We call on Governments to recognize
the important contribution of Online, Open and
Flexible systems to meet the challenge of scale and
quality in the provision of Higher Education and
Lifelong Learning for the period 2015-2030.

The Paris Message
UNESCO, June 2015

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

When the clock strikes midnight on the last day of the last month of 2015, the integration of
the ten ASEAN nations into one economic community commences. The implications and
ramifications of this development go beyond economics. Several ASEAN countries rank human
capital as among their most valuable assets. Thus, this event signal shifts in human resource
movements. How then can education, in general, and higher education, in particular, maximize
the benefits and minimize the consequences of these shifts? What anticipatory moves should
be done by ASEAN to ensure mutual benefits and synergies among their educational systems?

Some education observers are of the opinion that a regional education system transcending
national boundaries is an eventuality within the ASEAN. Such a system can best be expedited
through open, distance and eLearning or ODeL. More so when done within the context of a
global information society and most especially within an integrated community of nations
where economic barriers are being liberalized. Open, distance and eLearning is an educational
mode employing a range of educational systems, strategies and approaches that reflect the
convergence of open education philosophies and distance learning practice. As in the case of
traditional distance education, the teaching learning situation is conducted with the learner and
the teacher physically separated in space. However, the use of electronic/digital media,
specifically, the Internet is highlighted. Additionally, ODeL subscribes to non-restrictive,
inclusive educational strategies such as open access, open admissions, open-ended educational
timeframes, open educational resources, participatory assessment and others.

Prior to the regional adoption of this educational mode, a dialogue must first ensue between
and among ASEAN nations to determine how ODeL can be tapped to promote regional
integration. To this end, the UNESCO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific with support from the ASEAN Cyber University (ACU) has initiated a project titled, *Promoting Regional Integration of ASEAN through Open and Distance Education for Higher Education*. The project aims to facilitate a policy-level dialogue among ASEAN education stakeholders to promote cross-border provision and recognition of ODeL-based higher education. The dialogue will be built upon a comprehensive review of challenges, lessons learned and promising practices of ODeL in the ASEAN region and beyond.

**B. Rationale**

Before initiating a regional dialogue, however, a scoping study will have to be conducted for direction-setting purposes. A scoping study can provide a more accurate picture of the state of play of ODeL within and among ASEAN countries. Furthermore, it can identify needful national or regional ODeL policies that may facilitate ASEAN Integration. Additionally, it can identify efforts that are underway within and among ASEAN that is consistent with ODeL adoption.

The findings of the scoping study would inform the UNESCO-ACU regional policy-level dialogue, the first forum of which is slated for November 2015. Moreover, it would result in a research framework and research agenda for more comprehensive follow-up studies.

A lead researcher from the University of the Philippines Open University has been engaged to conduct the scoping study that would help structure the regional dialogue. This document constitutes the lead researcher’s Draft Report.

**C. Research Problem**

The scoping study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How can education, in general, and open and distance higher education (ODeL), in particular, maximize the benefits and minimize the consequences of ASEAN Integration?
   1.1. What is the current status of ODeL within and among ASEAN countries? Is it available? Is it accessible? Is there a demand for it? How is it perceived?
   1.2. What gaps need to be addressed to employ ODeL for the promotion of economic integration?
   1.3. What national or regional ODeL policies should be in place to address ASEAN Integration?

2. What elements in the development of an ASEAN Regional Qualifications Framework are relevant to ODeL?

3. What is the way forward for ODeL in the ASEAN?
   3.1. What arrangements and pedagogies should be utilized?
3.2. Should Massive Open Online Courses or MOOCs be employed? If so, how should these be designed, developed and delivered to ensure mutually inclusive benefits and co-benefits to ASEAN stakeholders?

3.3. What anticipatory moves should be done by ASEAN and its member countries to ensure mutual benefits and synergies among their open, distance and eLearning systems?

D. Objectives

The general objective of the scoping study is to create a better understanding of the current status of ODeL in ASEAN countries. This appreciation of the situation would serve as a springboard for and a guide to a continuing regional policy-level dialogue on how ODeL may be tapped for ASEAN Integration.

The specific objectives of the scoping study are:

1. To determine how open and distance higher education can maximize the benefits and minimize the consequences of ASEAN Integration.
   1.1. To describe the state of play of open, distance and eLearning (ODeL) within and among ASEAN countries;
   1.2. To recommend initiatives within and among ASEAN to employ ODeL for the promotion of economic integration; and
   1.3. To draft national and regional ODeL policies for ASEAN Integration.

2. To identify elements to be considered in the development of regional qualifications and quality assurance frameworks that pertain to ODeL.

3. To plan a roadmap for ASEAN ODeL.
   3.1. To recommend arrangements and pedagogies that may be employed;
   3.2. To determine how MOOCs should be designed, developed and delivered to ensure mutually inclusive benefits and co-benefits among ASEAN stakeholders; and
   3.3. To identify anticipatory moves by the ASEAN and its member countries to ensure mutual benefits and synergies among their open, distance and eLearning systems.
II. FRAMEWORK

The ASEAN Economic Community requires a collective strategy on capacity development that equitably supports a highly competitive and integrated region. This regional strategy must include:

- providing labor-market responsive human development opportunities;
- freeing mobility of skilled workers and professionals across the region; and
- innovating and diversifying deliveries of skill development programs for the marginalized.

Technically, these three concerns may be addressed by Open, Distance and eLearning strategies. ODeL, by definition, is inclusive. ODeL programs transcend geographic boundaries and may be made available to learners from all ten countries in the ASEAN Region. Authentic open education is not bound by cumbersome academic traditions and may be nimbly designed to respond to the needs of the current labor market. Furthermore, regionally recognized ODeL certification and degrees will allow mobility among their holders to practice across the region. Additionally, ODeL provides innovative and alternative educational delivery systems for the marginalized such as online learning, blended learning, flipped classes and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). By nature, these options should be industry driven and thus responsive to labor-markets. Using online delivery systems for capacity development make ODeL innovative and ubiquitous.

Global trends point towards the mainstreaming of ODeL.

A. The Mainstreaming of ODeL

The ODeL Promise. Open, distance and eLearning or ODeL is fast becoming the educational system of the future in the developed world. The Open Educational Resources (OER) initiative of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) of major Ivy League institutions demonstrate the promise. A meta-analysis conducted by the US Department of Education that synthesized the findings of over one thousand empirical studies found that online students performed better than those receiving face-to-face instruction because of: increased learning time; innovative curriculum and pedagogy; opportunities for collaboration and reflection; and learner control over interactions with the media (Means et al, 2010). In the developed world, quality of ODeL instruction, research and innovation is becoming less of a concern. In Britain, for instance, the UK Open University is ranked as the top third research university in the UK (Research Excellence Framework, 2014). The University of Nottingham, one of the UK’s most prestigious universities now runs its own open campus, Open Nottingham. In the United States, the University of Michigan has established Open Michigan. As a matter of fact, most residential or mortar and brick institutions of higher learning now possess an eLearning alternative such as an online program, a blended program or flipped classrooms.
In the developing world, the promise of ODeL is founded on a different rationale. For the past fifty years, the international development assistance community – among these, nongovernment organizations, bilateral agencies, international donors and financial institutions, and UN agencies – have invested heavily on basic education in the Third World. There have been substantive gains in these investments. However, investments on higher education have not been as substantial. Among donors and international funding institutions, the priority assigned or premium attached to higher education is not as much as the priorities assigned or premium attached to basic education, nonformal education (NFE) and technical vocational education and training (TVET) based on the argument that their potential to lift a country from a state of poverty to growth is much higher.

