Article

Insights into Bruneian students' transformative mobility experiences from their community outreach activities in Vietnam

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Abstract

This article is concerned with the internationalisation of higher education and student mobility for society and community engagement purposes. Drawing on the specific case study of Universiti Brunei Darussalam's Community Outreach Programme overseas, it examines the programme's operation in Vietnam as well as investigates Bruneian students' experiences during their programme activities in this Asian country. The article also explores the impacts of such experiences on the students' growth and transformations. The reported growth and transformations, on the one hand, demonstrate the importance of social engagement beyond campus and correspond to the internationalisation in higher education for society agenda recently advocated by international education scholars and practitioners. They also offer rich insights into (inter-Asian) student mobility for non-academic purposes, which remain largely under-researched. On the other hand, underlying the students' transformative experiences are many issues associated with student safety and wellbeing that require ethical responses and appropriate adaptive pedagogies.

Keywords

Inter-Asia, student mobility, internationalisation of higher education, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, ASEAN, Discovery Year, community outreach, internationalisation in higher education for society, social engagement, intercultural competence

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Vignettes

Vignette 1: at a local market in Bandar

'Where are you from?', the shop-keeper asked me as I was picking some fruits from his booth.

'I'm from Vietnam', I responded.

'Oh Vietnam. My daughter went to Vietnam for her DY [Discovery Year],[2] and we visited her. We really like your country. My daughter studied at UBD [Universiti Brunei Darussalam] and graduated recently', the gentleman excitedly told me.

As we were talking, other vendors heard our conversation and joined in. And I learnt that they all knew some Bruneian students, either directly or indirectly, that had been to Vietnam via the UBD's DY program.[1]

Vignette 2: at a Bubble Tea shop

'Are you from Vietnam?', a young man standing behind the counter of a Bubble Tea shop asked me as I was talking to my daughters in Vietnamese.

'Yes, we are. Why and how do you know?' I looked at him with surprise and delight that his guess was right.

'Oh because I volunteered to teach English to school students in Phu Yen during my DY. I stayed there for six months, I learnt some Vietnamese', the young man said.

'Have you graduated yet?'

'Not yet, I'm waiting to graduate next semester. I'm thinking of going back to Vietnam to continue helping the schools there', he replied while handing us the Bubble Tea that we had ordered.

(Notes from Phan Le Ha's research diaries)

The above vignettes serve as our invitation to readers to start thinking about the still rather modestly researched phenomenon of inter-Asian student mobility and about the never-studied academic mobilities between Brunei and Vietnam, as well as about the society and community engagement purposes of the internationalisation of higher education. Despite many activities regarding the internationalisation of higher education and academic mobilities taking place in the Asian region and among Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries more specifically, except for Singapore and Malaysia most other ASEAN countries, to a varied extent, remain largely on the margin of the existing scholarship on global higher education and academic mobility studies. In this article, we present a case study of student mobilities between Brunei and Vietnam, with a particular focus on Bruneian students going to Vietnam as part of their required curriculum. Our work addresses various aspects of inter-Asian student mobilities – an under-researched scholarly area that this Special Issue collectively examines and promises to advance.

Internationalisation of higher education and (inter-Asian) student mobility

The term 'internationalisation' has become widely used in higher education since the 1990s and these days it serves as an overarching term to embrace anything ranging from international partnerships and collaborations, international student recruitment, transnational education, student and staff mobility, joint international teaching, research and community engagement, and institutional capacity building (De Wit et al., 2017; Jones and Brown, 2007; Knight, 2004; Leask, 2015; Phan,

2017). As this body of literature shows, internationalisation has also been adopted to describe the structural framework, strategic initiatives, mission outcomes, management and culture of higher education institutions (HEIs). Likewise, internationalisation has been coupled with HEIs' aspirations and desires to both go global and internationalise from within.

Student mobility has been central in HEIs' visions and missions, and has also become intertwined with the globalisation and internationalisation of higher education (Brooks and Waters, 2010; Collins et al., 2014; Liu and Phan, 2021; Phan, 2017; Xu and Montgomery, 2019; Yang, 2019). Indeed, many universities have incorporated student mobility in their internationalisation strategies and operation to help them achieve many goals, including capacity building, enhancing institutional global presence, reputation and competitiveness, enriching curricula, promoting values considered to be important for the 21st century, building international networks and enhancing students' educational experience and their graduate employability. At all levels of policy, curriculum and practice, student mobility has been conceptualised and presented as a key feature of contemporary global higher education. This is also the case with our own university – UBD, which we discuss in greater detail in the subsequent sections.

Within the wide-ranging and comprehensive nature of the existing literature on the internationalisation of higher education and student mobilities, inter-Asian student mobility or student mobility within Asia has emerged as a key phenomenon as identified and discussed in recent and the newest works on academic mobility in the region (Cho et al., forthcoming 2022; Collins and Ho, 2018; Lipura and Collins, 2020; Phan, 2017, 2018; Phan and Fry, 2021; Sidhu and Ishikawa, 2020). These scholars have also called for more research into this fast-rising phenomenon so as to enrich and expand our scholarly and conceptual understandings of mobility studies and new developments happening in many different directions in Asia's higher education systems (see, for example, Oleksiyenko et al., this Special Issue). Our article, by bringing to the table the first ever and original case study of student mobilities between Brunei and Vietnam, responds to this scholarly call.

Internationalisation in higher education for society

While many positive aspects of the internationalisation of higher education have been documented, its roles in community service and engagement are questionable. Brandenburg et al. (2020) point out the disconnection between HEIs' internationalisation strategies and social engagement. They have, hence, called for internationalisation in higher education for society (IHES), whereby HEIs are pushed to play more tangible roles for societies by directly linking their internationalisation strategies to societal issues. In other words, their internationalisation should serve as a tool to support social engagement and exercise its responsibilities in helping solve global issues of relevance. This is where and how the practical values of IHES emerge; that is, to be responsive to societal issues. Brandenburg et al. (2020) identify xenophobia, hate speech, environmental change and global warming as critical societal issues facing the global population today – the challenges that IHES ought to engage and enact upon.

Specifically, for HEIs, the IHES values will serve and fulfil their new mission to provide a service to society alongside their existing teaching and research missions. IHES will also enable HEIs to share the benefits of higher education more directly and widely across local, national and global communities. This means their IHES strategies would involve people outside academia through joint projects to serve targeted groups or society. This will forge authentic social engagements beyond what is said on paper. Eventually, the strategies will result in real impacts in solving societal issues.

