing in higher education and development (SEAMEO RIHED).
- SEAMEO RIHED's Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme is the region's flagship initiative that is currently exploring virtual and blended mobility, alongside physical mobility, to address the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In moving forward, although the AIMS Programme has been focusing on intra-regional collaboration, it's worth noting that virtual mobility offers the possibility of inter-regional collaboration.



The Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme



- A **multilateral** and collaborative student exchange programme that involves the participation of both governments and HEIs with the goal of enhancing mobility and connectivity in the region and beyond
- Operated on the basis of **self-sufficiency and solidarity** and **balanced mobility**
- A network of **78 universities** among **9 countries**
- Offers a semester exchange to undergraduate students in **10 academic disciplines**
- More than **5,000 students** have participated since 2010
- **www.aims-rihed.net**



Impact of the Pandemic to the AIMS Programme



- SEAMEO RIHED carried out **a survey** in March - April 2020 to examine the situation of member universities in the face of pandemic
- Physical mobility has been significantly impacted and delivery has gone **online**, including regional dialogues with AIMS stakeholders
- By early 2020, the AIMS Programme registered a total of **124 students** to take part in exchanges. This represents **a drop of 85%** from the previous year's figures



AIMS Universities during the Pandemic:

Current Responses of Member Universities



AIMS universities that currently face physical closure of campus (60%):

Moves all face-to-face activities for AIMS students to online platforms, such as lessons, campus tours, new student orientations, etc.

64.29%

Advises current inbound and outbound students against international travel

50.00%

Defers new student applications to the AIMS Programme

21.43%

No policy yet but accepting online nominations and AIMS applications

17.86%

Advises outbound students shift to next year

17.86%

AIMS universities that are currently under usual operation (40%):

Offers online learning for newly admitted AIMS students or current students who are at their home countries

83.33%

Limits or cancels group activities, such as meetings, campus tours, new student orientations, etc.

77.78%

Advises current inbound and outbound students against international travel

61.11%

Defers new student applications to the AIMS Programme

33.33%

AIMS Dialogue on Virtual Mobility



- The shift to online teaching and learning has prompted more attention to **assessment procedures and pedagogical approaches**, as well as ways to integrate **socio-cultural aspects** to the mobility experience virtually
- AIMS universities are actively exploring the potential for and benefits of virtual mobility

Flexibility & Convenience

- Utilises ICT to obtain the same benefits as physical mobility but without having to travel
- Offers flexibility for students and teachers in the learning process and teaching approach

Inclusion Strategy

- Enables equal learning opportunities by reducing existing barriers, including gender, disability or socio-economic status

