**BRITISH COUNCIL**

**UK-East Asia Higher Education Forum 2019**
——

**Learning institutions in a global world: The contribution of universities in a local, regional and global development through innovation**

31 October 2019

DoubleTree by Hilton Kuala Lumpur

# Contents

# Background

On 31 October 2019, representatives of higher education institutions (HEI), policymakers, civil society organisations and corporates involved in social innovation gathered in Kuala Lumpur for the UK-East Asia Higher Education Forum. The one-day event was organised by the British Council in collaboration with the Association of Commonwealth Universities. The delegates looked into and discussed the contributions of universities to local, regional and global developments through the lens of innovation. Through three focused panel discussions and three keynote presentations, the multi-sectoral stakeholders explored their roles in higher education to create student-centred engagement curricula, integrate social innovation and entrepreneurship into their mission statements, as well as lead research innovation through a consortium or cross-regional partnerships.

# Welcoming Remarks

Director of British Council Malaysia, Sarah Deverall welcomed the stakeholders from education sector in East Asia and UK to explore how higher education institutions (HEI) use their unique capacities as innovators to address societal and economic challenges. The context for this forum was developed from two major events in 2018: The Going Global 2018 Conference, which was attended by more than 1000 delegates from 61 countries, followed by a regional policy forum: Higher Education Horizons 2025, focusing on agendas for internationalisation in ASEAN. The discussions revealed insights on the higher education landscape, especially the increasing need to ensure universities are responsive to local and regional concerns.

Universities play a critical role to produce knowledge that drives innovation and empower human capital to transform these innovations into practical solutions for the society. In some countries in East Asia, the British Council has already begun some groundwork on mapping the extent to which Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship is embedded across the research, teaching and engagement missions of higher education institutions. These include Building Research Innovation for Community Knowledge and Sustainability (BRICKS) in Hong Kong and a South East Asian research initiative on social innovation and social entrepreneurship in the teaching landscape of Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines. She reiterated that British Council values the ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Education Malaysia as well as the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and shared her hopes that the insights from this forum will also provide a segue into the theme of Going Global 2020 in London, "Global learners, global innovation", which very aptly focuses on the global learner of the future, their journey to becoming a global innovator and how this shapes global learning institutions.

As the collaborative partner of the event and an advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the ACU champions higher education as a cornerstone of stronger societies through a network of over 530 member universities in 50 countries, collectively serving more than 10 million students.

Head of Strategic Partnerships, Dr. Faye Taylor emphasised that universities can contribute to and benefit from working on the seventeen SDGs. Besides being the source of knowledge, innovations and solutions

to the SDGs, students are the current and future SDG implementers. Universities are provided with opportunities to develop cross-sectoral leadership with partners in government and business to tackle the SDGs. A responsible university can offer a framework to demonstrate impact, diversify funding streams and gain substantive collaboration with partners internally and externally.

The ACU identifies three fundamental leadership pillars in the course of attaining the SDGs – advocating, enabling and networking. In advocacy, working with other networks of universities such as the International Association of Universities and the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF). The ACU and partners look to speak with one voice for the higher education sector and participate in advocacy platforms such as the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), a United Nations platform on sustainable development to follow up and review the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The ACU also believes that an SDG-focus can enable social innovation opportunities including funding and government agendas, recognising contributors in key impact areas, as well as building sustainable partnerships to achieve the SDGs. The ACU is highly active in empowering pan-Commonwealth networks such as the Peace and Reconciliation Network (Goal #16), a network of 50 universities in 19 countries, to realise the modern vision of the Commonwealth. Working towards the sustainable development goal of Climate Action (Goal #13), the Climate Resilience Network pools knowledge and experience in critical challenge areas. This network is uniquely led by small island states, and currently involves 20 universities from 11 countries. The ACU maintains a network of universities that apply different approaches to the SDGs and shares those best practices.

Professor Dr. Rahmah binti Ahmad H. Osman, Director of Higher Education Department officiated the event by sharing the aspiration of Ministry of Education (MoE) in becoming the global references of knowledge and destination of choice for international education. Based on the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs report, 9% of ASEAN youth perceive that their skills are outdated while 52% of youth believe that they need to upgrade their skills. As the world acknowledge that East Asia has come a long way to become a competitive region, the education sphere is now facing the challenge to provide up-to-date and advanced skillsets for the future workforce. The higher education sector can close this gap using the context of sustainable development, bringing new ideas and innovations to achieve SDGs and increase capacity of the youth.

As the regulatory body and leading the education reform, MoE works to increase collaboration between Malaysia and foreign universities, enhance student mobility within ASEAN and provide access to capital, talent and research opportunities. The ministry is also open for establishing more international branch campuses and collaborations across the globe including a large number of universities from UK.