Recognising HEIs' 'failure to make a real difference in the world'[3] despite their promotion and pursuit of internationalisation over the past decades, leading scholars such as Betty Leask (2020)

have urged HEIs and scholars to address this very problem, as evident in the upcoming inspirational Special Issue entitled 'Reimagining Internationalisation for Society', published in the *Journal of Studies in International Education* (*JSIE*) in 2021. Articles included in this *JSIE* Special Issue, such as those by Gregersen-Hermans (2021) and Ramaswamy et al. (2021), show how internationalisation for society could enhance students' holistic experience and should inform the curriculum for the future. These authors examine how the internationalisation of higher education and the functions of HEIs could be aligned more effectively with education for sustainable development and with the United Nations sustainable development goals in designing and implementing a curriculum that not only enhances students' holistic experience, but also makes universities' civic mission more visible. From the standpoint of study abroad and local and global engagement, Jon and Fry (2021) offer a much-needed account of the range of contributions and impacts that former study-abroad participants have made towards the common good via a series of ideas and actions including civic engagement, philanthropic activities, social entrepreneurship and voluntary simplicity. Jon and Fry's (2021) important study echoes Phan's (2018) case study of Southeast Asian international students studying in Vietnam, in which she shows how a Vietnamese university's commitment to poverty reduction and sustainable and green farming could inspire some international students from the Philippines who would want to carry out the same practices in their home country to help local communities' economy and tourism.

Our article responds well to the above surveyed literature and exemplifies clearly Brandenburg et al.'s (2020) discussion of IHES. While located in the context of inter-Asian student mobilities, our study, with a focus on the specific case of UBD's Community Outreach Programme (COP), is particularly concerned with student mobility for community engagement and outreach purposes. In this regard, student mobilities have more direct connections with societies, communities and individuals that may need support. Such mobilities are not confined to classroom teaching and learning. They extend students' knowledge of the world beyond books and academic knowledge, via volunteerism, community services and humanitarian activities, which are also evident in Jon and Fry (2021). Their mobilities mean doing hard work, addressing real-world problems and helping to improve them. To our knowledge, this article is perhaps among the first to provide insight into this important yet under-explored aspect of student mobilities in general and inter-Asian mobilities in particular.

The case

The case we present is centred on UBD's DY programme through which Bruneian students have gone to other countries including Vietnam for their COP activities. COP is one of the set paths under the DY programme. After more than 10 years of sending out students to undertake their COP activities in Vietnam, it is high time to carry out an in-depth study to examine these students' mobility experience with their COP in Vietnam and to investigate if their reported experience is in line with the intended goals of the COP activities. The increasing student mobilities between Brunei and Vietnam, as we shall show, corroborate with the larger phenomenon of inter-Asian student mobilities (Cho et al., forthcoming 2022; Collins and Ho, 2018; Phan, 2017, 2018; Yang, 2018) and with internationalisation for society (Brandenburg et al., 2020; Gregersen-Hermans, 2021; Jon and Fry, 2021; Ramaswamy et al., 2021).

For the purpose of our study, we have adopted qualitative case study research. Although there are distinctive approaches to case study research by three leading figures in this area, namely Merriam (1998), Stake (1995) and Yin (2002), as Yazan (2015) shows in his thorough review and discussion of their work it is agreeable among all these scholars and others including Bartlett and Vavrus (2017), Baxter and Jack (2008) and Creswell (2014) that qualitative case study enables us

to obtain thick and well-rounded data about the case and what is related to it, within it, surrounding it, comparable to it and (re)shaping it, be it individuals, groups, a phenomenon or some/all of them combined. At the same time, this approach allows researchers to employ multiple data collection techniques to maximise the richness of information sources, the case and its context. In the sphere of the internationalisation of higher education and academic mobilities, one of us (Phan, 2008, 2009, 2017, 2018) has been conducting multi-year, multi-site studies using qualitative case study, and has found this approach effective and flexible, particularly with the collection, presentation and communication of multi-layered and multi-source data.

This approach works well for the nature and purpose of our study as it gives us the freedom and flexibility to conceptualise the case which embeds multiple inter-related layers of actors and units, which include the university (UBD) and its collaborating partners in Vietnam, the DY programme, the COP activities, individuals and units overseeing and supporting the operation of the DY and COP, students participating in the DY/COP, and the beneficiaries of the COP activities, as well as the sustained Brunei–Vietnam student mobility phenomenon that has been established via distinctive society engagement programmes co-contributed by Vietnam, Brunei and other organisations such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) based in Vietnam that we shall turn to for details in the subsequent sections.

Varied data collection methods were employed for our study: (a) websites, policies, documents, reports and promotional materials; (b) notes taken from relevant presentations given by UBD colleagues; (c) interviews with relevant UBD colleagues involved in the DY programme and COP activities; and (d) COP activity written reports and reflections from 98 UBD students undertaking their COP in Vietnam between 2016 and 2020.

We, the authors, in varied ways, have been involved with the COP at UBD as well as supervising and teaching many students who have participated in the COP over the years. Hence, alongside the data obtained from various sources, the details provided about this case study also came from our insider knowledge of the university, its internationalisation policy and practice, and its curriculum and student mobility initiatives.

Thematic analysis was the main techniques for data analysis (Creswell, 2014; Nowell et al., 2017). The themes were generated from the data as well as driven by the aims of the study. As will be seen in the following sections, we have also combined thematic analysis with the IHES Matrix developed by Brandenburg et al. (2020). The IHES Matrix contains the following components: '1. Goals that any IHEs activity pursues; 2. Actor group(s) within the HEI; 3. Target group(s) in society; 4. Involvement at the HEI; 5. Dimensions of internationalisation; 6. Movement between HEI and society; and 7. Beneficiaries' (Brandenburg et al., 2020: 43).

We have incorporated the Matrix components in our analyses where relevant, as will be seen a little later.

The subsequent parts interweave the multiple sources of data with our analyses, interpretations and discussions.

The context and the case: UBD's DY and COP

This section provides detailed and thick descriptions about the context which is also the case for this study. To help create a flow, we present the information according to a time sequence and milestone moments, instead of breaking it down into compartmentalised components.

UBD, as the flagship HEI in Brunei Darussalam, implemented fundamental changes to its curriculum in 2009. Specifically, UBD introduced the four-year Generation Next (GenNEXT) programme for undergraduate studies. The programme has a broad-based and transdisciplinary framework, providing students with the flexibility to tailor their studies according to their individual learning styles.