Expanded Collaborations

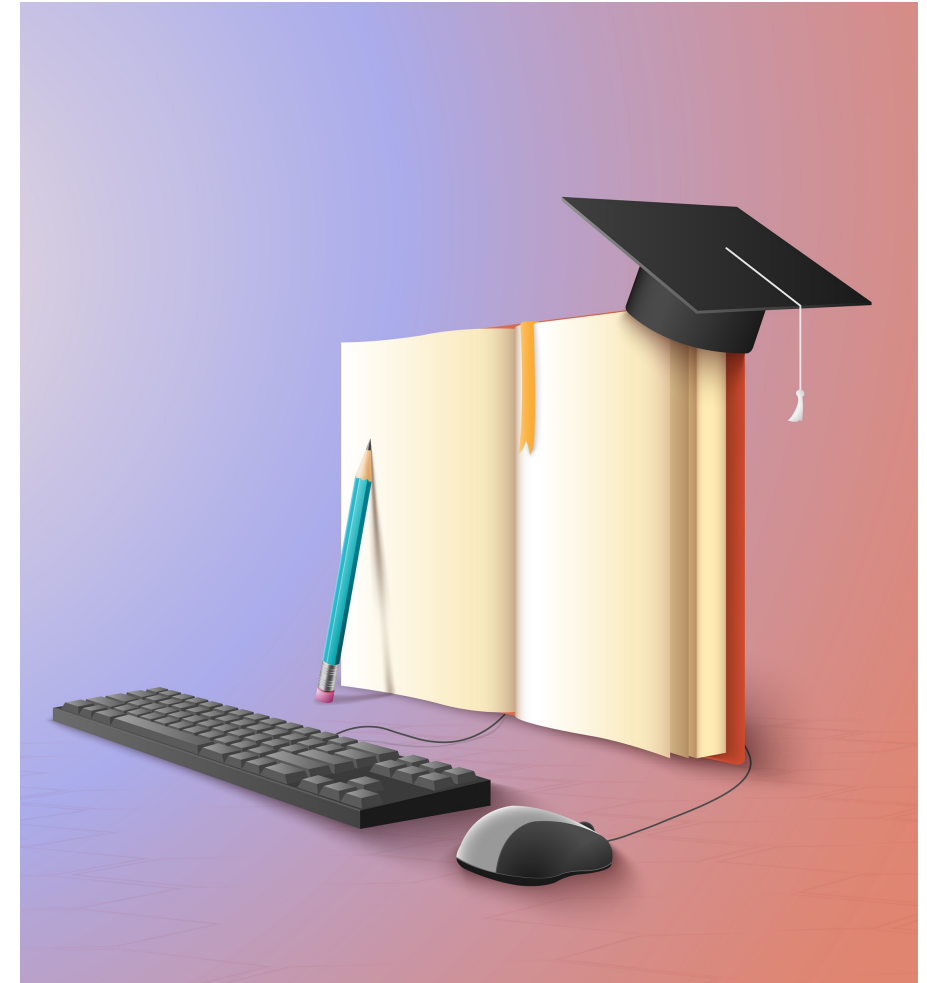
- Offers the possibility of inter-regional collaborations for the AIMS Programme

AIMS Dialogue on Virtual Mobility:

National Measures Implemented



- Developing and promoting blended learning
- Adjusting national credit regulations (eliminating the limits imposed on the total number of credits students can obtain from online courses)
- Providing increased autonomy to universities in designing credit requirements for programmes
- Providing online workshops and training for students and faculty to maximize learning and teaching experiences



Upcoming Plan: Develop Joint Online Courses



Agriculture



Biodiversity



Economics



Engineering



Environmental
Management and Science



Food Science and
Technology



Hospitality and Tourism



International Business



Language and Culture

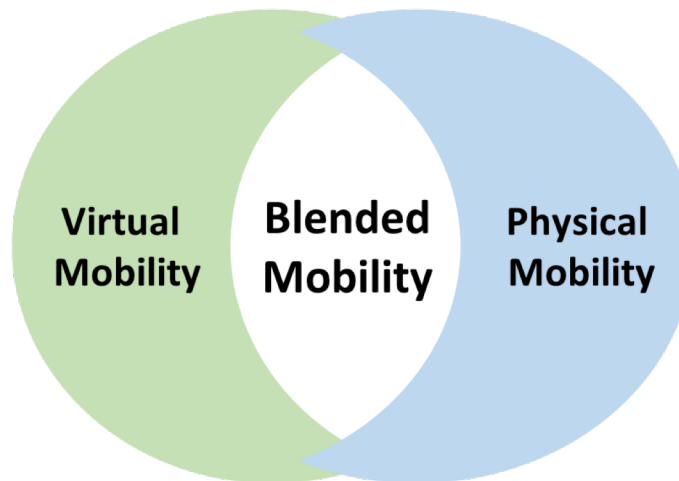


Marine Science

Way Forward: Student Mobility in the Post-Pandemic Era



- Unpredictability and disruption demand a new way of thinking about mobility: the roles of physical mobility and virtual mobility
- Will the shift be more towards **blended mobility** (a combination of virtual mobility and physical mobility which advantages of both approaches are enhanced)?





Thank You

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