Championing the shift to achieve system aspirations, the national education agency aims to enable the change through values-driven learning for talents of the future. Beside imparting students with the right skills and abilities, values play a pivotal role to nurture future proof graduates. The ministry also recognises the need for a flexible education model and an agile governance framework. University of Malaya, the national university is ranked number 70 at the recently announced QS World University Rankings (2020), while three top public universities (UM, University of Science and University of Technology Malaysia) are within the top 200 of the University Impact Ranking 2019. Malaysia is already an attractive destination for higher education, being the third most English efficient country in Asia and various field of studies including

Halal Certification. The Service Learning Malaysia – University for Society programme (SULAM) will be expanded to provide more learning experience that links theory and practice with the actual problem solving in the community. MoE also facilitates the public private research network grant scheme for higher accessibility to grants and opportunities for members of academia to conduct demand driven research. While encouraging international collaborations, the agency also strives to preserve local knowledge such as literature and national heritage, before exporting to prominent libraries around the world.

# Keynote 1: Role of Higher Education Institutes in realising the Sustainable Development Goals

As the global community progresses from the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the 17 all-encompassing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dato Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, Rector of the International Islamic University Malaysia, elucidated how developed countries can empower resource-stricken nations to participate in the Shared Prosperity agenda. Global leaders have the responsibility to equalise resources so that these become accessible to everyone. He also urged participants to consider culturally-driven sustainable development as seen in Bali, Bhutan and Thailand. Professor Tan Sri Dzulkifli called for a reconnection to the Malaysian national identity, and the idea of Sejahtera Malaysia that underlies our collective will for a better nation.

Professor Tan Sri Dzulkifli, who was a member in the formation of the National Education Blueprint (2011–2015), believed that structures have to change as the function of education has evolved as the world braces itself for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0). More focus should be placed on shaping the well-being of students and providing education with soul. It's high time for the education system to advance from human capital to humanity, mind to heart and high-tech to high touch. Only by humanising education can the output of higher education institutions become less vulnerable to being dictated to by machines.

# Panel 1: Innovation in Engagement

The objective of this panel discussion was to explore how multi-stakeholder collaborations can empower youths and learners to engage with and contribute to community development through social entrepreneurship and innovation.

The panellists were:

- Dr. Yatela Zainal Abidin, Chief Executive Officer of Sime Darby Foundation in Malaysia
- Leo Smith, Head of Global Mobility of De Montfort University in the United Kingdom
- Chanhee Lee, Coach at the Institute for Higher Education Innovation in Yonsei University in South Korea

- Matthjis Van Leeuwen, Director of Sunway iLabs in Malaysia
- Suzanne Ling, Co-founder of PichaEats in Malaysia

Dr. Yatela Zainal Abidin is the Chief Executive Officer of Sime Darby Foundation in Malaysia, one of the oldest corporate foundations in the country, incorporated as Yayasan Sime Darby (YSD) in 1982. This philanthropic arm of Sime Darby implements collaborative corporate social responsibility (CSR) through five pillars, namely Education, Environment, Community & Health, Sports, and Arts & Culture. Education is the pillar with the highest financial commitment so far (RM285.7 million since 1982), through the provision of scholarships and bursaries to scholars pursuing vocational studies, certificates, diplomas and undergraduate studies in local and foreign institutions. Over the years, YSD has worked closely with social impact organisations and sustainable projects to equip students with knowledge outside of their classroom. Among the results of the engagements are the Robin Food App for food waste management, and the Human Elephant Conflict Management project, a collaboration with the University of Nottingham, Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (PERHILITAN), and Sime Darby Plantation.

Leo Smith is the Head of Global Mobility for De Montfort University (DMU) based in the UK, and spearheads DMU's flagship student mobility programme – DMU Global. Running with the big idea of social impact and public engagement, DMU supports its students in engaging with the local community in Leicester. Notable projects include the ground-breaking link-up between the university and the city's prison that has helped to transform the fortunes of this once-troubled jail. Academics and students from the university have been championing altruistic projects inside the prison walls which has significantly reduced violence, overcrowding and drug abuse.

Chanhee Lee is a Coach with the Institute for Higher Education Innovation at Yonsei University, South Korea. The university embraces its new role of being a platform instead of just an ivory tower for students. The mission is to connect and nurture empathetic talents who have soft skills and "extelligence", and to empower them to innovate for social good. The long-term vision for the university is to be part of a transformed higher education system. Through the Social Innovator Certificate Programme (SICP), the institution aims to generate opportunities for students to create social value by delivering novel and bold solutions to societal challenges and continue to expand the impact to larger communities. One such opportunity that the institution seeks to provide for students is "externship". This new concept prepares interns to provide solutions to companies or projects, and in the process, increases their multi-directional interaction with stakeholders.