The restructured programme is considered necessary in preparing students for the globalised world and the uncertain future workforce. GenNEXT is also in line with Wawasan Brunei 2035 (Brunei Vision 2035), which was announced in 2007:

> This vision aspires that by 2035, Brunei Darussalam develops into a nation which will be widely recognised for the accomplishment of its educated and highly skilled people measured by the highest international standards; quality of life that is among the Top 10 nations in the world and a dynamic and sustainable economy with income per capita within the Top 10 countries in the world.[4]

The changes implemented at UBD were also driven by UBD's quest for internationalisation and its preparations for participating in the global university ranking exercise, whereby inbound and outbound student mobility is an important criterion. To produce all-rounded and future-ready graduates who can be globally competitive and ready to join the workforce in this globalising world, UBD students are required to be involved in various academic and non-academic programmes. For this requirement, UBD incorporates international student mobility programmes to allow students to participate in local/international academic/non-academic activities in the GenNEXT curriculum. This student mobility programme, the DY programme, is one of UBD's key strategic initiatives to internationalise the university community and gain exposure beyond their university compound and acquire the necessary competence skills (Hamdan et al., 2020; Tan and Shahrill, 2015). Specifically, the DY programme should enable students to develop self-confidence and a sense of independence while at the same time should cultivate an appreciation of other cultures, religions and languages. The programme also aims to improve students' communication and analytical skills.

The DY programme is to be undertaken in the third year of undergraduate study, and after that they are to return to the university for their final year. Successful completion of the DY programme constitutes one of the requirements for graduation. The DY programme is comprised of a range of DY options, namely the COP, Incubation and Innovation, Internship, and the Study Abroad Programme (SAP). Students can choose to undertake their DY at any UBD partner universities, host agencies, institutions or stakeholders either locally or abroad. To ensure that UBD students successfully attain the main objective of DY which is to produce global citizens, UBD strongly encourages its students to undertake their DY activities abroad and incentivises qualified students with a considerable amount in monthly allowances.

At the initial implementation of the DY programme in 2009, students were allowed to pursue their DY activities for one semester only in their third year. However, starting in 2014, UBD required its students to leave the university for both semesters in an academic year to pursue their chosen DY activities in an effort to maximise the potential of the DY programme. That particular mandate witnessed 100% of UBD third-year students leaving the university to pursue DY, of whom 80% undertook overseas placements.

Since 2011, UBD has engaged with more than 161 partner institutions in 32 countries and with 86 partner agencies worldwide for its DY activities. The outbound mobilities of UBD students demonstrate a global directionality pattern where students not only pursue DY activities in traditional destinations including the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea, but also in ASEAN countries, particularly in consideration of growing regional integration, extensive internationalisation processes and dedicated initiatives by HEIs in Southeast Asia. Hence, a new trend of intraregional student mobility since the mid-2000s has arisen, supported by regional mobility schemes such as the ASEAN University Network (AUN), University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) and ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) (Chao, 2020). Between 1999 and 2015, student mobility within the ASEAN region (intra-mobility) rose from

2882 to 17,769 students, which is a 132% increase (Chao, 2017). UBD contributed considerably to the figure from 2011 to 2019. The university sent out 3082 students to various universities and host agencies in ASEAN countries, with the highest number of students attending DY in Malaysia.

COP

To fulfil the overarching DY requirements, UBD students should undertake any two of these DY options: COP, SAP, Incubation and Innovation, and Internship. In this article, we focus specifically on the COP path. While students can do their COP both in Brunei and overseas, we pay particular attention to the COP activities conducted by UBD students in other countries.

When choosing COP, students are affiliated with an organisation to take on programmes and projects that engage the local community. Students are encouraged to understand the community's issues and problems before designing and undertaking any communal activities. More importantly, the activities should be aligned with the overarching learning objective of the COP which is to produce a generation of graduates responsive to their environment. Specifically, the programme aims to improve the academic, personal and intercultural competencies of the participating students by enabling them to develop a better sense of social responsibility, self-reliance, volunteerism and appreciation of cultural differences. The COP learning objective as cultivated and enacted upon by UBD and its partners is not only highly in line with Brandenburg et al.'s (2020) call for IHES and the accompanying IHES Matrix, but is also holistic as it connects the participating students' individual growth and aspirations with societal change for the better.

To maintain the academic essence of the overall DY programme, students are advised to prioritise academic-oriented programmes or projects during their COP activities. For instance, one of the well-accepted COP projects is where students undertake teaching tasks for underprivileged children either at local or overseas placements. One of the pilot COPs, pioneered by UBD academic Dr Yabit Alas, took place in Yala and Pattani in Southern Thailand in 2010. The objective of the project was essentially for UBD students to teach English to pupils at *madrasah* or *sekolah pondok* (religious schools) in Southern Thailand for one month, following the local demand for English. That year, 16 UBD students participated in the pilot project. Given the positive responses from the Thai host community and favourable feedback from the UBD participating students, similar initiatives were subsequently undertaken in 2011 in Surabaya and Jakarta, Indonesia. Later in 2012, the project was extended to Vietnam under the collaboration of UBD and local host universities and agencies.

In addition, through UBD's collaborations and partnerships with various NGOs and agencies, UBD students can also undertake projects, through either local or overseas placement, related to environmental awareness, or join a tutoring programme for underprivileged children that aims at wellbeing and personal development. They can also volunteer to provide assistance to relevant organisations that support special needs students and people with dementia. Likewise, COP students can join hands with voluntary services to participate in animal rescue programmes and economic empowerment programmes for chosen communities or villages, either locally or abroad. For instance, in 2012, UBD students were involved in a voluntary programme to assist underprivileged women and children in a rural village in northern Hanoi. Subsequently, in 2013, UBD students worked alongside volunteers from other countries in their combined efforts to preserve coastal areas in Da Nang, Vietnam.

For the purpose of this article, we focus in particular on the COP activities that UBD students participated and conducted in Vietnam during the 2015–2020 period, as elaborated in the subsequent section.

COP activities in Vietnam

COP in Vietnam (COPV) has grown significantly in popularity since the introduction of the COP voluntary project in 2012, as mentioned earlier. The Brunei–Vietnam dynamics started in 2011 when Dr Yabit Alas, UBD's pioneer for COP abroad, and Mr Kaizawa Shinichiro, the President of the Network for Voluntary Development in Asia (NVDA) as well as of the non-government/non-profit organisation Never-ending International workCamps Exchange (NICE) Japan, met in Singapore during a conference. The President of NVDA expressed his intention to cooperate with UBD in undertaking community work in Vietnam under the auspices of several Vietnamese universities. Recognising that Brunei is one of the countries in the ASEAN with the highest English proficiency and that 95% of the programmes offered by UBD adopt English as the medium of instruction, Mr Kaizawa was convinced that UBD could assist in building the educational and employment capacity for underprivileged communities in Vietnam by helping them learn English.

Formal discussions between UBD and NVDA officially began in April 2014. Two UBD representatives were invited to attend a conference focusing on volunteerism and cooperation projects with NVDA held in Hanoi, Vietnam. UBD then took a bold step by sending three students to Vietnam for their COP activities in August 2014 under the international youth NGO Solidarités Jeunesses Vietnam (SJV), a member of NVDA. UBD has continued to send students to SJV since then. SJV has assigned Bruneian students to Vietnamese universities based in various cities and provinces from north to south including Hanoi, Ha Long, Phu Yen, Vinh City and Bac Lieu. Additionally, UBD students are also given the opportunity to participate in various work camps and volunteer projects overseen by SJV.

