



2023 Trend Report

Higher Education & e-learning in ASEAN



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Enhancing Higher Education Cooperation: Malaysia-UK MoU and an Innovative English Education Platform

#HigherEducationCooperation
#EducationPartnership #51Talk

Mr. Wooyong Shin / Yonsei University



Malaysia and the United Kingdom have recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation in the higher education sector. This collaboration aims to enhance scientific research, talent training, academic exchanges, and promote areas such as STEM, ICT, TVET, innovation, online education, lifelong learning, and entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, the innovative online English education platform, 51Talk, has been recognized for its unique teaching approach and received appreciation from Malaysia's Prime Minister at a youth empowerment forum, highlighting the importance of equipping the next generation with effective English communication skills.

01

Malaysia and United Kingdom Strengthen Higher Education Cooperation

Malaysia and the United Kingdom have recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at enhancing cooperation in the higher education sector. The MoU encompasses various areas of collaboration, including scientific research, talent training, academic staff and student exchanges, training platforms for education administrators and educators, scholarship opportunities, bilateral programs between institutions, and cooperation in fields such as STEM, ICT, TVET, innovation, online education, lifelong learning, and entrepreneurship.

The signing ceremony took place at the Department for Education (DfE) in the UK and was witnessed by the Malaysian high commissioner to the UK. The MoU was signed by the secretary-general of the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education and the UK's Permanent Secretary at the DfE. During the visit, the Malaysian delegation also attended an Asean Ministerial Breakfast Meeting to discuss education sector planning and development in Southeast Asia, as well as other relevant topics such as climate change, gender equality, TVET, and digital technology.

Additionally, the secretary-general had the opportunity to engage with over 300 Malaysian students in the UK during an Aidilfitri event. Another significant event was the signing of an MoU between two Malaysian universities, UPSI and UniSZA, and the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) to promote the Malay language. UPSI will focus on sharing Malay culture and values, while UniSZA will lead the digitization of Islamic and Malay manuscripts in the SOAS collection.

Implications

The signing of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Malaysia and the United Kingdom signifies a commitment to enhance collaboration and mutual benefits in the higher education sector. This partnership opens opportunities for scientific research, talent training, academic exchange, and the promotion of various fields such as STEM, ICT, TVET, innovation, online education, lifelong learning, and entrepreneurship. The MoU not only strengthens ties between higher education institutions but also facilitates the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and resources between Malaysia and the UK. This collaboration has the potential to drive advancements in education, research, and development, while promoting cultural understanding and fostering global connections in the academic arena.

02

51Talk Empowers Malaysian Youth with Innovative Online English Education

51Talk is a prominent online English education platform with a global presence. Headquartered in Singapore, the company specializes in providing personalized English lessons to young learners aged 3 to 15, as well as adults aged 18 and above. Established in 2011, 51Talk was listed on the New York Stock Exchange on June 10, 2016. To date, the platform has served students from over 50 countries and regions, with more than 100 million classes conducted. With a diverse pool of over 20,000 highly qualified teachers from North America and the Philippines, 51Talk is committed to delivering high-quality language learning services to its global audience.

Since entering the Malaysian online education market in March 2022, the company has gained a strong foothold through its innovative AirClass (AC) teaching system. This unique platform allows young students to learn English through real-time translation, taught by teachers from around the world.

Recognizing the need for improved conversational English skills among Chinese students, 51Talk aims to empower the next generation with the ability to communicate effectively in English. Their courses align with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), an international standard for language proficiency.

Jack Huang, the founder and CEO of 51Talk, explains that English has become the primary language for global communication, leaving non-native speakers at a disadvantage. As a result, many countries have made English an integral part of their childhood curriculum.

The platform's distinctive and enjoyable teaching approach caught the attention of Malaysia's Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, during the Youth Empowerment Forum Malaysia 2023. 51Talk's method focuses on short but frequent one-on-one lessons that reinforce concepts at regular intervals to aid information retention. Interactive and entertaining sessions make the learning process engaging for young children.