Hence, higher education infrastructure and capacities have not developed on a pace approximating basic education or TVET. In the meantime, the number of higher education students is estimated to jump more than four times from 94.4 million in 2000 to 414 million in 2030. In fact, many countries in the Third World who have made headway in achieving their MDG education targets are now facing problems of uptake to the higher education system thus marginalizing ever increasing numbers of qualified entrants. Under such circumstances, the international education development sector is now looking towards online, open and flexible systems as viable alternatives to mortal and brick higher education institutions.

**The Paris Message.** In June 2015, 150 academics, education administrators, policy makers, practitioners and education-sector stakeholders from more than 55 countries convened at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris to address issues of access, equity and quality learning outcomes as key features of the new vision for the post-2015 education agenda. In a stark departure from the millennium development agenda that focused on basic education and its nonformal and technical vocational adjuncts, the participants highlighted the contribution of higher education to the global sustainable development agenda and in supporting the developing world achieve equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030. As a group, they were convinced that higher education, drawing on experiences from online, open and flexible systems, needs to be transformed in order to deliver change in the scale and speed required.

At the end of the three-day high-level global forum, the participants issued The Paris Message (APPENDIX A), a global call to immediate action for governments, higher education institutions and intergovernmental organizations to, among other things:

- recognize the importance of online, open and flexible systems to meet the challenge of scale and quality in the provision of higher education and lifelong learning for the period 2015-2030;
- create effective policies and enable regulations for online, open and flexible systems at all levels based on equity principles;
- give priority to the use of new pedagogical approaches using digital affordances;
- reform the curriculum to ensure student engagement and success;
- be encouraged to create, develop, adapt and share high quality accessible digital resources, taking into account local needs and diversity of learners;
The Paris Message informs the framework of this scoping study.

B. The Focus on Higher Education

The developments described above have offered two rationales for the focus on higher education.

Firstly, higher education needs to prepare for the large uptake of entrants brought about by successes in achieving MDG2 (the universalization of primary education) and scaled-up investments in basic education development across the developing world including eight out of the ten ASEAN countries.

Secondly, the Paris Message highlights the need for open, online, flexible systems for higher education.

A third rationale pertains to the nature of ODeL itself. Open education prescribes a constructivist approach to learning. It encourages independent or autonomous learning while putting much premium on metacognitive goals. This approach is more appropriate to higher education than to basic education. Similarly, distance education provides limited opportunities for technical and vocational practicum. Hence, ODeL may not be the mode of choice for TVET.

These limitations of ODeL have little to do with culture, economics or geography. Nevertheless, we have to shift from the global to the regional since this scoping study is being conducted within the context of ASEAN Integration.

C. The Education Dimension of ASEAN Integration

The term ASEAN Integration refers to the initiation, at the end of 2015, of the ASEAN Economic Community or AEC. The AEC is one of three pillars of the ASEAN Community, the two others being, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) and the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC). Hence, ASEAN community building encompasses: enhancing competitiveness for economic growth and development through closer economic integration; nurturing human, cultural and natural resources for sustained development in a harmonious and people-centered ASEAN; and enhancing peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in the region through comprehensive political and security cooperation.

Article 1, Paragraph 10 of the ASEAN Charter states that the Association intends to “develop human resources through closer cooperation in education and life-long learning, and in science and technology, for the empowerment of the peoples of ASEAN and for the strengthening of the ASEAN Community.” Let us repeat the phrase for emphasis: Education and lifelong learning...for the strengthening of the ASEAN Community. This statement highlights the original
intent of the Association to employ education in the service not only of ASEAN Economic Integration but of all three pillars of the ASEAN Community.

ASEAN higher education has three priorities: mobility; harmonization; and capacity building. Concrete steps have been taken to address these priorities. In terms of mobility, faculty and student exchanges have been initiated; bilateral and sub-regional arrangements have been established such as mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs) for engineering, architecture, accountancy, surveying, nursing, medicine and tourism. In terms of capacity building, intra-ASEAN, bilateral and multilateral programs have been initiated. In terms of harmonization, an ASEAN Qualifications Referencing Framework is currently being finalized for implementation in 2018, with the following thrusts: harmonization; quality; and recognition.

Another thrust that the ASEAN Secretariat has emphasized is ASEAN Connectivity (APPENDIX B). Among all the educational programs and platforms available in the ASEAN region, ODeL is uniquely suited to contribute to: physical connectivity; institutional connectivity; and people to people connectivity for obvious reasons.

D. Proposed Research Framework

Conceptual Model. Given the above, our framework for inquiry should be guided by the current discourse on: the mainstreaming of ODeL; the focus on higher education; and the education dimension of ASEAN Integration. As these phenomena are still in the process of consummation, our framework should be anticipatory and our inquiry should take on the nature of futures research.

The elements of the framework should include the major concerns on ODeL embedded in the Paris Message, i.e., access, equity, and quality learning outcomes. Added to this list is a concern that may be characteristic to Asian countries, the acceptability of ODeL.

Figure 1 gives the conceptual model, a visual representation of our proposed framework.
FIGURE 1. Conceptual Model

ASEAN COMMUNITY
AEC, ASCC, APSC

ASEAN INTEGRATION

ASEAN EDUCATION PRIORITIES
Mobility/Harmonization/CapDev

EQUITY
Targeting
Openness of Pgms

ACCEPTABILITY
AQRF
Recognition
Demand

QUALITY
Content, Pedagogy,
Assessment

ACCESS
IT Infrastructure
OER, Programs
Absorptive Capacity

ODeL
MAINSTREAMING
Propositions and Constituent Concepts. The framework’s main propositions are:

1. Open, distance and eLearning is in the process of being mainstreamed into ASEAN higher education.

2. Open, distance and eLearning may lead to ASEAN Integration.

However, ASEAN Economic Integration is merely one of three pillars of the ASEAN Community, the two others being the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) and the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC). Thus, we consider Integration as a step towards ASEAN Community Building. Moreover, ODeL contributes to integration by way of ASEAN Higher Education, the features of which are: mobility; harmonization; and capacity development.

3. There are factors that influence the impact of ODeL on ASEAN Integration and subsequently to Community Building. These factors are: acceptability; accessibility; equity; and quality of outcomes.

Under acceptability, we may classify; the demand for cross-border or trans-border ODeL among ASEAN nationals; the recognition of ODeL programs and credentials within and among ASEAN countries; and the existing initiatives towards an ASEAN Qualifications Referencing Framework.

Under accessibility, we categorize: the availability of programs; availability of telecommunications infrastructure; the absorptive capacities of programs; and the openness of educational resources.

Under equity, we include: the openness of programs; and the targeting of marginalized communities, sectors and nationalities.

Under quality of outcomes, we enumerate the quality of content, pedagogy and assessment.

These are the constituent concepts of the proposed research framework on the study of ASEAN Integration through open and distance higher education, some of which will be covered rudimentarily in this scoping exercise to start off our continuing regional conversation.
**Operationalization.** TABLE 1 gives the operationalization of these variables and their corresponding indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>OPERATIONALIZATION</th>
<th>MEASURABLE INDICATORS</th>
<th>IMPACT INDICATORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>Intra-ASEAN mobility of academics, professionals and students; Mutual recognition of HE degrees; Support for Intra-ASEAN mobility</td>
<td>Number of ASEAN academic, professional &amp; student expatriates; Number of MRAs on HE degrees; Number of supported exchange pgms</td>
<td>Increase in ASEAN academic, student &amp; professional expats; Increase in MRAs on HE; Increase in supported exchange pgms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonization</td>
<td>Implementation of AQRF (HE)</td>
<td>Number of qualifications referenced</td>
<td>Increase in qualifications referenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Development</td>
<td>Support for HE Capacity Development</td>
<td>Number of supported HE CapDev pgms</td>
<td>Increase in supported HE CapDev pgms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptability</td>
<td>demand for cross/trans-border ODeL; recognition of ODeL pgms/credentials; recognition of AQRF (ODeL)</td>
<td>Number of persons who wish to enroll; Number of programs recognized Number of qualifications referenced</td>
<td>Increase in persons wishing to enroll Increase in programs recognized Increase in qualifications referencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>availability of programs; availability of IT infrastructure; absorptive capacity of programs; openness of educational resources</td>
<td>Number of ODeL programs offered; Number of dead spots; Number of students enrolled in ODeL; Number of OER</td>
<td>Increase in ODeL program offerings; Decrease in connectivity problems; Increase in students enrolled in ODeL; Increase in OERs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>openness of programs; targeting of marginalized communities, sectors &amp; nationalities</td>
<td>Number of admission requirements Number of students from marginalized communities, sectors and nationalities</td>
<td>Decrease in admission requirements; Increase in representation of marginalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Outcomes</td>
<td>quality of content; quality of pedagogy; quality of assessment;</td>
<td>Degree of relevance of content; Degree of effectiveness; Degree of responsiveness to workplace</td>
<td>Cognitive and metacognitive gains; Increased number and degree of skills; Increased acceptability of graduates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 1.** Operationalization of the Proposed Research Framework's Variables

This framework will serve as a guide to continuing, long-term inquiries on the mainstreaming of ODeL in the ASEAN and how it will contribute to ASEAN community building. It is meant not only for this study and succeeding studies but as a springboard for discussion or as prelude to a continuing conversation on ASEAN ODeL. Being a scoping study of an emerging development, its coverage is limited. Discussions on mainstreaming, quality and acceptability are the focus for Volume 1, while those of accessibility and equity will be reserved for Volume 2.
III. METHODOLOGY

A. Design

To answer the research questions, the scoping study adopted a neo-positivist approach employing an integrated multi-level mixed methods design. By definition, a neo-positivist approach uses the deductive method of inquiry based on a predetermined framework. However, it acknowledges the value and applies qualitative procedures and, occasionally, anticipatory methods as aids to internal validity and depth of analysis.

Integrated mixed methods, being the quintessential neo-positivist design, involve quantitative (QUAN) and qualitative (QUAL) strands. The QUAN strands include an online survey and the analysis of secondary data on ODeL enrollment. The QUAL strands are made up of: key informant interviews (KII); and documents analysis. Owing to the anticipatory nature of the scoping study, two futures research techniques, the Policy Delphi and Collective Visioning, classified as ANT strands, are also utilized.

Data was gathered at several levels: individual (survey, KII); group (Policy Delphi, collective visioning); institutional (universities); national (secondary data on national enrollment); and regional levels (policies and programs). The QUAN, QUAL and ANT strands are fully integrated since individual strands or methods are dependent upon, complementary of and supplementary to one another.

B. Methods

The following methods formed part of the integrated mixed methods design.

Documents Analysis (QUAL). The lead researcher initially conducted a review of related literature consisting of documents on national qualification frameworks, ODeL/blended policies and programs offerings, and fugitive materials on the accessibility and acceptability of these programs.

This analysis attempted to answer the following research questions: What is the state of play of open, distance and eLearning (ODeL) within and among ASEAN countries? What national or regional ODeL policies are in place to address ASEAN Integration? What elements should be considered in the development of regional qualifications and quality assurance frameworks?

Initial findings of the documents analysis informed the conduct of the Policy Delphi Study.

Online Survey (QUAN). An online survey was conducted with respondents coming from all ten ASEAN countries. The one-paged online survey collected data on open, distance and eLearning perceptions among higher education professionals and clientele (APPENDIX C1). Thus, respondents consisted of English proficient higher education stakeholders in all ten ASEAN countries. They were sampled from the UNESCO Bangkok mailing list and contact lists of
students enrolled in ASEAN 232 of the UP Open University. The latter assisted in the conduct of the online survey.

The survey gathered quantitative data that focused on the following research questions: How can education, in general, and open and distance higher education, in particular, maximize the benefits and minimize the consequences of ASEAN Integration? What is the state of play of open, distance and eLearning (ODeL) within and among ASEAN countries? What arrangements and pedagogies should be employed?

It looked into stakeholder perceptions of accessibility, acceptability and potential absorptive capacity of ODeL programs. Initial findings of the survey will inform the conduct of key informant interviews.

Policy Delphi (ANT). An online Policy Delphi was organized by the lead researcher. It involved education policy experts from each of the ten ASEAN countries. These experts are listed as national research collaborators in a later section. Three Delphi rounds were conducted with the end view of identifying policy options.

The objective of the Policy Delphi is to collectively draft a regional policy statement on ODeL that address ASEAN Integration given within forecast parameters volunteered by the participants. In the past, this technique has been employed online in two regional studies: for the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research that looked into the founding of a global food and agriculture university (Flor and Librero, 2005); and for SEAMEO SEARCA which explored the design of a regional curriculum on natural resources management (Flor and Sampong, 2009).

Procedure. The Delphi Procedure began with the formation of a panel representing major policy stakeholders, i.e., groups that have something to gain or lose with a policy on ODeL. Thus, an ODeL/higher education/human resource authority from each ASEAN country will part of the panel as much as possible.

The Delphi Study was conducted via email from Sunday, 4 October to Saturday, 24 October. It was initiated by the lead researcher, who served as moderator emailing the members of the panel separately.

There were three Delphi rounds.

1. On the first round (4 to 10 October), each member was asked separately to answer an identical question on the regionalization of higher education using ODeL. The answers of the Delphi Panel were consolidated by the moderator and were crafted into a two-paged policy statement with two parts: forecasts on ODeL and regional policy thrusts.

2. On the second round (11 to 17 October), the policy statements were sent individually to the members of the panel to ensure anonymity of responses. Each was asked to revise
or modify the statements according to his/her best judgment. The revisions (in MSWord track changes mode) were sent back to the moderator along with a short justification for each revision made. The revisions were once again consolidated by the moderator and crafted into Version 2 of the policy statement.

3. On the third and final round (18 to 24 October), Version 2 was sent individually to the members of the panel for further revisions and modifications. The policy statement was now formatted as a PDF file. Comments were inserted into the document using the Adobe Acrobat Comment functionality. The marked document was sent back to the moderator for consolidation and crafting of Version 3.

This Draft Report contains Version 3 of the Delphi Policy Statement. It will be presented to the UNESCO-ACU Regional Policy Forum on 23-24 November 2015 in Bangkok for vetting by the forum participants. As in all Delphi exercises, confidentiality of inputs during the process is assured.

_delphi Collaborators_. The experts who were invited to serve in the Delphi Panel, their country of origin and institutional affiliations are listed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASEAN Country</th>
<th>Institutional Affiliation</th>
<th>Suggested Collaborators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>Universiti Brunei Darussalam</td>
<td>Dr. Masitah Shahrill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Youth &amp; Sports</td>
<td>Dr. Om Sethy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Universities Terbuka</td>
<td>Prof Dr Suciati Sastroutomo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Sports</td>
<td>Acharn Dockeo Phonthachit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Open University of Malaysia</td>
<td>Prof. Dr. Fadzil Mansor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Yangon University of Distance Education</td>
<td>Prof. Dr. Hla Tint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>UP Open University</td>
<td>Prof. Dr. Melinda F Lumanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td>Prof Dr Arul Chib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University</td>
<td>Prof Dr Kamolrat Intaratat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Hanoi Open University</td>
<td>Prof Dr Ly Lan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2. Experts Invited to the Delphi Panel**

**Moderator’s Role.** The moderator ensured that the policy statements crafted reflect the opinions of all members of the panel. In other words, a policy consensus should be reached as much as possible. In cases of contradicting opinions, the justifications given by the individual panel members were considered by the moderator in the crafting of the policy statement which was again subjected to the panel’s review.

**Participation in Regional Forum.** Members of the Delphi Panel will be invited as sponsored participants in the UNESCO-ACU Regional Policy Forum on ODeL for ASEAN Integration, tentatively scheduled from 23 to 24 November 2015 (APPENDIX D) in Bangkok. They will be
encouraged to share their respective country’s concerns, if any, on the matter by actively participating in the discussions even beyond the regional ODeL policy agenda.

The initial Delphi question (APPENDIX C2) was guided by the following research parameters: How can education, in general, and open and distance higher education, in particular, maximize the benefits and minimize the consequences of ASEAN Integration? What anticipatory moves should be done by the ASEAN and its member countries to ensure mutual benefits and synergies among their open, distance and eLearning systems? What national or regional ODeL policies should be in place to address ASEAN Integration?

Results of the three rounds of Delphi will be validated with Key Informant Interviews.

**Collective Visioning (ANT).** This data gathering cum processing technique will taps the collective wisdom of the participants to the Regional Policy Forum in crafting vision, goal and strategic thrust statements on ODeL for ASEAN Integration. The vision, goal and strategic thrust statements will constitute a strategic framework that forms the basis for a five or ten year strategic plan. This will be the final session in the policy forum, which will provide long-term broad strokes as the way forward.

**Key Informant Interviews (QUAL).** Three higher education policy makers present in the High Level Policy Forum on ODeL in November will be identified to serve as key informants of the study. Based on the preliminary findings of online survey and the Policy Delphi, they will be interviewed to triangulate the results and to thicken the discourse.

The guide questions (APPENDIX C3) will revolve around the following research problem statements: What is the state of play of open, distance and eLearning (ODeL) within and among ASEAN countries? How should MOOCs be designed, developed and delivered to ensure mutually inclusive benefits and co-benefits to ASEAN stakeholders? What arrangements and pedagogies should be employed? What efforts are underway or may be planned within and among ASEAN to employ ODeL to promote economic integration?

**C. Data Coverage**

Being a scoping study, data collection did not cover all of the constituent concepts nor did it gather data on all the variables/ indicators specified in the framework. The intention of the scoping study is to determine the parameters on which a more comprehensive, longer-term research can be conducted and to set the direction of a dialogue that would flesh out these parameters. The phenomenon being studied, i.e., the promotion of ASEAN Integration through ODeL may be in its initial stages and is far from its consummation. Although ODeL has been around for decades in at least five of the ten countries, its role in the ASEAN is only beginning to be explored. Thus, the limitations in obtaining empirical data for quantitative analysis and the lack of discursive points for qualitative analysis. Nonetheless, these quantitative, qualitative and anticipatory data were gathered:
**ODEL Perception.** How do higher education stakeholders consider open, distance and eLearning programs? Do they have a positive opinion of these? Do they consider these as second-rate alternatives to residential programs or face-to-face instruction? Do they see these as opportunities for advancement without necessarily giving up their jobs and family responsibilities? Primary data of these perceptions in quantitative (survey) form were collected.

**ODEL/MOOCs/Blended Programs.** Are there currently ODEL programs being offered in all ten ASEAN nations? Are there blended learning programs? Or MOOCs? How many programs are currently available? Are they offered beyond the confines of their national boundaries? Are there ASEAN wide programs?

**National and Regional Policies.** Are there currently national policies that govern open, distance and eLearning? If so, which countries have these? What are their salient provisions? How may these provisions be improved for regional integration? Are there ASEAN guidelines or agreements on ODEL? What is the current status of the ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework (AQRF)?

**D. Data Analysis Procedures**

The following data analysis procedures were utilized:

**Descriptive Statistics.** The primary data gathered from the online survey and the secondary data culled from existing documents and databases will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, i.e., sum, mean, median or mode, as appropriate.

**Delphi Forecasting.** The study will adopt the feedback cum consensus approach inherent in the Delphi technique to arrive at conclusions regarding national and regional ODEL policy.

**Descriptive Analysis.** The documents reviewed and conversation threads gathered in key informant interviews will be likewise subjected to descriptive analyses.
IV. MAINSTREAMING OF ODEL IN THE ASEAN

A. Indications of Mainstreaming

In the short history of open and distance education, some ASEAN countries have actually trailblazed in this area. Among the centers of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) is one that caters exclusively to open and distance education, the SEAMEO Regional Open Learning Center (SEAMEOLEC) based in Jakarta. In the ASEAN, the country with the longest distance education tradition is Indonesia, with its pioneering SMP (Lower Secondary Education) Terbuka and its Universities Terbuka, the first mega-university in East Asia. UT is followed closely by Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University in Bangkok in terms of date of establishment and size of enrollment. Today, six out of ten ASEAN countries have national open universities.

Furthermore, there is every indication that the global educational system, in general, and Southeast Asian higher educational institutions, in particular, are gradually but most certainly mainstreaming open, distance and eLearning at varying degrees. The primary drivers of this trend are: the new information and communication environment; progressive shifts towards learner-centered autonomous and independent learning in higher education; demands dictated by professional careers and personal commitments; and the economies of scale achieved by ODeL.

ODeL is no longer the sole purview of open universities. Most residential or brick and mortar institutions are now offering their own distance learning programs or, alternatively, incorporating eLearning into their delivery system and blended learning/flipped classrooms into their pedagogies. This is true in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

In the Philippines, ODeL is actively being mainstreamed by a Law, Republic Act 10650: An Act Expanding Access to Educational Services by Institutionalizing Distance Learning in Levels of Tertiary Education. Philippine Open Distance Learning Act was enacted on 28 July 2014. Decades before this, however, state colleges and universities such as the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, the Central Luzon State University, the Visayas State University and the Benguet State University have established their own open campuses.

All of these, however, have had no direct relation to transnational education and the promotion of ASEAN Integration, except for a few exceptional cases.

B. Antecedents

ASEAN Cyber University. From the official standpoint, ASEAN’s ODeL flag carrier is the ASEAN Cyber University. ACU is a joint undertaking between ASEAN and the Seoul Cyber University. It was established: to bridge the development gap among ASEAN Member States and to support ASEAN’s efforts for regional integration; and to promote education cooperation and people-to-
people exchange. ACU is an integral part of the ASEAN Universities Network (AUN). However, there is some ambiguity about its status, as an institution, a network hub or a project.

Initially, the ACU was known as the ASEAN-ROK Cyber University. It was first proposed by former Secretary General of ASEAN, Dr. Surin Pituswan, on the 20th Anniversary of the ASEAN-ROK in June 2009 with the purpose of promoting education cooperation and people-to-people exchange. This proposal was formalized at the 12th ASEAN-ROK Summit on October of the same year in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand.

ACU has a sub-regional focus, the CLMV countries: Cambodia; Laos; Myanmar; and Vietnam. A master plan for the ACU was agreed in principle during the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) for Establishing the ASEAN Cyber University in Seoul in 2011. The master plan is composed of a three-phased roadmap for the CLMV: capacity enhancement and pilot operation of eLearning centers (2011-12); establishment of the ASEAN eLearning portal and curriculum management (2012-14); and expansion of the ACU through eLearning and research collaboration. The following institutions are involved in the ACU: the Institute Technology of Cambodia (ITC); the National University of Laos (NUOL); the University Technology (UT) of Myanmar; and the Hanoi University of Science and Technology (HUST).

There are two tiers of ACU membership, the Ministerial level and the institutional level, with the AUN Secretariat actively involved in both.

**The GMS VU.** Among the earliest antecedents of the promotion of regional integration through open and distance higher education is the Greater Mekong Sub region Virtual University. The GMS-VU Project was launched in 2001 under the initiative of UNESCO Bangkok in collaboration with Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) and SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (RIHED).

The original intent of GMS-VU is to establish a Virtual University to offer distance learning programs, preferably online courses, to students in all the six countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, namely, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and Yunnan Province in China. In the initial expert group meeting which was held at Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University in 2001, it was decided that the project should pilot test the feasibility of offering distance learning programs in three fields of studies - IT, Tourism, and Mekong Studies.

A task force meeting on GMS-VU Tourism was held in May 2002, further identified partner universities for this project, agreed on the structure of the certificate programme on Tourism and assigned responsibilities to develop the modules for this certificate course to various partner universities. These partner universities are: the Royal University of Phnom Penh (Cambodia); the Yunnan University (China); the Yunnan Radio & TV University (China); the National University of Laos (Lao PDR); the University of Distance Education (Myanmar); STOU (Thailand) and the Hanoi Open University (Vietnam).
UNESCO Bangkok has been working closely with the partner universities to develop a certificate program on Tourism in the GMS, which consists of one core course (equivalent to three credits) and an elective course (three credits) via distance instruction.

**ASEAN Studies of the OU5.** Within the Asian Association of Open Universities or AAOU, national open universities of five ASEAN countries have banded together to form a block known as the OU5. These are: the Hanoi Open University; the Open University of Malaysia; the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University; Universities Terbuka of Indonesia; and the University of the Philippines Open University. In 2009, Universities Terbuka proposed to the OU5 the joint offering of a Master of Arts in ASEAN Studies.

The proposal found its impetus from an official statement released by ASEAN leaders in its January 2007 Summit Meeting in Cebu City, Philippines, that sought inclusion of ASEAN studies in the university curriculum of member nations. It went one step further by proposing a joint program of five ASEAN open universities making it a transnational, intra-ASEAN program to be offered at a distance mode.

The dynamics of university curriculum processes, however, have since prevented the launching of the OU5 MA in ASEAN Studies program. But it has not prevented individual universities among the OU5 from offering similar programs. For instance, the UP Open University has been offering a ladderized post-baccalaureate program, the Graduate Certificate in ASEAN Studies and the Master of ASEAN Studies since 2013. Similarly, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University is likewise offering a Communication for ASEAN program.

**C. Scoping Study Observations On Mainstreaming**

Judging from the discernible trends within ASEAN nations as reflected in the existing literature and documents studied, it may be deduced that open, distance and eLearning is being mainstreamed into higher education and will become a major mode of delivery in open universities as well as residential institutions in the future.
V. ACCEPTABILITY

A. Outmoded Perceptions

The Need for Recognition. From 21 to 23 October 2015, UNESCO-APEID conducted a Regional Capacity Building Workshop on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in Asia and the Pacific. The event was a follow-through of the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (2011 Revised Convention). Two of the topics covered were: open and distance learning for higher education; and the acceptance of non-traditional modes of education. Some of the observations volunteered during the workshop run counter to the observations on mainstreaming that were made in the preceding section and contradicted the theme of the Paris Message.

These observations revolved on two major issues: the “low image” of distance education; and the exclusion of non-traditional modes of learning by accreditation bodies. Distance learning, it was observed, suffered from prejudicial problems. There was a lack of appreciation for and credibility of distance learning programs. For instance, China does not recognize distance learning degrees from other countries. In Cambodia there is bias against distance education degrees. Forty to seventy percent of students in Myanmar enroll in distance education programs because they believe they can pass these easily. The only exception was in Pakistan where there was no prejudice on modalities. Distance and residential programs were regarded equally. There was a felt need for a mechanism or even an accrediting body tasked to recognize degrees obtained through distance learning. Even the private sector, it was intimated, refuses to recognize such degrees.

These prevailing but outmoded perceptions are characteristic of a historically constructed narrative on distance learning.

Historical Roots of Prejudice. Most distance learning programs started out as correspondence schools using print or broadcast media. The content, pedagogies and assessment used in these programs were identical to conventional residential programs. They were conventional courses offered at the distance mode and were similarly based on the teacher-centered or instructor-directed approach. The only difference between these programs and those offered face-to-face was the delivery system. But the use of print or broadcast delivery instead of face-to-face instruction under a teacher-directed regimen resulted in significant losses in teaching effectiveness.

Nevertheless, distance education, was an indispensable option, particularly under Third World conditions where: educational services were few and far between; schools were unreachable by prospective students who lived in far flung villages; learning time had to give way for work; and economies of scale had to be achieved under resource-deprived conditions. Thus, distance instruction was generally thought of as a poor but necessary alternative to residential education.

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However, a combination of open educational philosophies and educational technologies changed the equation altogether. The introduction of open, distance and electronic learning ushered in the development of new, innovative educational programs that did not have residential analogs or counterparts. They were designed specifically for online learning and were based on a learner-centered, constructivist approach. Even the clientele of ODeL programs have changed to those more conversant with new information and communication technologies. These more recent types or later generations of distance learning programs are the ones now being mainstreamed, not the outmoded correspondence type of distance learning. Thus, the distinction between distance education and open, distance and eLearning.

B. Demand: Perception Survey Findings

To substantiate the point, the scoping study included an online survey to determine the current perception of ASEAN nationals on open, distance and eLearning (not distance instruction per se) and its potential in the promotion of ASEAN Integration. It was conducted from 1 to 31 October 2015 and covered all ten countries. Respondents were sampled from the 2014 UNESCO mailing list and from contact lists of graduate students enrolled in ASEAN 231 under the UP Open University ASEAN Studies Program who assisted in the conduct of the online survey.

Respondents. The respondents were informed that the UNESCO Asia Pacific Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok) and the ASEAN Cyber University (ACU) in collaboration with the UP Open University were conducting a Scoping Study on the Promotion of ASEAN Integration through Open, Distance and eLearning. The study made use of mixed methods, among them a short online survey that looked into perceptions of education stakeholders in the region. The respondents were requested to accomplish a short questionnaire with ten questions answerable by “Yes” or “No” that can be completed in five minutes.

Gender Disaggregation. Questionnaires were sent out to a total of 1756 ASEAN nationals, out of which 1007 responded and returned their accomplished forms. Although disparities in gender may be found in the individual country counts, the representation serendipitously balanced out in the totals with 519 (51.53%) female respondents and 488 (48.46) male respondents.

Breakdown per Nationality. The highest number of respondents understandably came from the Philippines with 391 accomplished questionnaires constituting more than one-third or 38.82 percent of the total. This is followed by Singapore with 138 (13.70%) respondents and Malaysia with 108 (10.72%). Note that the three countries with the highest number of respondents are those with the highest English proficiencies. Perhaps the language into which the questionnaires were formatted and sent out was a determinant to the level of participation in the survey. Those who possessed a greater degree of English proficiency tended more to participate than those who were not.

* In many cases, gender data was unavailable. The researcher reconstructed this information through the respondents’ names and email contact details when appropriate.

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There were: 97 (9.63%) respondents from Thailand; 80 (7.94%) respondents from Indonesia; 55 (5.47%) respondents from VietNam; and 45 (4.47%) respondents from Myanmar. The countries with the lowest number of respondents were: Cambodia with 36 (3.58%); Brunei Darussalam with 33 (3.28%); and Lao PDR with 24 (2.39%). With the exception of Singapore, these are the ASEAN countries lowest in population.

The breakdown of nationalities and gender of the respondents is found in TABLE 3.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>7.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>10.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>38.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>13.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>9.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>519 (51.53)</td>
<td>488 (48.46)</td>
<td>1007</td>
<td>1007</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 3. Respondents to the Online Survey**

**Perceptions.** The following were the perceptions of the respondents on open, distance and eLearning for the promotion of ASEAN Integration.

When asked about their familiarity with ODeL, the majority (63.25%) answered that they were familiar with it. Furthermore, a bigger majority (71.5%) stated that there are open, distance and eLearning programs offered in their respective countries. This is a contradiction of sorts because some of those who answered that they were not familiar with ODeL also said that there are ODeL programs in their country. Perhaps the term “familiar” had been misconstrued as “conversant” or “accustomed” rather than simply being aware, which was the intent of the question.

Almost all of the respondents (95.23%) believe that ODeL programs should be offered in their respective countries. However, only a little more than a quarter (25.72%) of the respondents said that they have indeed participated in an ODeL program. Nonetheless, a clear majority (79.54%) answered that if given the opportunity, they would participate in an open and distance higher education program offered in their own country.

An even bigger majority (92.95%) believe that ODeL programs offered in other ASEAN countries should be open to all ASEAN nationals. What is even more encouraging is that out of the 1007 respondents, 121 (12.01%) acknowledged that they have actually participated in an ODeL program offered in another ASEAN country. If given the opportunity, 83.32 percent of the respondents state that they would participate in an ODeL program at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level offered by an ASEAN country other than your own.

Of the 1007 respondents, 943 (93.65%) believe that ASEAN-wide ODeL programs at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level are useful. An almost equivalent number (93.35%) believe that ASEAN-wide ODeL programs at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level will promote ASEAN integration.

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Table 4 gives the frequency counts and percentages of the responses to the perception survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>FREQUENCY COUNT</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>TOTA L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Are you familiar with Open, Distance and eLearning programs?</td>
<td></td>
<td>637</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Are there ODeL programs offered in your country?</td>
<td></td>
<td>720</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do you believe ODeL programs should be offered in your country?</td>
<td></td>
<td>959</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Have you participated in any ODeL program offered in your country?</td>
<td></td>
<td>259</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>If given the opportunity, would you participate in an ODeL program at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level offered in your country?</td>
<td></td>
<td>801</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do you believe ODeL programs offered in other ASEAN countries should be open to all ASEAN nationals?</td>
<td></td>
<td>936</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Have you participated in any ODeL program in an ASEAN country other than your own?</td>
<td></td>
<td>121</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>If given the opportunity, would you participate in an ODeL program at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level offered by an ASEAN country other than your own?</td>
<td></td>
<td>839</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Do you believe that ASEAN-wide ODeL programs at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level are useful?</td>
<td></td>
<td>943</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Will ASEAN-wide ODeL programs at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level promote ASEAN integration?</td>
<td></td>
<td>940</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 4. Responses to the Perception Survey**

**Probe Questions.** Some students from the UPOU ASEAN Studies Program who assisted in the survey sent out probe questions to selected respondents that they knew personally. The answers to the probe questions were quite revealing.

**Need to Open Trans-ASEAN ODeL Programs.** For instance when asked why they believed ODeL programs offered in other ASEAN countries should be open to all ASEAN nationals, they provided a wide range of reasons including:

- To gather different views and opinions of different nationalities within the ASEAN region.
- To achieve equal opportunities to all.
• Because it is a great opportunity to access or attain higher education especially those who are busy yet desire to study but have no chance due to work, family responsibilities or physical disability. Also, it provides much freedom, flexibility, practicality because it is more cost effective than the traditional study and it leads to personal growth, advancement and management.
• To create a wider market for learners and to provide opportunities for other countries to obtain international and globally competitive degrees that are not available in their own homeland. This way, it can educate and develop more competitive students globally. The sharing of knowledge of improved higher education becomes accessible and affordable, especially to those who are unable to take up full time residential programs.
• As technology paved the way for convenient and fast access to the world wide web hence any information needed can just be extracted right then and there; the traditional modes of distance learning has evolved alongside and made it easier for those who are working professionals, working abroad, those with families, and others to be able to pursue higher education depending on their availability and time.
• Because students can have the privilege to cross enroll from the best schools in ASEAN countries.
• Some ASEAN countries need to have access to universities that specialize in fields that are outside their institutions' concentrations.
• For best practice sharing, different countries may adapt different styles of learning and to have collaborative learning especially on culture and traditions.

Participation in ODeL Programs Offered in other Countries. Another probe question dealt with their participation in an ODeL program at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level offered by an ASEAN country other than their own. The answers were:

• ODeL is far more convenient. No need to travel to another ASEAN country, thus bypassing usual paperwork (VISA, etc) which could be very expensive and time-consuming.
• It would be "2 in 1", education and travel/ self-exploration experience at the same time. It’s like paradigm shifting of knowledge from your own country to another.
• We are presented with much better course options, dynamic learning and interaction, learn by way of adaptation and it practices you to get ready to engage in an international study program.
• I am constrained by my full time work; therefore it would be helpful for me to take an ODeL program instead of going to a residential school.
• I'm currently working. Juggling work with study will not be that easy, especially if I will be taking on-campus programs. So opting for an ODeL program would make studying more accessible and possible and will be the best choice. And it’s a helpful experience to try ODeL programs of another country so as to expand and improve our standard of education.
ODeL and ASEAN Integration. An even more important concern is how ASEAN-wide ODeL programs at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level would promote ASEAN integration. The answers were:

- It will promote acceptance and understanding of other races, culture, religion, etc.
- Being a part of ASEAN is already an advantage how much more in learning the same program in different approach, every member of the ASEAN-wide ODeL program will be progressive.
- It paves way for improved education to be accessible and attainable regionally. Moreover, those countries who offer international standards of education can open up opportunities to less endowed countries. It creates camaraderie for countries through sharing knowledge and education.
- It doesn't mean that distance learning means distant at knowledge at all; the dependency varies on the student's willingness to access knowledge, personal enrichment and the desire for development.
- ODeL promotes sense of synergy to their mentors and colleagues just as traditional classroom setting executing effective communication, interesting discussions and stimulating engagements. There is much more potential at being involved in ODeL programs, despite being relatively young, it promises positive future of breakthroughs, achievement and success.
- Because I can meet students from other countries virtually, though, and will promote better understanding between us in a common educational setting.
- A multinational cohort of students enrolled in an ODeL program would be less sensitive to nationalities and more open, understanding and empathizing of other countries and their citizens.
- Today’s trans-ASEAN ODeL students are tomorrow’s ASEAN leaders.

C. Relevant Mechanisms for Recognition

In spite of a clear demand for ODeL programs, regional inter-country recognition remains a valid concern if these were to facilitate ASEAN integration and community building. There are existing mechanisms for recognition, one of which is a UNESCO initiative and the other, a mechanism under the ASEAN itself.

Convention on Recognition. The UNESCO Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific (the 1983 Convention) was initiated in Bangkok in 1983 as a mechanism for the recognition of higher education credentials across the Asia Pacific Region. Since then, however, significant changes have taken place in the region. These include, in the words of UNESCO, “the massification and internationalization of higher education.”

Member States update and amended the 1983 Convention in Tokyo, Japan in 2011 paving the way to the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (the 2011 Revised Convention). This version “seeks to ensure that studies, diplomas,
and degrees in higher education are recognized as widely as possible, considering the great diversity of educational systems in the Asia-Pacific region and the richness of its cultural, social, political, religious, and economic backgrounds.”

Four ASEAN countries – Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR and the Philippines – are signatories of this Convention.

**AQRF.** The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework is a guide for the translation of professional qualifications across participating ASEAN countries. Its purpose is to enable comparisons of qualifications across countries that will: support recognition of qualifications; facilitate lifelong learning; promote and encourage credit transfer and learner mobility; promote worker mobility; lead to better understood and higher quality qualifications systems.

We can trace the roots of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework back to the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS 1995). The purpose of AFAS was to eliminate restrictions to service trades among ASEAN countries. Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) for qualifications in major professional services were put in place for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

In 2007, the ASEAN Economic Blueprint (ASEAN 2007) also called for the recognition of professional qualifications. From 2005 to 2009, seven MRAs have been concluded covering the fields of engineering, nursing, architecture, surveying, medical practice, dental practice and accountancy. The blueprint also provided for the free flow of skilled labor through harmonization and standardization of qualifications, standards and credentials.

With the impetus provided by AFAS and ASEAN 2007, the concept proposal for the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework was developed as part of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) Economic Cooperation Work Programme (ECWP). The AQRF was formally endorsed by ASEAN Economic Ministers during the 46th AEM meeting in 25th August 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar and subsequently endorsed by the ASEAN Education Ministers on 11 September 2014 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. This year (2015) marks the establishment of AQRF Board. Sectoral implementation will soon follow leading to the conclusion of the referencing processes and full-blown implementation in 2018.

The AQRF is intended to support and enhance each country’s national qualifications framework or qualifications system while providing a mechanism to facilitate comparison and transparency. It will link the participating national qualifications framework of ASEAN countries and become the mechanism for recognition of its qualifications against other regional and international qualifications.
D. Scoping Study Observations on Acceptability

The beginnings of distance instruction have somehow earned it a reputation inferior to its residential counterpart. This misconception has impinged upon its acceptability. With the advent of open, distance and eLearning, however, these perceptions have changed paving the way for the mainstreaming of ODeL. In a survey conducted in October 2015, significantly higher percentages of ASEAN nationals believed that:

1. ODeL programs should be offered in their respective countries.
2. If given the opportunity, they would participate in an open and distance higher education program offered in their own country.
3. ODeL programs offered in other ASEAN countries should be open to all ASEAN nationals.
4. If given the opportunity, they would participate in an ODeL program at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level offered by an ASEAN country other than their own.
5. ASEAN-wide ODeL programs at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level are useful.
6. ASEAN-wide ODeL programs at the bachelor’s/master’s/doctoral level will promote ASEAN integration.

It is clear from the online survey that perceptions on ODeL are quite positive across ASEAN and that there is a significant demand for ODeL programs at the higher education level. Furthermore, it is perceived that ODeL can promote ASEAN Integration because it fosters understanding among its multinational students who may eventually become the leaders of ASEAN tomorrow.

The question of acceptability and recognition will be addressed by existing mechanisms such as the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas as well as the ASEAN Qualifications Referencing Framework.
V. QUALITY

A. Four Dimensions of Quality in ODeL

As described in the preceding chapters, there are current initiatives within and outside the ASEAN framework that address the concern for quality, among them are the 2011 Revised Convention and the AQRF. The ASEAN Universities Network (AUN) is the body within ASEAN tasked to monitor and evaluate the quality of higher education offered by universities within the region for purposes of accreditation. Under the AUN umbrella, the ACU has designed and developed the Guidelines for eLearning Course Management QA in Higher Education (APPENDIX E). These initiatives will undoubtedly contribute to the pursuit of quality for ASEAN-wide ODeL programs once the institutional hurdles are overcome. However, other perspectives that relate too quality in ODeL may also have to be considered.

In October 1998, the international education development sector issues a World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century. One of its most quoted provisions is on quality. Article 11 of the Declaration states that quality in higher education is “a multi-dimensional concept, which should embrace all its functions, and activities; teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment.” This comprehensive range of quality areas implies the futility of a one-dimensional approach to quality.

Open, distance and eLearning is characterized by educational innovations based on open educational philosophies, distance learning and information and communication technologies. A quality system for ODeL should highlight these foundations. With respect to these core features, we can cluster ODeL quality areas according to its four subsystems: content system; pedagogy; delivery; and assessment. How do these four subsystems measure up in terms of open education, distance education and ICTs? How do they interrelate with and support one another?

We assume that these four subsystems are the determinants of quality in learning outcomes. They are likened to four posts that hold an educational system together. Any change in one subsystem requires equivalent degrees of changes in the others. Otherwise, system stability and integrity will be lost. We can illustrate this by revisiting the acceptability issues on distance education discussed in the previous chapter.

Alternative Arrangements. Being defined by openness, ODeL thrives on the availability of alternative arrangements. This means that there is no one formula that should be adopted in the pursuit of quality or excellence. The teacher-directed or instructional approach has its own value but it should not be the only basis of quality. Alternative pedagogies and assessment systems must be accommodated. As a matter of fact, these alternative arrangements are best offered side-by-side or alongside one another, giving the learner an array of choices based on his/her learning style. Thus, the availability of alternative arrangements will be a recurring theme in this quality discourse.
Situating Massive Open Online Courses. Mention has been made earlier of Massive Open Online Courses. MOOCS epitomize the open, distance and eLearning educational model. MOOCS are open to everyone. They have no admission policy. MOOCS are free. Their educational resources may be accessed freely. There are no limits to its absorptive capacity. It could take in as much learners as the servers that run them may accommodate. However, one can only get accreditation for a fee. Knowledge is free. Accreditation is not.

MOOCS may be considered as one alternative that may be offered alongside or complementary to other ODeL forms, teacher-directed courses included. As a matter of fact, it can be used as an entry point to a more structured, teacher-directed program.

B. Content

ODeL programs exhibit quality if their curricula are not carbon copies of existing residential programs. In other words, they are not merely residential curricula offered in the distance mode. Many ODeL courses are just online analogs of face-to-face courses. It can only be expected that such courses would suffer in quality since some of their content may be inappropriate to or may not be adequately treated under distance learning conditions.

Employing Regional Themes. Open, distance and eLearning courses for ASEAN nationals should reflect the regional nature of their programs. Course content, in any area of study, should adopt the curriculum perspective approach. In particular, ASEANization themes should be infused into the curriculum. Given its transnational reach, ODeL is uniquely suited to serve as an educational vehicle for inculcating an ASEAN identity. It provides an opportunity for the ASEAN education sector to develop courses that provide a regional perspective and contribute to ASEAN community building. Such is the advantage of ODeL over face-to-face programs. It has the potential of presenting a uniquely ASEAN outlook thus promoting integration and a sense of self.

One Curriculum, Different Languages, Multiple Formats. ASEAN ODeL programs may be offered by different open universities within the ASEAN Region but their curriculum should be similar if not identical for consistency. However these may be offered in different languages and in different formats, depending on availability, university resources and learner preferences.

C. Delivery

Multiple Delivery Platforms. Quality in delivery is correlated with diversity of learner alternatives and choices. An ODeL program should be available online and offline. Its resources should be available in text, audio, video or a combination of these formats. The wider the choices, the better the learner can exercise his/her prerogatives and preferences.
Transnational Arrangements. ODeL programs should be offered at the regional level. It should be open to students from other countries and should be recognized by accrediting institutions from other countries. ODeL concerns should eventually be incorporated into the Regional Convention for Recognition of Degrees and the ASEAN Qualifications Referencing Framework.

D. Pedagogy

As in the case of delivery, quality in open and distance eLearning may be correlated with openness. One program should allow multiple modalities.

Is openness built into the instructional design? Does the student determine the learning path that he will pursue? Are a variety of choices open to him/her? Note that Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasizes the quality of learning outcomes. The more learner-centered the educational experience is, the more sustainable the learning.

E. Assessment

Traditional Assessment Models. Open, distance and eLearning represents drastic changes in the delivery system of an educational program. To a certain degree, the content and pedagogic components have adjusted to these changes. However, the assessment system has generally maintained the traditional models applied in face-to-face instruction. The maintenance of traditional assessment models has at times resulted in instabilities that impinge upon quality.

One Standard, Multiple Assessment Options. Authentic assessment is the model most appropriate for ODeL. Authentic assessments focus on educational outcomes and approximate in situ conditions. Industry led assessments would be ideal for ODeL assuming that the ASEAN industrial sector initiates these. Third party assessments, conducted by external service providers to the university similar to the TVET accreditation system in the Philippines, also present a viable option. Qualitative assessment based on the Structured Observed Learning Outcomes (SOLO) Taxonomy instead of the more conventional Bloom’s Taxonomy may better address SDG 4’s thrust on quality learning outcomes.

These options, combined with traditional assessment models, may be made available to ASEAN ODeL presenting a range of options which institutions may avail themselves of depending on their and their students’ circumstances. The idea is that a range of assessment models are made available while using one common standard for the entire region. How this standard is operationalized through diverse assessment models should become part of the AQRF discourse.

F. Scoping Study Observations on Quality

The scoping study submits that quality in ODeL is a function of content, delivery, pedagogy and assessment as seen from the lens of open education, distance learning and ICTs. It differs from conventional assessment in its accommodation of alternative arrangements in these areas.
Quality in ASEAN ODeL implies content infused with ASEANization themes, i.e. identity, community and a sense of self. It means a diversity of delivery platforms and pedagogies. It supports the availability of multiple outcome-based assessment models.
VI. ODEL POLICIES FOR ASEAN INTEGRATION

A. The Policy Delphi

As one of the scoping study’s anticipatory (ANT) strands, an online Policy Delphi was organized involving education policy experts from the ten ASEAN countries. The objective of the Policy Delphi was to collectively draft a regional policy statement on ODeL that address ASEAN Integration given within forecast parameters volunteered by the participants.

Three Delphi rounds were conducted with the end view of identifying policy options from Sunday, 4 October to Saturday, 24 October. On the first round, each member was asked separately to answer an identical question on the regionalization of higher education using ODeL. The answers of the Delphi Panel were consolidated by the moderator and were crafted into a two-paged policy statement with two parts: forecasts on ODeL and regional policy thrusts. On the second round, the policy statements were sent individually to the members of the panel to ensure anonymity of responses. Each was asked to revise or modify the statements according to his/her best judgment. The revisions were once again consolidated crafted into Version 2 of the policy statement. On the third and final round, Version 2 was sent individually to the members of the panel for further revisions and modifications.

Version 3 of the Delphi Policy Statement is found in the succeeding section.

B. Policy Statement

The promotion of ASEAN integration, in general, and the regionalization of higher education, in particular, may be enabled by open and distance learning (ODL) programs. There has been a growth of the Open University movement in the ASEAN, wherein institutions have provided opportunities for higher education learning and certification. Higher educational institutions in ASEAN countries that employ ODL may now realize their ideal of openness at the regional level. This ideal may be translated as higher education access for anyone, anytime or anywhere within the ASEAN.

ODL may be considered as a concrete investment on life-long learning dismantling limits to capacity development. Through ODL, people from all walks of life may avail of higher education, either for career advancement, upgrading of qualifications or personal fulfillment. ODL is becoming an accepted and indispensable part of mainstream education prompted by the need to make learning more accessible to a wider population and the growing need for continuous skills upgrading as well.

ODL offers an alternative approach to higher education that leverages on ICT to deliver academic programs. The role of information and communication technologies has been significant as an enabling environment for ODL. With advancement in technologies, anything is possible. It may pave the way for improved course delivery systems. Stakeholders will be aware
of and will commit support to ODL programs. Students may be able to choose programs that fit their professional requirements. Learning may become more purposeful and meaningful. More learners may participate in ODL not because of certification alone but primarily to develop professional skills. Lessons may become more interactive. Course instructors may develop their teaching skills and IT skills. Through shared knowledge and resources, teaching staff may develop their academic skills. Learners' feedback may lead to continuous improvement.

Universities offering ODL programs may collaborate and implement exchange programs. Quality may be guaranteed through collaborative arrangements that result in internal and external quality assurance systems. However, policies and strategic plans must be put in place.

National education systems should work towards creating a learning society capable of facing the challenges of the knowledge age. They should realize that conventional education alone cannot cope with the demands of capacity development. Open and distance learning will play a bigger and more important role in developing human resources across sectors. National governments should be cognizant of the potential of ODL in fulfilling the fundamental right to learn and the need to incorporate it within the framework of human resource development.

A policy should be pursued that addresses mobility of professionals and harmonization of qualifications. National policymakers should accommodate transnational course offerings and degree certifications. Under ASEAN integration, human resource development and capacity building are areas of cooperation. National policies on credit transfer, accreditation system, qualifications framework and quality assurance guidelines, among others, should be put in place. Harmonization of qualifications should follow the existing ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS) to address any credit transfer issues. The process of harmonization of credentials will require integration at the regional level. Hence, a concerted effort should be made by national and regional quality assurance bodies to implement cross-accreditation.

A policy that addresses limitations to equal access should also be formulated. Within an ASEAN region with international and intranational disparities in resources, firewalls restrict the free distribution of networked educational resources. Even with equality of access, the disparities in pedigrees between educational institutions with varying resources may lead to differential benefits for earners, depending on a variety of measures, including but not restricted to nationality, ethnicity, age, income, gender, educational background, disability, etc. Related to access is the issue of insufficient training for teachers as users of ODL resources, and challenges to the production, maintenance, and updating of such in an environment of limited financial, technical, and training resources. There are legal constraints at the national level, in terms of copyright and the sharing of material that violates intellectual property rights.

While open universities have traditionally focused on distance learning as a mandate, some traditional universities are viewing ODL, in general, and Massive Open Online Courses, in particular, as an alternate source of revenue generation. Particular attention should be paid to the objectives and intention of education resource providers in terms of whether these resources are an economic product solely for financial gain. