

## **National Higher Education Conference – TNE’s Contribution to Higher Education**

Global higher education has grown rapidly over the last few decades both in terms of student numbers and higher education institutes. An interesting trend is the shift in dynamics of internationalization due to globalization and advancement in technology. In the past, students typically ventured abroad to obtain international qualifications. However, at present, increasingly more students pursue foreign degrees through collaborative agreements between local institutions and degree-awarding institutions from prominent education-exporting countries. Thus, there has been an increased demand for Transnational Education (TNE) higher education programmes in many countries.

In Sri Lanka too, the inability of the state sector to meet the increasing demand for higher education and the opening of the economy in the late 1970s created a fertile ground for the emergence of non-state higher education, and in particular, TNE partnerships. The landscape of transnational education (TNE) is experiencing rapid transformation as a result of heightened demand and growth, especially due to the economic crisis of the country. Over the years TNE providers in higher education have been able to provide modern and innovative higher education programmes from around the world to Sri Lankan youth, increase access to higher education, and infuse good practices into the management and delivery of programmes within higher education institutions in Sri Lanka. Having identified these key contributions, with the increase in demand types of TNE programmes, quality assurance, validation and recognition, mapping to local subject benchmarks as well as partnership models have raised different challenges as well as opportunities.

SLANSHEI proposes to host an annual National Higher Education Conference with the inaugural conference to focus on the significant contribution by TNEs to higher education in Sri Lanka. Through this conference, we aim to achieve the following:

- to present the key contributions made by TNE to the higher education in Sri Lanka
- to bring together all stakeholders of TNE education - academics and scholars from key TNE partner universities, Sri Lankan academics from both state and non-state sectors, and key personnel from quality assurance agencies in Sri Lanka to elicit their views, experiences, and vision for the future of TNE.
- to promote a robust and inclusive quality assurance and accreditation mechanism in Sri Lanka

The National Conference on Higher Education is conceived to be a full day programme, with sufficient time for peer-to-peer exchange, networking and collaboration. The programme will consist of presentations, a panel discussion and working groups as discussed below.

### **Keynote Address 1: Global impact of TNE**

United Kingdom being our key TNE partner country, a key figure from UK TNE partnerships will deliver the keynote address. The address will discuss the achievements and opportunities in TNE from a global perspective. TNE's contribution to increasing access, quality and standards, staff development and research, and innovation and growth of education in developing nations will be focal points. They could also discuss the partnership types in a global context, and the success of and popularity of each mode.

### **Keynote Address 2: Local Perspective**

Sri Lanka's Non-State Higher Education sector has seen a significant growth due to TNE partnerships established over the years. The impact these partnerships have had in increasing access and producing employable graduates is undeniable. Moreover, providing an international education locally could bear positive results on society as a whole.

### **Presentations on TNEs contribution to Higher Education**

Over the years Transnational Education has been vital in not only expanding access to, but also improving the quality and diversity of higher education.

In this segment, key non-state higher education institutes delivering TNE provisions in the country will be invited to present their experiences in the value brought to the country through the TNE partnership. The presentations will be in partnership with their partner university, where they could discuss topics such as capacity building, training, innovation, quality (External and internal), student experience, graduate skill development etc.

### **Panel: Towards a robust and inclusive quality assurance and accreditation mechanism**

The robustness of quality assurance mechanisms in TNE plays a crucial role in upholding the integrity and reputation of TNE programs and enhancing their value in the global education landscape. Over the years, the quality assurance council of Sri Lanka has focused only on the state universities and accredited programmes by the Ministry of Education. TNE provisions are accredited by the host countries' QA agencies and are subject to rigorous quality assurance practices. This panel aims to discuss how the TNE QA frameworks can be taken into account within the Sri Lankan QA frameworks.

Composition of panel (sample):

- Two key TNE figures from UK and Australia
- Mr. G M R D Aponso, Director, Strategic Planning & Policy Research Division, MOE
- Prof. Colin Peiris, Founder Director of the QAA Council of Sri Lanka
- Chairman, Quality Assurance Council, Sri Lanka
- Student representative form State University
- Student Representative from Non-State Higher Education Institute

## **Working groups: Leveraging TNE partnerships for the Development of Sri Lankan Higher Education**

In this segment all participants will select the working groups they wish to contribute to in order to identify action plans to leverage the established TNE partnerships, in developing the higher education sector as a whole. The objective is to collectively work towards providing better opportunities for the youth and academics of the country. The areas identified below are those that could benefit greatly from global input but have not created a major impact thus far.

**Working Group 1:** Student & Staff Mobility

**Working Group 2:** Staff Development

**Working Group 3:** Research Collaborations

SLANSHEI is committed to support and facilitate the working groups to continue their work in actioning the plans post conference.

## National Higher Education Conference 2023 - Agenda

8.00-8.30	Registration
8.30-8.45	Arrival of Key Guests
8.45-9.00	Welcome Address Lighting of Oil Lamp
9.15 – 9.35	<b>Keynote Address: Global impact of TNE</b>
9.35 – 9.45	Q&A
9.45 – 10.05	<b>Keynote Address: Local perspective of TNE</b>
10.05-10.15	Q&A
10.15-11.00	<b>Presentations on TNEs contribution to Higher Education</b>
10.15-10.35	Presentation 1 Q&A
10.35 – 10.55	Presentation 2 Q&A
10.55 - 11.15	Presentation 3 Q&A
11.15 – 11.35	Tea Break
11.40- 12.40	<b>Panel: Towards a robust and inclusive quality assurance and accreditation mechanism</b> Q&A
1.00-2.00	Lunch
2.00 – 4.30	Working Groups <b>Working Group 1: Student &amp; Staff Mobility</b>

	<p><b>Working Group 2:</b> Staff Development</p> <p><b>Working Group 3:</b> Research Collaborations</p> <p>Reporting Back (Tea/Coffee will be served during the sessions)</p>
4.45-5.00	<p><b>Formal</b> Closure of Conference</p>