PichaEats was founded 3 and a half years ago as a social enterprise. 6 years ago, Suzanne Ling and her co-founders were volunteering as teachers without selling any food. Before venturing into selling home-cooked meals made by refugees, they were volunteering in a refugee learning centre to teach English to refugee children who cannot access formal education in Malaysia. After learning that the children were prone to drop out to help their families secure more income, Suzanne, Kim and Swee Lin decided to work to solve the economic problems of the refugee families. Having a network of students and with the university as the venue, they sold home-cooked food made by the refugees.  The project was then established as a social enterprise called Picha Project and now formally known as PichaEats. Since 2016, the social enterprise PichaEats has served more than 300 corporations and impacted more than 120

refugees in the Picha network. The underlying motivation for PichaEats is to make sure that every child in a Picha family has access to education. In return, the PichaEats founders and team regularly go back to universities to share their journey with the current students. They wish to inspire more people through the sharing of experiences to make the students realise that they can create impact with the knowledge gained in their university life.

Matthjis Van Leeuwen, Director of Sunway iLabs, introduced Sunway iLabs, and highlighted its importance in aligning to the goals of the Sunway Education Group in sustainable development. Operated as a non-profit partnership between Sunway Group, Sunway Ventures and Sunway University, the lab plays a crucial role in enabling students on their path towards innovation and entrepreneurship. The mantra for Sunway iLabs is Inspire, Build, Launch, with an aim to instil entrepreneurship and stimulate market-driven solutions, turn ideas into actual prototypes for testing and market validation, and provide a testbed and market for start-ups to launch their businesses. The Make It Challenge programme has inspired students to build tangible solutions to tackle responsible consumption and production and had focused on reimagining how food can be produced and consumed in a sustainable manner. Organised by Sunway University in collaboration with Lancaster University and a partnership with the United Nations Technology Innovation Labs (UNTIL), this effort has moved students to work on the SDGs and build something outside their conventional classrooms. The collaborative SAY Empower 12-week programme with Selangor Youth, a non-governmental organisation, guides participants in problem solving through a step-by-step process of identifying, formulating, planning, implementing and evaluating impact-driven projects.

# Q&A Session:

### What are the essential skills, knowledge and attitude needed in graduates? Is there really a big gap in the education system?

Matthjis Van Leeuwen underlined the importance of students becoming more than a learner, and that education should prepare them for the job market in Malaysia where skills such as problem solving and the ability to collaborate in teams will be crucial. When they step into the working reality, effective communication will be required to get things done. Dr. Yatela Zainal Abidin believes that investing in youth and their education is the key. She pointed out the significant pattern that a high percentage of Malaysian public university graduates are facing unemployment, and that many of them come from underprivileged families. The intervention hence has to be catered to their needs – focusing on resilience, soft skills and various engagement experiences. Suzanne Ling shared her team's experience in PichaEats where they had observed a lack of internal drive, purpose and personal growth for some youths. She hopes that events held in universities and other exposure programmes can serve as opportunities for students to experience the real world and ignite their purpose to change the world.

### Is it too late if "real" education or change starts in university?

Leo Smith highlighted the case study of De Montford University (DMU) where students are involved in public engagement with 25 primary and secondary schools in Leicester that stresses English as basic education. They also have a summer school programme that has invited more than 1,000 students to the

DMU campus to experience university life and to learn the types of courses available. Chanhee Lee explained that the Institute for Higher Education Innovation at Yonsei University facilitates engagement with youth groups through their students. Twenty per cent of the outreach programmes are for youth groups in which the student groups use social innovation to carry out civic and political education.

# Keynote 2: Social Innovation in Higher Education - A Case for a Civic University

As one of the 39 specialist design and innovation universities in the UK, Ravensbourne University London has a unique remit as an anchor institution to the regeneration of the North Greenwich peninsula in London. Paul Sternberg, Director of Design Innovation and Principal Research Fellow, captured the audience's attention as he made the case for re-thinking the idea of the civic university by emphasising the value of knowledge 'co-creation' and the importance of grassroots social innovation in which the university can play an essential part.

What is the ultimate mission of a higher education institution? In line with the Association of Commonwealth Universities' dedication to building a better world through education, Sternberg drew on the concept of a "Third Mission": a civic framework for higher education institutions to channel and apply the social value of knowledge, running alongside traditional teaching and research. Higher education institutions need to identify opportunities which will allow them to emerge from their ivory towers and siloed cultures and actively engage with the community beyond the academic realm.

Moving beyond the conventional idea of a civic university in terms of a 'one-way' contribution to the cultural and economic life of its location, universities need to have a much better understanding of how they can contribute to social change and economic transformation. This can be achieved, Sternberg argued, through a deeper understanding of the value of social capital and the role of community leaders as catalysts for 'bottom up' grassroots innovation supported by the university.