Another host organisation for COP activities in Vietnam is FPT University, a local private Vietnamese university with campuses in Hanoi, Danang, Can Tho and Ho Chi Minh City. UBD's cooperation with FPT University started in 2013 when representatives from FPT visited UBD and proposed to collaborate with UBD for the DY programme, because the purpose of the DY programme would fit well with FPT's commitments to serving underprivileged communities in Vietnam by helping enhance their educational opportunities and conditions, especially via English language teaching. Specifically, under this collaboration, FPT University has served as the host for Bruneian COP students and has involved them in FPT's Human Development Project which entails UBD students offering English-language lessons to students in selected local primary and secondary schools (FPT International Student Exchange Center, 2016).

In January 2014, the first cohort of eight students left Brunei to participate in the COP at FPT University in Hanoi. The number of students in the second cohort almost doubled as they commenced their COP with FPT in August 2014. With such a high volume of participation, UBD expanded its partnership with FPT by sending students to FPT campuses in Da Nang, Can Tho and Ho Chi Minh City. Between 2014 and 2020, over 380 UBD students undertook their COP activities under FPT in Vietnam.

According to the data we have compiled from the interviews conducted with relevant individuals at the university and from the students' written reports, Vietnam is one of the preferred DY/COP destinations for Bruneian students because of several factors: attractive programmes offered by the host institutions, the close proximity between Brunei and Vietnam, and a favourable currency exchange rate. In addition, as more and more Bruneian students travelled to Vietnam and they could travel in large groups, the safety factor increasingly became a significant consideration for UBD students in choosing Vietnam as their DY/COP placement.

The findings above show Brunei's active participation in the global transformation of higher education as well as its flagship university UBD's impressive internationalisation and outbound student mobility programmes. The findings also further confirm what has been reported in the

existing modest amount of literature (Hamdan et al., 2020; Tan and Shahrill, 2015; Tan et al., 2016, 2017; Tibok and Hiew, 2019) which mostly focuses on Brunei's and UBD's strategic internationalisation efforts as largely informed by government and institutional policy and practice, and by statistics gathered over the years. Let us now present more qualitative analysis, where this paper will make its major contribution through a dialogue with Brandenburg et al.'s (2020) IHES Matrix and the work of others such as Jon and Fry (2021) and Ramaswamy et al. (2021).

COPV as IHES strategy

Informed by the previous section, we now align the structure of the COPV more explicitly with the seven-component IHES Matrix provided in Brandenburg et al. (2020: 43): '1. Goals that any IHEs activity pursues; 2. Actor group(s) within the HEI; 3. Target group(s) in society; 4. Involvement at the HEI; 5. Dimensions of internationalisation; 6. Movement between HEI and society; and 7. Beneficiaries'.

We have adapted the IHES Matrix to highlight in particular the COPV aspects that incorporate social engagement, which is the principal element of IHES. Specifically, we have combined component 1 with component 3, and component 2 with component 4, while the rest remain the same.

Goals and target groups (components 1 and 3)

Generally, the COPV's goals are aligned with the IHES's principal aims which are educating society and building its capacity. Specifically, the COPV pursues several IHES goals, such as the role of public good in developing global citizens and supporting social integration (Brandenburg et al., 2020: 43). The target groups for the COPV goals are multiple, including UBD as the managing university, UBD students as the youth, Vietnam – the target country's HEIs and school pupils, and any other groups that may benefit from UBD students' services.

Since 2011, about 100 COP students from UBD have provided primary and secondary school pupils in Vietnam with thousands of teaching hours via English lessons and associated activities, giving these pupils opportunities to practise speaking skills and interact with other Asian speakers of English. The main task required of the COP students is to conduct English classes for a maximum of 20 hours per week during normal working days for 14 continuous weeks in primary and secondary schools in Vietnam. In addition to teaching English-language skills to Vietnamese pupils, the COP students are also required to teach them about the cultural diversity of different countries in the ASEAN. In many cases, as shown in their written reports, the COP students had to take full charge of their classrooms, from classroom management to lesson plans and teaching activities.

For the UBD students, the COP has helped them develop character-building and life skills through their motivation and meaningful social engagement with the Vietnamese community. Thus, UBD students as one of the main target groups of IHES have also benefited from the COP goals.

Actors and involvement at the HEI (components 2 and 4)

As COPV is one of the integral parts of UBD's flagship DY programme, the domestic management of the COPV involves the university leadership (e.g. the Office of the Vice President for Global Affairs, Global Relation Office, the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Discovery Year Office). Strategic coordination of the programme is also taken up by faculty administration (e.g. the Offices of Faculty Dean, Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs, and Discovery Year

Coordinator). From the interview data with relevant people at the university and from our insider knowledge, the organisation and coordination of the DY programme in general and the COP/COPV in particular have become more structured in recent years, producing an increasingly holistic involvement of the HEI.

Dimensions of internationalisation (component 5)

The COPV focuses mainly on outbound student mobility, specifically volunteering activities by UBD students in several primary and secondary schools and in disadvantaged communities in Vietnam. UBD also increasingly addresses other dimensions of internationalisation, including developing and sustaining strategic cooperation with HEIs in the host country and identifying potential teaching and research collaborations, alongside social engagement.

Movement between HEI and society (component 6)

To date, UBD has enjoyed 10 years working closely with educational and NGO partners in Vietnam for its COP (COPV). Via the COPV, UBD has made contributions to the development of Vietnamese society, and has created sustained links with varied local communities for social engagement purposes. The COPV has been effectively conducted beyond the walls of the HEI, well integrated into the host country's surrounding environment. At the same time, the COPV has also helped inform the Bruneian public about Vietnam and encouraged more interactions and visits between peoples from two sides, as evident in the vignettes presented at the beginning of this article.

Beneficiaries (component 7)

Consistent with the COPV's goals, both the society, specifically the school children and local Vietnamese communities, and the HEI community have benefitted tremendously from the programme, as revealed in the written reports provided by the Bruneian students participating in the COPV. The range of activities is diverse, intense and highly engaged, which includes teaching, organising extra-curricular activities for students, conducting and running events for the host organisation in Vietnam (i.e. FPT University), introducing Brunei to an international audience, and participating in multicultural events initiated by the local host and its partners.

From the students' written reports, it is also evident that every semester more and more schools in Vietnam have welcomed Bruneian students to their classrooms and put efforts in maintaining this long-term relationship so as to help create a more international environment for their teachers and pupils. In addition, as the COPV also incorporates the participation of various campuses of FPT University, other local Vietnamese universities such as Da Nang University, and NGOs such as Solidarités Jeunesses Vietnam, which are not the programme's direct target groups and primary beneficiaries, the capacity-building component of the COPV is further strengthened and expanded.

Brunei students' transformative experiences through their COP activities in Vietnam

In this section, we present and discuss the mobility experiences of 98 students who undertook various COP activities in Vietnam (both Da Nang and Hanoi) between 2016 and 2020. These students' written reports and reflections compiled upon their COP completion were the main data. Although there is no strict format for their reports to follow, all the reports include the following information: the mission statement of the COP and how they were attracted to that, the scope and nature of the

COP activities that the students participated in and contributed to during their respective semesters, the benefits and challenges associated with the activities, and their reflections on their growth and limitations, as well as implications for next batches of COP students.

All the COPV students had to teach English for at least 20 hours per week for 14 weeks in their assigned primary/secondary schools in Vietnam, mostly in Central Vietnam and outside Ha Noi. It should be noted that the idea of teaching English to Vietnamese was initiated by the two host organisations in Vietnam, based on their observation that the Bruneian population is highly proficient in English and that UBD implements English as a medium of instruction in its entire curriculum. Brief training by local teachers and sometimes also by UBD staff was provided to these students before they started teaching. The host organisations also provided the students with a few basic Vietnamese-language lessons when they first arrived in Vietnam so as to help them start their COPV activities and as part of their mobility experience.

Together with their teaching, the COPV students were asked to run regular extra-curricular activities with Vietnamese students and teachers, such as running an English-speaking club once or multiple times at different schools. On top of these, they were required to organise several major events to showcase Brunei to others, including food, clothing and cultural practices. It was also mandatory for them to initiate and run weekly mini events in pairs/groups to strengthen group solidarity and to learn the necessary skills as global citizens living outside their home country. It was also very often that they were asked to organise and take charge of engagement activities for the host university in Vietnam, such as conducting English classes for Japanese students who joined the host university for a study tour. Their daily schedules were usually packed and they were constantly occupied with back-to-back activities and tasks throughout the entire period of the COPV.

Motivation and objectives of the COPV students

Anderson and Lawton (2015) argue that it is important to identify and understand students' motivation to go abroad, whether personal, social, economic, professional or aspirational (Javed et al., 2019; Phan, 2018), as motivation determines what students may get out of their overseas experience. The UBD students' written reports and reflections reveal multiple reasons behind their motivation to join the COP activities in Vietnam.

At one level, the students were generally motivated by their own determination to step out of their comfort zones to experience different learning environments and opportunities, as seen in the examples below:

> I wanted to swerve out of my comfort zone and experience the life of living abroad.

> I applied for the program with the intention of improving myself and to become more independent.

> The COP program gave us the exposure to the world and help us overcome challenges that will make us evolve to wiser individuals with experience.

> We are excited to explore Vietnam and meet people there in order to gain new cultural experience and knowledge.

> I wanted to learn about the society's historical background and culture.

> It is incredibly liberating that it gave all of us an itch to known what Hanoi has in store for everyone.

At another level, the students also reported that they were motivated to participate in the COP after learning about its objectives. This can be seen as a professional motivation. They fully

understood that the COP aims to imbed positive habits of volunteerism through community service activities. None of the students had teaching experience before joining the programme, and although they were 'nervous and stressed' because of this, they were willing to be taught and guided by their mentors and Vietnamese local teachers about teaching and working with school children. They felt compelled to give their knowledge to those in need, particularly pupils in schools with limited access to English and teaching facilities and materials, as they revealed in their reports. They were also aware that the COPV activities would instil civic and social responsibility skills in them.

Interpersonal networks such as family and friends could also influence students' decision to go abroad (Brooks and Waters, 2010; Lipura and Collins, 2020; Snodin, 2019). Based on the authors' frequent consultation sessions with DY students during the administrative handling of DY applications, it is evident that parents have a definite say in their children's (students') decision regarding the type of DY activity and destination. This finding is not in isolation. Consistent with Javed et al. (2019), Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) and Padlee et al. (2010), this finding demonstrates a clear relationship between family network and the students' decision-making regarding the preferred destination and programme for their DY/COP. Amongst all factors, the students shared that the proximity of Vietnam to Brunei is rated as having the utmost significance to their parents. The direct flight between Brunei and Vietnam is only 1.5 hours.

Friend network is also an equally significant factor contributing to Bruneian students' motivation to go to Vietnam. This also gives their parents a sense of assurance, as more and more Bruneian students are travelling to Vietnam and they can travel in large groups and can hence support one another. This very positive aspect has overridden other quite significantly negative aspects such as 'no mosques in Da Nang' or 'few or no halal restaurants' or 'no access to halal food in Vietnam', as the students wrote in their reports.

Crises influencing and harnessing personal growth and intercultural competence

Past studies reported that study-abroad students would almost immediately experience cultural shock regardless of the amount of pre-departure preparations they made. Cultural shock happens in various forms of difficulties such as strange food, limited language skills, unusual traffic systems, accommodation trouble, social isolation and weather change (Anjalin et al., 2017; Sherry et al., 2009; Snodin, 2019). Oberg (2006) proposes four stages of the cultural adaptation model (honeymoon, crisis, recovery and acceptance). The COPV students reported that their honeymoon stage and their excitement to explore Vietnam were short-lived as they were fast confronted with the realities of everyday living in Vietnam, whereby differences in language, culture, lifestyles, weather, religion, etc. were matters of constant struggles. Plus, the students also reported facing many challenges in their teaching assignments. At this point, it is evident that the students were experiencing Oberg's crisis stage:

> The struggle was real during crossing the roads, stuck in a bad traffic, water poisoning, getting used to the weather change.

> The streets were filled with cars and motorbikes where to the students' disbelief, people just spat out of their car windows and motorbikes.

> All Bruneian students had the difficulty in communicating with Vietnamese people.

> It was very difficult when it comes to communicating with the students in the first few weeks . . . We faced a lot of challenges for the students to be truly able to understand English words.

Acknowledging the challenges around them, the students quickly stretched their skills and experience to adapt to an entirely new environment. The crisis forced them to assess new cultural surroundings and to find ways to adjust. For instance, the COPV students identified several effective ways to teach the pupils who had hardly been exposed to English before. One way was to use body language and sound-making to assist their students' learning of new words and simple instructions in English. The COPV students also sought help among themselves in preparing lesson plans, and some gradually learnt to focus more on helping weak pupils. They shared that they felt 'motivated and rewarded' when their pupils 'improved their communication, reading and writing skills, and became more confident and became much eager to participate in class activities'.

Thus, as the students began to learn their ways within different sets of cultural, social and religious norms in a foreign country, they reported a greater sense of confidence and independence:

> It can be rather challenging at times but it certainly pays off. This COP program . . . has helped me to step out of my comfort zone and become more independent.

> [O]ver time I realised that this program played a huge role in helping me grow into a more confident version of myself . . . These traits helped me getting by in a foreign environment and also harnessed my ability to be more vocal with my thoughts and decisions.

> Teaching young children in Vietnam is very challenging due to the language barrier. However, I gained self-confidence in teaching them, being outgoing and stepping out of my comfort zone.

> Previously, my skills and views of everything was quite limited. I was scared to spread my wings to know more and I trapped myself in my own cage. Doing this program helps me to explore the world outside my cage. The warm hospitality I received to all the skills I have gained as a teacher, student and as an individual will definitely help in my future endeavor.

> This community outreach program is definitely about me discovering about myself more. I have grown into someone who have courage, confidence and perspectives.

The above finding indicates that the COPV enhances the emotional and psychosocial wellbeing of the students, as they began to show an increased sense of confidence and independence, both as an individual and as a group. It is also found that these new traits essentially come from their ability to navigate themselves successfully when dealing with the challenges of living overseas with no immediate family network to support them.

The reports also show the students were constantly mindful of the COPV's main objective, which was teaching English to school children in Vietnam so as to help leverage their educational opportunities. In joining the COPV, the students fully understood its goal and hence carried with them the weight of responsibility for action and their mutual obligation towards the school children in need of their help. Many students shared how they felt at the end of the programme, for example:

> This program taught me a valuable life lesson – the importance of giving back to the community in need, be it knowledge or a helping hand.

> This program not only gave us a new experience in teaching but also helped us to bond with each other and create a good teamwork between us.

> We as the teachers of this program have to work independently to be able to handle tasks and to be patient to face any challenges during teaching.

Throughout the 14 weeks of Community Outreach Program at FPT University, it gives us a great opportunity to be able to contribute to the community, gain valuable lessons and experiences. We managed to overcome the challenges, obtaining new skills and create friendships throughout our stay in Da Nang, Vietnam.

This COP unquestionably was one of my greatest life achievements. Being able to teach the local students and also adapting to the lifestyle and the surroundings here widen my perspective as a person. The experience and skills that l gained from this program will definitely practicable in forthcoming endeavors in life.

Furthermore, the UBD students learnt that their voluntary services towards several Vietnamese organisations steadily created a bridge and bond necessary to ensure a safe and sustainable environment for those in need of their help. This positive development is not only a reflection of the trust which develops in a partnership that extends beyond the boundaries of nation-states, but, more significantly, it is also a product of meaningful social engagement which took place between the multiple target groups, precisely what IHES aims to achieve.

Alongside an increased level of confidence and independence, the UBD students concomitantly developed intercultural competence as demonstrated by their higher level of adaptability and tolerance. Deardorff (2006) identifies several critical elements of intercultural competence: awareness, understanding, and appreciation of differences, particularly cultural contrasts. Although the UBD students did not acquire Vietnamese language after their 14-week stay in Vietnam, their reports indicated that they learnt to accept differences in opinions and practices, and became more open-minded and appreciative of cultural differences of the local community. They felt they were more community-oriented and interculturally adaptable after the programme in Vietnam, where they also met and were put to work and organise many community engagement activities for/with international students from other countries such as Japan, Thailand, Indonesia and Australia.

From meeting new people of different cultures and ages, I began to understand things differently and are much more open when I am faced with problems and challenges.

I became wiser, more self-sufficient and more open-minded. These traits helped me get by in a foreign environment.

The programme has allowed me to adapt better to situations that present themselves, give me a greater empathy to all people regardless of background.

Cultural appreciation, empathy, social network and global citizens

The UBD students also demonstrate further cultural appreciation and empathy through their post-DY description of Vietnam. In their reports which they prepared after the conclusion of the COP, the students mentioned that 'Vietnam is a perfect place for the program' as 'it taught Bruneian students more about life'. The students also acknowledged that 'this program shows [them] a lot, that there's another world besides just the academic world'. One student, for example, considered the COP in Da Nang as 'an eye-opening experience' for him as he was 'able to experience more things that life has to offer'. Others valued the 'warm hospitality of Vietnamese people', and many viewed their stay in Vietnam as 'a blissful journey' and stated that they 'did not have any regrets about being away from their family for more than three months'. Such expressions of appreciation are not only meaningful responses to the hospitality and goodwill shown by the host organisation (Yang, 2019), but they also clearly show that the students

understood and bore their responsibility to the host agency (Tran and Vu, 2017). This finding is another reflection of authentic social engagement between the COPV students and the host society, a fundamental aspect of the COP.

The demonstration of higher levels of understanding, appreciation, tolerance and empathy for other cultures amongst students attending overseas academic activities is identified and discussed in previous studies such as Black and Duhon (2006), Clarke et al. (2009) and Salisbury et al. (2013). Authors such as Anderson and Lawton (2015) also observe that a good match between students' motivation and the target programme could result in a positive impact on students' cultural competence. Indeed, the findings of our study not only prove this observation, but also show the importance of the students' resilience and motivation to want to make the programme a success. Their (inter)cultural competence, as a process not merely a product, was being accumulated in the course of the COPV programme.

In addition, the COPV students reported a greater appreciation for the support and compassion they received from their families in Brunei and their UBD friends who went with them to Vietnam, particularly in time of crisis, stress and frustration. For example, some students were overwhelmed by the ambitious scope of the COPV, particularly because it required them to fulfil so many tasks: teaching English for the first time, participating in and organising several major events to showcase their knowledge about Brunei, and initiating and running weekly mini events to learn about and prove their skills and capabilities in leadership, teamwork, time management, etc. The intensity of the programme combined with the language barrier, lack of teaching experience, lack of sleep because of late-night class preparations, little access to halal food, illness from the weather change in North and Central Vietnam where there are four seasons and it is not warm all the year round as it is in Brunei, to name a few, undoubtedly caused stress to many students. Families and friends became their important support in times like this.

As they left the comfort of their homes and familiar culture in Brunei, the students generally reported that the social network provided by the participating students became the significant factor that buffered the effects of the challenges and stress. Hence, the student friendships were forged more robustly:

> Prior to coming to Da Nang, I barely had friends and I had no intentions of making one due to my poor social skills. With these newly found friends, I became more communal and able to speak up more.

> Since there were only six Bruneian students in Hanoi, we had to take care of one another. We shared amongst ourselves the medications we brought from Brunei and we made sure everyone was safe and sound. The male students' priority was to make sure [of] the safety of the female students.

Bochner et al. (1977) identified such a network as a monocultural social network where social interaction is more likely to occur amongst co-nationals; that is, international students from the same cultural or national backgrounds. Brown (2009: 189: original emphasis) contends that international students find the comfort of home in the monocultural social ties as '[h]ome was recaptured through interaction with compatriots, as reflected in the recurrence of the words *family* and *home* to describe the conational groups they had formed'. What was written in the reports from the UBD students indicates similar findings:

> I gain new [Bruneian] friends and see them as part of my family.

> I have come across many challenges, struggles and there were bad days that would never seem to end. However, these friends that I consider as family has provided me with love, acceptance, forgiveness, understanding and endurance which allows me to see the brighter sides of the day.

This COP helps to boost my self-esteem. Most importantly, I have friends whom I can proudly call as my family.

Monocultural social networks are heavily criticised by many scholars such as Hendrickson et al. (2011) who argue that these networks prevent international students from mixing with those from outside their linguistic, cultural and national backgrounds. However, in contrast to this argument, being bonded among themselves did not prevent or discourage the Bruneian students from forging friendships with Vietnamese (national host friendships), and also with other international students who participated in a similar programme hosted by FPT University (multi-national friendships). One crucial factor that allowed the students to develop the three nodes of social networks is the nature of the COPV. This nature ensures the participants establish a high frequency of contact not just within their personal networks, but also with the host community and other international participants in various academic, professional and recreational activities, thus facilitating an enriching social engagement with the host society.

Finally, the positive conational or monocultural relationships and the sense of relatedness to the host community evidently inculcate gratitude, as expressed by the students in their reports. Gratitude is interpersonal as it develops in a context of social relationships and is essentially a way of returning thanks to one party or benefactor (Emmons and Crumpler, 2000). However, existing research on international students rarely pays attention to this very aspect of international students' personal experiences. From the students' reports and reflections, it is clear that many students consciously expressed their appreciation of the COPV opportunity presented to them and were even more appreciative of the advantages afforded at home that they considered now as blessings. The feeling of gratitude also enhances their self-awareness, sense of meaning and purpose in life:

One of the achievements is that it [the programme] made the students be blessed and not to take things for granted.

From the experiences, I get to understand the reality of the world, the differences and the little things that matter.

From stepping out of my comfort zone, embracing new culture, being appreciative of the small details in life and to coming home with unforgettable memories, I would not trade this intellectually challenging experience for anything in the world.

[The programme] taught me how to be independent, to prioritise others, to be more confident and lastly it taught me to be open and find who I really am as a friend, a brother, a Muslim and as a human being.

The students' heartfelt expressions of gratitude are a clear indication that the students returned to their home country with adjusted perspectives, understandings and attitudes. After the COPV, these students also gained new skills of adaptability, sensitivity and resilience. The perspectives and skills do not just demonstrate the successful attainment of the aims and objectives of UBD's COP in Vietnam but they are also significantly critical competence skills required of global citizens. What the students have gained will not only be beneficial for their career pursuit once they complete their university study, but will also make them feel like citizens of the globe, the very central agenda and pursuit of IHES.

Ethical implications of student mobilities and what our study has highlighted

With the growing volumes of student mobilities within the IHES framework, one pertinent ethical implication is the security and wellbeing of international students. Issues of vulnerability and needs, including international students' emotional challenges, have been discussed thoroughly in previous studies (Brown and Jones, 2013; Magni et al., 2019; Poyrazli and Lopez, 2007). Forbes-Mewett (2016), in her analysis of the accounts of professionals in Australia who worked with full degree and short-term international students, highlights the significant rise in the number of students experiencing stress and emotional problems. Her recent work refers to more recent global issues such as societal ignorance and xenophobia as increasingly becoming the roots for the security issues confronted by international students (Forbes-Mewett, 2020). Guo and Guo (2017) point out that complicated relationships with instructors and course-mates, racial discrimination and stereotyping were among the causes of emotional strains experienced by international students studying at HEIs in Canada.

The COPV students' mobility experiences have also exposed issues relating to safety and wellbeing that need to be addressed. Specifically, the limited availability of halal (Islamic permissible) food in Da Nang and Ha Noi caused the students to heavily rely on canned food they had brought with them from Brunei. If there were any halal restaurants or halal food supplies, they were expensive and hence unaffordable for the students. This very problem led to students not eating well and suffering from a poor diet for an extended period of time. Eating then became a source of stress for the students. Another major problem faced by the COPV students from all the batches concerns medication. As some students were unable to adapt to climate shifts in Vietnam, they got sick quite frequently and they felt they did not have the right medicines for treatment. The students also reported their repeated experiences of being overcharged by taxi drivers, and having their privacy violated due to the dormitory management's involuntary intrusion into their rooms. They also felt exhausted as a result of having had to work overtime and overnight so as to complete numerous extra assignments given by the host university, which were not necessarily aligned to their teaching tasks – the main goal of the COPV.

As students' vulnerability becomes increasingly apparent during overseas placement, there should be a greater emphasis placed upon the need for HEIs, both home and host institutions, to expand their scope of support by providing adequate security and protection to students (Yang, 2019). This argument is echoing the crescendo of calls for HEIs to understand better and act upon their responsibility towards both outgoing and incoming international students (Ambrósio et al., 2019; Lapina et al., 2016). As university leaders have always been perceived as traditional role models on ethics that substantially engage and can influence other agencies and organisations (Keohane, 2006; Lozano et al., 2013; Prisacariu and Shah, 2016), HEIs should therefore render the protection that is required by their mobile students.

In the light of the IHES agenda, protecting students is a priority to UBD, considering that the COPV students stay and participate in a wide range of activities in a society unfamiliar to them for an extended period of time. Evidently, UBD appoints a strong administrative team at the university and faculty levels to oversee and manage all DY matters that include all COP activities. The IHES Matrix refers to them as the actors of IHES who form the domestic administration. Specifically, DY faculty coordinators ensure regular communication with their mobile students, partly as the university's crisis management plan. The faculty coordinators are the home university's frontliners who manage its overall responses in case of student crises. To further ensure students' safety in Vietnam, the COPV students are also assisted by an on-site supervisor appointed by UBD, who can ensure that any conditions requiring responses from crisis management are addressed

appropriately. For instance, during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the COPV students were required to undertake a crisis evacuation and return to Brunei. Faculty and on-site coordinators and the Brunei Darussalam High Commission in Ho Chi Minh continued to be in regular contact with the inbound students until they reached home safely.

It is equally worth mentioning that the COPV students also fully understood that they should also bear the responsibility and ensure their wellbeing during the placement period. For instance, as discussed earlier, one of the immediate challenges faced by the COPV students upon their arrival in Vietnam was language issues. They initially felt hopeless when communicating with the public and especially with the school children. However, with each other's support and teamwork, the students were resilient enough to overcome the challenge and learn some basic Vietnamese to help them with communication. Their resilience rose from their sincere intention and motivation, as shown earlier. This was the primary reason why the students persevered, overcame the challenges and eventually undertook impactful engagement with the various target groups in the host society.

Yang (2019: 9) suggests that responsibility issues should be considered 'issues of mutuality' between HEIs, relevant agencies and the students. The COPV is a clear example of how ethical risks underlying student mobilities can be significantly minimised when all relevant parties recognise, mutually undertake and act upon the responsibilities. More importantly, the COPV students have developed a better sense of themselves when undertaking such responsibilities. This, in many ways, demonstrates that such an understanding of accountability and obligation has a powerful influence on students' learning attitudes and their senses of discipline and their overall personal growth.

Related to the ethical implications of student mobility for social engagement purposes, we are also aware of the literature critical of outreach programmes, service learning and volunteerism. Perhaps the most classic is the caustic piece 'To hell with good intentions' by Ivan Illich (1968), who in his address to the Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects (CIASP) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, on 20 April 1968, urged those pursuing international missions to come to learn, but not to help. Also, Mitchell et al. (2012) offer nuanced views of service learning, seeing it as the pedagogy of whiteness that ought to be disrupted. In a similar vein, Phan (2017) shows and theorises the ways in which certain academic mobilities crossing Asia and the West as well as within Asia could be seen as neo-coloniality in that it celebrates the link between English and colonialism, and (re)produces the long-fought-against problematic discourses of development, modernity, and an obsession with so-called western ways of being and doing.

Our current article is more in line with Jon and Fry (2021) in that we are paying particular attention to students' transformative experiences through the lens of study abroad and global engagement for the common good and through the purposes of internationalisation for society (Brandenburg et al., 2020). This does not mean we neglect the ethical issues raised by Illich (1968), Mitchell et al. (2012) and Phan (2017), but these ethical and critical aspects of community outreach and service learning are already investigated in depth in another outlet by one of us (Phan, 2021).

Concluding thoughts and what's next

This article responds to scholarly calls for a new research agenda as international student mobility has become increasingly diversified and complex (Lipura and Collin, 2020; Liu and Phan, 2021; Phan and Fry, 2021; Yang, 2019). Specifically, it examines Bruneian students' transformative experiences as they participate in the COPV. The nature of the COP points to the importance of impactful social engagement beyond campus. Hence, it serves as powerful evidence of the IHES in action.

Ultimately, our theoretically and empirically informed study has been the first that involves multi-form empirical data, engages with relevant scholarly discussions and debates, and generates new knowledge and scholarship on Brunei's internationalisation of higher education and academic mobility. As such, it also makes theoretical and empirical contributions to the larger phenomenon of inter-Asian student mobilities and new development of higher education in Asia.

The article showcases a unique mobility experience and represents 'new narratives of desires and possibilities' (Phan, 2018: 783) in the sphere of inter-Asian mobilities, such narratives that are vividly and diversely evident in the accounts of Asian students studying in Taiwan (Kheir, this Special Issue), of South Korean students pursing their studies in India (Lipura, this Special Issue), and of Japanese students participating in the CampusAsia project co-ordinated simultaneously by a Japanese university, a Chinese university and a Korean university (Hanada and Horie, this Special Issue). In addition, as we have shown in this article, UBD's COPV also presents a unique case of a non-traditional destination that moves away from the predominant westward directionality of student mobility, a thread that all the articles included in this Special Issue demonstrate. The analysis of the UBD students' written reports and reflections provides us with ample evidence of their transformative experiences, which point to the importance of impactful social engagement beyond campus and correspond to the IHES (Brandenburg et al., 2020) and the aspirations to contribute to the common good (Jon and Fry, 2021).

In light of the adapted IHES Matrix, we show how the COPV has brought about much-needed social engagement and pushed the students from home and host organisations to think and act interculturally and sensibly. The students also found themselves gradually taking into consideration diverse personal, collective, institutional, sociocultural, economic, religious and linguistic as well as local, regional and global factors as they strived to find ways to live and work together for the common goal of community engagement. As the students gave their time, knowledge and services to the multiple communities to which they were assigned to help in Vietnam, they also acknowledged that they had learnt much from these communities; thus mutual learning is enabled.

The students' reports and reflections also show how the COPV produces personalised and impactful social engagements. The data reveal that successful social engagement to a great extent depends upon the students' motivation, and that impactful social engagement should bring actual benefits to the students themselves.

Our case study has identified the motivations and objectives of the UBD students participating in the COPV and the impacts of the programme on their academic, professional and personal growth. The findings also identified the students' resilience, which grew out of their motivation and enabled them to overcome the struggles and challenges they encountered during the COPV as they were undertaking multiple social engagement initiatives with the host society. Hence, it is hoped that this article will provide a much-nuanced understanding of student mobilities as internationalisation for social engagement agenda. To further strengthen the IHES of COPV, HEIs need to make sure that teaching, learning, research and social engagement speak to one another. One way to do this is for universities in general and UBD in particular to broaden their respective dimensions of internationalisation through a research network with the target HEIs and/or other international partners.

The findings and discussions provided in the article can also be utilised by HEIs and researchers to come up with a pedagogy for mobile students for non-academic purposes. Geibel (2020) outlines a practical pedagogy for student mobility programmes that encompasses four decisive tenets (citizen diplomacy, social identity approach, relational learning and Freirean pedagogy). In a nutshell, the programme's objectives need to be clear and for the HEIs to 'articulate the desired learning outcomes' (Geibel, 2020: 70). As evidenced by the COPV case study, not only did the students fully

understand what they could expect from the programme and make the necessary preparations before departure, but their motivation and enthusiasm were elevated, and they looked forward to the commencement of the programme.

Effective pedagogy for student mobility programmes also relies on impactful engagement with the host society (Geibel, 2020), and, from the above discussion, the COPV provides clear evidence for this. HEIs ought to be asked to provide training and opportunities, including intercultural skills, communication and engagement skills, to make sure that impactful engagements happen between international students and the host society (Geibel, 2020). This is also critical from the ethical perspectives discussed above (Yang, 2019), as the necessary intercultural skills would significantly minimise safety and wellbeing risks associated with international student mobilities.

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Notes

1. Bandar or Bandar Seri Begawan is the capital city of Brunei or Brunei Darussalam.
2. Discovery Year is a programme integrated as part of the four-year bachelor degree curriculum of Universiti Brunei Darussalam.
3. See https://journals.sagepub.com/pb-assets/cmscontent/JSI/JSIE_CFP_2020-1592922741917.pdf (accessed 2 April 2021).
4. See https://www.gov.bn/SitePages/Wawasan%20Brunei%202035.aspx (accessed 30 June 2021).

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