Notable attendees at the forum, including Selangor Crown Prince Tengku Amir Shah Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, Malaysia's Communications and Digital Minister YB Fahmi Fadzil, Muar Member of Parliament YB Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, and squash legend Datuk Nicol Ann David, praised 51Talk's vision to equip Malaysia's next generation with English communication skills, aligning with the core values of Malaysia Madani.

As the only private online education company invited to the forum, 51Talk attracted interest from various strategic partners, including government entities, for potential collaborations. The company has a track record of winning awards in the Asian education sector and is eager to collaborate with partners in the Malaysian market to create opportunities for youth to contribute meaningfully to nation-building.

Implications

51Talk's unique teaching philosophy and innovative online platform have the potential to revolutionize English education in Malaysia, empowering the country's youth with effective communication skills and bridging the language barrier in the globalized world.

Transforming Malaysian Education: Hybrid Learning in Higher Education and Digital Integration in Schools

#Ministry of Higher Education

#Hybrid Learning #University Education

Mr. Wooyong Shin / Yonsei University



Malaysia's Ministry of Higher Education plans to implement a hybrid learning system in universities, allowing students to attend on-campus lectures only in their first and final year of study while offering flexibility to study from home during the intervening years. In parallel, the Ministry of Education is focusing on integrating digital technology into the education system, providing training to teachers, distributing laptops, and implementing support programs to enhance teaching effectiveness.

01

Ministry of Higher Education Introduces Hybrid Learning System for Universities, Promoting Flexibility and Cost Savings

The Ministry of Higher Education has announced its plans to implement a hybrid and flexible learning system in universities. Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, the minister, explained that this system will involve students attending on-campus lectures only during their first and final year of study. In the intervening years, students will have the choice and flexibility to study from home, eliminating the need for physical attendance in classes.¹

During the closing ceremony of the "Jom Masuk U 2023" program and the launch of the Institutions of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Foundation Program at the University of Malaya, Nordin highlighted the benefits of this initiative. He emphasized that the new system will provide students with the opportunity to organize their schedules more flexibly and reduce their education costs. Moreover, this approach will enable graduates to enter the job market a year earlier.

Nordin disclosed that 19 public universities are prepared to implement this flexible learning system, offering a total of 95 bachelor's degree programs for the 2023/2024 academic session. Furthermore, the duration of some programs will be shortened from four to three years.

The ministry has identified 44 study programs in nine higher education institutes that can have their study periods shortened. In addition, as part of the Family's First Student Development Program (Sulung) initiative, 10,000 students representing the Bottom 40% income family will receive full tuition fee exemptions at all public universities.



Implications

The implementation of a hybrid and flexible learning system in universities has the potential to increase accessibility and affordability in higher education. By allowing students to study from home for the middle years of their program, the system eliminates the need for physical attendance and provides flexibility in organizing schedules.

02

Ministry of Education Clarifies SPM Exam Dropout Figures and Emphasizes Digital Integration for Future Education

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has confirmed that approximately 29,663 registered candidates, including private candidates who were enrolled for one or two subjects, did not take the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination last year. Deputy Education Minister Lim Hui Ying clarified that this number accounts for 7.3% of the total registered candidates, which is in line with the figures mentioned by Prime Minister Datuk Anwar Ibrahim during a recent dialogue program. The former Education Minister, Datuk Dr Radzi Jidin, had stated that only 14,858 candidates (3.8% of the total) who were registered for six subjects, including private candidates, did not attend the examination. Lim provided this clarification during a parliamentary session while addressing a question raised by Roslan Hashim regarding the discrepancy between the dropout figures mentioned by the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Education's data.²

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education will enhance the teaching system through digital technology integration, providing training and guidance to teachers to improve their digital education skills and fulfill their responsibilities. The Ministry has conducted 1,789 digital training programs and distributed 50,000 laptops to schools, facilitating the modernization of teaching. Additionally, a service program with support from leading digital education experts has been implemented to assist teachers in integrating educational technology effectively.

Implications

The implementation of digital technology in education is becoming increasingly important and is being prioritized by the Ministry of Education. This implication arises from the Ministry's emphasis on improving the teaching and learning system through digital integration, providing training to teachers in digital education, and supplying laptops to schools and educational institutions.