Higher education institutions and policymakers need to review their roles and responsibilities in reimagining the future shape of the sector by engaging with a new understanding of the civic university. Universities can be more than a marketplace for recruitment, employability and formal qualifications. For students as young people, they can be platforms to build active citizenship based on intrinsic values such as integrity, reciprocity and pro-social engagement with the outside world. Communities should be able to draw on the responsiveness of the university as a unique civic agency full of creative and human resource to help address pressing social, cultural and economic needs where knowledge and knowledge co-creation become a valuable currency.

While encouraging students to generate social value during their studies, it is important that civic engagement is part of the institutional DNA of a university and is seen as mission critical along with academic achievement and employability.

Sternberg concluded that an understanding of how a civic university can contribute to a student's sense of emotional, psychological and social wellbeing alongside the need for a new set of quality assured metrics are essential and need to be explored as part of a deeper conversation about the role of the university in society.

# Panel 2: Innovation in Teaching and Learning

The objective of the second panel, with panellists from different universities in Asia and the UK, was to demonstrate the impact of adapting curricula and developing training to foster social innovation within higher education institutions.

The panellists were:

- Dr. Elsie Tsui, Adjunct Associate Professor from the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) Business School

- Professor Dato Dr. Imran Ho bin Abdullah, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Industry and Community Partnerships) of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and Chair of the AUN USRS Thematic Network

- Dr. Lizann Bonnar, Vice Dean Academic for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Strathclyde University in the United Kingdom

- Dr. Laurene Chua-Garcia, Vice President for External Relations and Internationalisation of the De La Salle University (DSLU) in the Philippines

- Professor Nuntavarn Vichit Vadakan, DR.PH, Dean of the School of Global Studies (SGS), Thammasat University in Thailand

- Muhammad Setiawan Kusmulyono, Faculty Member in the Entrepreneurship School in Universitas Prasetiya Mulya (UPM) in Indonesia

Dr. Elsie Tsui, Adjunct Associate Professor from the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) Business School, discussed the inclusion of social innovation in its MBA program, the first in Hong Kong to provide social entrepreneurship studies beginning 12 years ago. Dr. Tsui is a lecturer specialising in Social Entrepreneurship and Impact Investment, and also manages an accelerator programme for Hong Kong business students which has seen the participation of more than 8,000 students so far. The motto of the CUHK Business School is to close the gap between theory and praxis, offering the business practicum and entrepreneurship training. Students are partnered with social ventures to tackle real-life business cases. This enables the MBA students to create a tangible impact in practical cases while the social ventures receive free consultancy services from the business students. To prepare the students to be more venture-ready, the Pan-Asia Venture Development Platform serves as an independent, self-funded platform with a mission to engage CUHK MBA students and graduates in the development of quality high-growth ventures in Asia.

Professor Dato Dr. Imran Ho bin Abdullah, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Industry and Community Partnerships) of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), discussed its civic engagement mission in setting up the Pusat Pendidikan Komuniti UKM in Pos Gob, Gua Musang, in collaboration with CIMB Islamic. The foremost aim of the project was to address the lack of education opportunities in Pos Gob where 90% of the children of schooling age did not receive formal education. The villagers say the school is too far away and that they were concerned about the safety of children as young as seven years old living in a hostel. The Pusat Pendidikan Komuniti (Community Education Centre) was built in 2017 after a needs assessment was carried out. The "jungle school" was built with natural resources by the community members and solar panels installed by UKM. The entire process took six months from the needs assessment until completion and launch.

The University of Strathclyde provides opportunities for both undergraduate and postgraduate students to work with academic staff through research based Vertically Integrated Projects (VIPs). The university was established in 1796 by Professor John Anderson "for the good of mankind" and with the purpose of being "a place of useful learning". This mission continues today in VIPs, where staff and students at different levels of study collaborate in multidisciplinary research teams to investigate a real-world problem linked to a SDG. Dr. Lizann Bonnar, the current Vice Dean Academic for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, spoke about the understanding and skills students develop in working on these projects, which cut across all four faculties of Business, Humanities and Social Sciences, Engineering and Science. VIP - Energy for Development project The VIP Energy for Development project, which is aligned to SDG 7, was introduced as an example VIP. This project brings together staff and students in Engineering and Business and works on solutions for stand-alone solar home energy systems and small village micro-grids. To embed further an understanding of sustainable development into curricula, the university will launch a new university-wide module on the multidisciplinary perspectives of sustainable development in January 2020 that will be open to all students. In addition to academic staff from all four faculties discussing the role of their disciplines in addressing each SDG, representatives from the Students' Union as well as the Project Coordinator for Open Government and Sustainable Development Goals of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations are also contributing content for this class. The class aims to develop a range of competencies outlined by UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development as essential for addressing the SDGs. Dr. Bonnar quoted Jonathon Porritt, founder of Forum of the Future, who said "we should be preparing students for the work of the world, not just the world of work".

De La Salle University Vice President for External Relations and Internationalization Dr. Laurene Chua-Garcia spoke about the vision and mission of the University as founded by the Brothers of the Christian Schools to pursue education ideals geared towards social transformation and people empowerment. DLSU promotes community engagement in all facets of academic life, in line with a major key result area of the University: "Community that values talent and is socially-engaged." All academic departments integrate community engagement programs into the curriculum. Moreover, faculty researchers use their expertise to conduct research to alleviate poverty and to provide sustainable solutions to society's problems. The primary unit responsible for social development is the Center for Social Concern and Action (COSCA). The unit is tasked to address the areas of leadership, advancement, and general oversight work on promoting the Lasallian Social Development principles. These guiding principles are the framework that the University observes in all programs that seek to contribute towards the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Professor Nuntavarn Vichit Vadakan is the Dean of the School of Global Studies (SGS), Thammasat University, Thailand. SGS is a new and innovative academic initiative within the university and comprises undergraduate and graduate programmes. Its student-centred nature is translated into the vision and core mission of the school:

**Vision**: Innovative Leadership to achieve sustainable solutions to complex global issues.

**Mission**: Develop graduates with 21st century skills who understand and embrace global citizenship through a multidisciplinary approach in knowledge creation based on innovative teaching, research and academic service.

The university aims to create a life-long and independent learning environment for its students. The school envisions a life-long partnership with its students who are more than just the receivers. The teachers also no longer just play the role of a giver. In the learning process, the teachers are facilitators, coaches and mentors to the students. The self-determined students complete the first phase of education and return for a symbiotic partnership with the providers, serving as faculty members or researchers in the university.

Muhammad Setiawan Kusmulyono spoke about the unique idea behind the Entrepreneurship School in Universitas Prasetiya Mulya (UPM), Indonesia. Its yardstick of success is not the number of social entrepreneurs produced in the course. Rather, the key outcome for the entrepreneurship programme is building empathy through the course through social entrepreneurship. The curriculum is designed with a focus on building empathy, and emphasises Content, Method and Activities. A major effort has been placed on "how to teach" instead of "what to teach", and it is compulsory for students to spend the first hour of the week on making a case presentation to establish an understanding of why and what they learn.

# Q&A Session:

### Question from the audience: How has the measure of student learning changed? How do we assess the impact of learning?

Muhammad Setiawan Kusmulyono said in Universitas Prasetiya Mulya, the measurement is focused on how "social" the student is. In that context, it measures the level of empathy of students who are mostly from middle-income families and above. Dr. Lizann Bonnar explained that the impact assessment is carried out on the Vertical Integrated Projects, with the results then being announced. For DSLU, two metrics are important to determine the impact, which is real time and graduate metrics. Every faculty is involved in this process, and each subject must have a community engagement (student's metric) such as CSR and sustainability. The real time effect is also traced starting from where they work after graduation, and if they come back to the school after graduation, either to continue their studies or to work with the university through an industry linkage. Professor Nuntavarn Vichit Vadakan said impact measurement is a complex process and should be different from traditional measurements. The university should look at the personal growth of students, such as where they work and what they do, because even those working in the private sector can deliver impact such as through CSR and sustainability departments.

**Question from moderator: We are experiencing many local issues and global influences in tackling similar challenges. How might we promote collaboration between the UK and Asia?**

Dr. Elsie Tsui elaborated on the British Council Hong Kong's projects called BRICKS (Building Research Innovation for Community Knowledge and Sustainability), a partnership created between the Social Innovation Exchange (SIX), the Good Lab and Professor Alex Nicholls of the Said Business School at the University of Oxford. The pioneering new project collaborates with all eight public-funded universities and other HEIs to drive fresh approaches to research and teaching, to share best practices on social innovation and to cement relationships between academics and community practitioners in tackling social issues in Hong Kong. Professor Nuntavarn Vichit Vadakan urged higher education players to map out the ecosystem to understand the current gaps in the system and stressed that it timely to take stock so that harnessing and building on each other's strength is possible. For Strathclyde University, internationalisation is the strategy as the university is connected through the SDG network, with research collaboration across the world to enrich the student and staff experience.

# Keynote 3: Empowering Learners through Innovation - Passage to ASEAN

Duy Tan University and the Passage to ASEAN (P2A) initiative were represented by Mr. Phuoc Nguyen and Ms. Uyen Huynh. The P2A network aims to strengthen the ASEAN Charter of "One Vision, One Identity, One Community", by immersing learners in a cross-cultural environment. The P2A Game is a virtual game and free for learners to experience the interesting aspects of life in ASEAN countries. The P2A Journey serves as a mobility programme for students to visit partner institutions across ASEAN and experience their cultures first-hand. P2A on campus event is the ASEAN Model meeting where the students take on the role of country leaders of another ASEAN country so that they can gain insights into other ASEAN member states. P2A Service Learning creates a good platform for students to learn how to build a strong community where every individual contributes into the community growth.

Aside from the Secretariat, the P2A network is also managed and developed by the Student Council. Two student ambassadors from each university are appointed to join the network of Representatives of P2A. This network will govern itself, plan events and come up with ideas to improve P2A. For participants of P2A who have completed the ASEAN Race (10 countries) and visiting three different countries physically, the students are eligible to apply for the P2A Certificate for ASEAN Readiness.

# Panel 3: Innovation in Research

The objective of the last panel session was to highlight case studies or models on consortium or multi-sectoral partnerships in higher education which address social and global challenges, as well as regional priorities.

The panellists were:

- Johan Schot, Founder and Academic Director of the Transformative Innovation Policy Consortium (TIPC) based in the United Kingdom

- Professor Dr. Shaliza Ibrahim, Associate Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, University of Malaya (UM)

- Professor Alan Marshall, Head of Department of Electrical Engineering and Electronics in the University of Liverpool and UK Chair of the UK-Jiangsu 20+20 World Class University Consortium

- William Henry Clune, Senior lecturer from Asian School of the Environment, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and Partner at Sustainability and Economic Development Collaboratory (SEDC)

Johan Schot is the Founder and Academic Director of the Transformative Innovation Policy Consortium (TIPC), based in the UK. His paper on Three Frames of Innovation (2018) underpins the Transformative Innovation Policy (TIP) which aims to address global societal challenges, as summarised by the United Nations' SDGs.

- Frame 1: R&D & Regulation (Dominant in 1960-1980s)

- Frame 2: National Systems of Innovation (Dominant 1990s-today)

- Frame 3: Transformative Change

Schot said when Frame 3 is in action, the focal area will be the socio-technical systems which will see a fundamental transformation of the system architecture, changing both its components and directionality of development. Compared to Frame 3, Frame 2 is being experienced where the focus is high on product and process innovations that lead to significant price/performance improvements through successive incremental innovations. The members of the TIPC are researchers, policymakers and funding agencies who are committed to reframing the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy. The consortium has a five-year roadmap for policy experimentation, evaluation, capacity building and research agenda development. Using a transdisciplinary approach, its ambition is to create widespread adoption of new transformative innovation policies and practices across the world.

Professor Dr. Shaliza Ibrahim, Associate Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, University of Malaya (UM), shared about the evolution of research funding within the university. The University Malaya Research Grant (UMRG), when started in 2009, was a single-disciplinary funding project. It gradually evolved into having a high-impact research focus and collaborations started to be formed with non-research units. In 2016, UM incorporated a living lab concept, and the Impact Oriented Interdisciplinary Research Programme Grant was born last year.

There are two approaches in the working model implemented by UM:

- Top down – Newton-Ungku Omar Fund, NanoMITe, CREST talent development programme, International Associations/Network

- Bottom up – Hartalega project (with industry), RESPIRE (international), UMCARES (with communities)

UMCARES is a community service that works on implementing sustainable environmental initiatives and projects. It comes with four pillars: Action Research Grant, Kelab Sahabat Grant, Community Engagement and High Impact Project. For UMCARES, the university taps on the expertise of community organisations, and is working towards becoming a higher education leader in "absolute engagement". The Malaysian Institute for Innovative Nanotechnology (NanoMITe), initiated in 2013, is a consortium of academic institutions funded by the local government to engage in global scientific research collaborations to generate ideas, knowledge and products to benefit society while contributing to the national economy. As at 2019, University of Malaya has 40 living labs. The university's research capabilities are utilised to solve sustainability issues relating to its infrastructure and practices, turning theory into practice and enabling students to achieve greater engagement with their study material and a more well-rounded educational experience.

Professor Alan Marshall introduced the strategic international joint effort called the UK-Jiangsu 20+20 World Class University Consortium. The idea behind this collaboration is a many-to-many research relationship instead of the conventional one-to-one model. Jiangsu is a province with the second highest GDP in China and is currently hosting many of UK's one-to-one higher education collaborations. The areas of 20+20 are in three thematic areas namely Advanced Manufacturing, Environmental Engineering and Healthcare. This movement is encouraged by the strong momentum behind the Chinese's government's 'World-Class Universities and First-Class Disciplines' initiative. Supplementary resources such as grants and infrastructure are also available such as the Doctoral Training Centre, Pump Priming travel grants and Visiting Researchers Programme. To enhance accessibility to such programmes, a "Capacity Register" has been set up to help the China secretariat, Jiangsu University, to advertise potential research areas at Jiangsu universities involved in the Consortium and to inform about potential placements available.

William Henry Clune is a senior lecturer from the Asian School of the Environment, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Its sustainability agenda is aligned with the national aspiration to create sustainable solutions for cities and strategic partnerships, with the Sustainable Earth Peak (2011-2016) being part of the sustainability roadmap of NTU. Aspiring to be a truly sustainable metropolis, NTU and Singapore have used this platform as the testbed of solutions for mega issues such as water and food, energy supply, land use, health and security. Moving forward, NTU's Sustainable Earth Peak aims to go beyond the current SDGs to create new structures to tackle the sustainability challenge in a more holistic manner. NTU recognises that sustainability's challenge for multidisciplinary research and applied projects is also a collaboration and consortium building opportunity. The university calls for the three pillars of sustainability to be the framework of sustainability solutions, i.e. technology (innovation), law (governance) and economics (financial incentives).

The institutional leadership believes there is no one best way in the journey, and the stakeholders should try many things to strengthen sustainability collaborations within the university and seek opportunities to work with global partners.

# Q&A Session:

## Questions from the audience: Regarding the many-to-many research collaborations, is there a struggle to manage such relationships?

Professor Alan Marshall said the project can begin with 3x3 or 2x2 collaborations such as the relationship between three UK universities (Liverpool, York and Queen's Belfast) and three Jiangsu universities (Soochow, Southeast and Nanjing University of Science and Technology). That will be easier and more efficient in terms of management and evaluation.

## Also, regarding the Jiangsu-UK 2020 project, are there any research plans for countries other than China?

Professor Alan Marshall replied that there is an ongoing development in Hanoi University, and more such collaborations are in the pipeline.

## In international collaborations, how do we manage the cultural differences and regional diversity?

William Henry Clune believes that flexibility can be integrated into the process and that should differ on a case-by-case basis. Internal stakeholders within the institutions can handle the metrics based on their own capacity and types of research they are doing. He stressed that there is no one best way to do things when there are multiple stakeholders involved.

Concerning inclusivity in higher education, Dr. Lizann Bonnar asked about practices that ensure equality and the UN principle to ensure no one is left.

Professor Dr. Shaliza Ibrahim provided an insight into the Malaysian public universities where there are more females enrolled in Science and Technology courses than males. William Henry Clune, however, believed that there are still more males than females in postgraduate or post-doctorate level, and HEIs need to be braver in showing leadership in this area.

On measuring the research impact in contributing to the SDGs, Professor Alan Marshall said the indicators of success should be determined before setting out for evaluation. Indicators are different in China (based on volume) and the UK (high impact research). Professor Dr. Shaliza observed that many universities are still very much focused on quantitative research assessment while waiting for the buy-in for narrative reporting, and there ought to be a blueprint to measure the various areas of success. William Henry Clune reminded the audience that sustainability is multidisciplinary and complex. In some cases, the structure might not be as expected, and the returns of interest for traditional evaluation may be too conventional. There might be limitations or disadvantages in the process of impact measurement.

# Breakout Sessions

Part 1 of the Breakout Sessions began with five groups of participants sitting down to synthesise the top insights from the keynote addresses and panel sessions. The key ideas were focused on (1) sustainability and sustainable development as the end goal and motivation of change, (2) social innovation as the tool to achieve the SDGs, (3) improving the entrepreneurial spirit instead of creating more social entrepreneurs, and (4) the university as a platform to connect students to the real communities and to make a real impact.

The facilitators, Mr Guy Perring, Regional Director of Asia for i-Graduate as well as Mr Dash Dhakshinamoorthy, the Founder of StartupMalaysia.org invited the participants to discuss the new framework defined for the higher education sector, which comprises of assets, aspirations and market reality.

- What do you want to do? (Aspirations)

- What are the assets that you possess right now? (Assets)

- What are the situations out there? Is the system you're using soon to become irrelevant? (Market realities)

Group 1 believes that social entrepreneurship is at the centre of the three subsets. Dr. Laurene Chua-Garcia illustrated the idea with a community-based business such as starting a beauty parlor. The assets come from the community (talents), university students (business start up know how), and other resources that include industry-academe partners as well as alumni (for funding and other needs). The aspiration to achieve the SDGs through this collaboration can be localised to meet "market realities," enabling more community members to be part of the venture. Furthermore, students are motivated to come back to their universities in various capacities such as by serving as faculty members or inspiring more students to work in social enterprises. This model has been used in De La Salle University as the Lasallian Social Enterprise for Economic Development (LSEED) Program.

Group 2 emphasised the importance of the four key stakeholders (society, business, academia and government) as the assets and said the university can influence the market and other players such as the industry. The sweet spot is having ethical students as an aspiration of the university, as these are the people who need to be nurtured to change the world; they should be employable and should be problem solvers. It was also suggested by the facilitator (Dash) the framework should be in a permanent beta mode which can respond to the evolving needs of the bigger picture.

Group 3 shared the intersection as sustainability, social innovation and nurturing talents. The highest importance is placed on nurturing talents. Considering the market realities and assets in the university (students, research and other resources), the platform can be utilised to solve problems outside of the four walls (aspirations). This openness allows different agents to work together. Paul Sternberg also pointed out that their ideas need to rise beyond fragmented solutions and asked about the source of leadership for this movement.

Group 4 laid out the components of assets, aspirations and market realities. The realisation is that there is a high demand for ideas to be developed to meet current challenges. The sweet spot is the universities' ability to support idea development, technology transfer and commercialisation of these ideas. This process helps students gain the skills that make them employable while the ideas can contribute to tangible community solutions.

Group 5 elaborated on the interconnection between all the subsets. Students are recognised as the biggest asset because of the amount of knowledge they generate. Facilities in universities are assets for public good as well as for the alumnus network. Government policies can be the limiting reality when universities are driven to climb the ranking of world universities while funding is insufficient. The aspiration is about making a positive difference in universities such as inclusive learning and ensuring that HEIs are more accessible and relevant. The sweet spot of higher education is (Step 1) creating flexible education that is (Step 2) connected to the community, and having the society believe that (Step 3) it's worth going back to or investing in university education again.

# End Summary

At this gathering of higher education stakeholders across East Asia and the UK, the forum started off by reiterating the importance of the SDGs, and looked at the pathfinding and the successes so far in achieving the 17 SDGs that are more holistic in development compared to the eight MDGs. The SDGs, which have a timeline of 2015 to 2030, are a challenge to the change-makers including HEIs as the Industrial Revolution 4.0 forces stakeholders to pay attention to humanity and wellbeing.

Universities are now playing a multi-faceted role in the journey of learners, regardless of the phase of education they are in. Powerful stories from De Monfort University, De La Salle University  and Nanyang Technological University are testimonials that HEIs can and should do more than knowledge creation and dissemination. The emergence of design thinking, or human-centred design, and social innovation are the most sought-after bottom-up tool to solve the problems of the community. While empowering the learners to work outwards into the community, HEIs are now aware that cultivating internal capacity such as the ability to empathise is the key to grasping the ever-changing community needs. Again, this is aligned to the quadruple helix model that prioritises talent development as a mission of universities.

While HEIs are accountable for the transformation in their arenas, policymakers and businesses are also integral parts of a more inclusive higher education outlook.  As technology advances and connectivity improves across the globe, local education networks are now constantly seeking to be part of international networks or consortiums to exchange expertise and tap into win-win resource sharing.

Stepping into 2020 and the next decade, HEIs are set to harness the outcome of social innovation to achieve sustainable development. While it seems likely that student leaders will be at the forefront of this movement, HEIs are encouraged to be the catalyst and be reflective to ensure that they are purpose-fit for the path of innovation.

The ACU and the British Council have both committed to supporting and enhancing the role that universities play in sustainable development.

Prepared by:

Yong Yee Chong (Founder, Design Tinker)

On behalf of the British Council, organiser of UK-East Asia Higher Education Forum in collaboration with the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

November 2019

## About the British Council:

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We were founded in 1934 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1940. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

Since hosting the Going Global 2018 conference in Malaysia in 2018, the British Council has undertaken a series of activities to deep dive into the common HE priorities especially in the space of future internalisation and collaboration strategies between the UK and the East Asia region. The present forum is especially important to catalyse pertinent discussions in the priority area of 'innovation', given that the theme for Going Global 2020 focuses on the global learner of the future, their journey to becoming a global innovator and how this shapes global learning institutions.

## About the ACU:

The ACU is an international organisation dedicated to building a better world through higher education. We believe that international collaboration is central to this ambition. By bringing universities together from around the world – and crucially the people who study and work within them – we help to advance knowledge, promote understanding, broaden minds, and improve lives.

We champion higher education as a cornerstone of stronger societies, supporting our members, partners, and stakeholders as they adapt to a changing world. Our newly established Higher Education and the SDGs Network will support university efforts to directly engage in the SDG agenda – for example, through integrating sustainable development into their operations, sharing SDG learning content and materials, or developing SDG-focused research strategies. It builds on our longstanding role as a champion of the importance of higher education in sustainable development and experience of convening networks that tackle global challenges.