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Global Initiatives Promote Accessible Tech-Centric Education in Malaysia

#EducationAccess #TechLearning #OnlineCourses
#DigitalSkills #5GInitiative

Mr. Wooyong Shin / Yonsei University



Two significant educational initiatives showcase the global shift towards accessible, tech-focused learning. First, a partnership between the Seychelles government and SEGi University in Malaysia will grant Seychellois students access to diverse online courses, particularly benefiting working adults. Government educational loans ensure affordability, emphasizing inclusivity. Second, Digital Nasional Berhad (DNB) and Ericsson have launched the 'MY5G Ericsson Malaysia Pioneers Programme', targeting college students to boost digital literacy and emerging tech awareness. With 42 hours of content, it readies students for a digital future, aligning with Malaysia's digital economy goals. These initiatives highlight the growing importance of accessible, tech-driven education in today's evolving digital landscape.

01

Celebrating Educational Collaboration: Seychellois Gain Access to Online Courses through Malaysian Partnership

The Seychelles government and a prominent university in Malaysia have entered into an agreement, signed on Tuesday, that will enable Seychellois students to access online courses by the end of this year.

The agreement was formally established through a signing ceremony at the Ministry of Education's headquarters in Mont Fleuri, where Stella Lau Kah Wai, the Managing Director of SEGi University and Colleges in Malaysia, and John Lesperance, the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Education, executed the cooperation pact for higher education.

This recent accord is expected to provide an affordable opportunity for Seychellois individuals interested in pursuing further education. SEGi University and Colleges will create course content accessible on the africaopenlearning.com platform.

SEGi University, which initially originated as Systematic College in 1977 within Kuala Lumpur's higher education landscape, currently boasts 20,000 students across its five major campuses in Malaysia. Since 2016, Seychellois students have been pursuing advanced studies there.

In March 2023, SEGi also conducted a school leadership program for primary and secondary school educators in Seychelles. Stella Lau Kah Wai expressed the institution's objective, stating, "Our primary aim is to expand accessibility, making education available to people from all backgrounds."

The available courses encompass a wide range of disciplines, ranging from mass communications diplomas to a Ph.D. in information technology. These courses are offered online, allowing students to learn at their own pace, especially catering to working adults who cannot put their lives on hold to attend a university full-time.

Course prices vary, ranging from SCR7,832 (\$594) to SCR118,792 (\$9,023), depending on the selected subjects. Minister for Education, Justin Valentin, emphasized that with the government's newly introduced educational loans, these courses are now affordable.

Implications

The partnership between Seychelles and SEGi University in Malaysia, offering affordable online courses, has the potential to significantly enhance the skills and education levels of Seychellois citizens. This, in turn, may lead to a more qualified and competitive workforce, benefiting both individuals and the Seychellois economy as a whole.

02

DNB and Ericsson Launch Online Academic Program for College Students in Malaysia

Digital Nasional Berhad (DNB) and Ericsson have introduced the 'MY5G Ericsson Malaysia Pioneers Program,' a free online educational initiative for college students nationwide, beginning earlier this year. This initiative aligns with Malaysia's digital economy goals and focuses on fostering tech talent to support the country's 5G-enabled technology ecosystem.

The program, offered by Ericsson, is the first of its kind at a national level, delivering 42 hours of content designed to enhance digital skills and awareness of emerging technologies. Comprising three modules, practical problem-solving, and AI-powered digital solutions, students will also have the opportunity to creatively address real-world challenges in various industries. Successful completion of the program leads to an Ericsson digital badge, equipping students with skills for the increasingly digital world.

As 5G drives socioeconomic transformation, this program ensures that the next generation of leaders is well-prepared for the digital future while contributing to Malaysia's digital literacy and economic growth.

Implications

The launch of the 'MY5G Ericsson Malaysia Pioneers Program' reflects a strategic response to the pivotal role that 5G technology plays in reshaping Malaysia's digital landscape. By offering a comprehensive and free online educational initiative to college students, the initiative addresses the growing need for skilled individuals in the digital age. This underscores the importance of nurturing tech talent on a national scale, aligning with Malaysia's long-term digital economy ambitions.

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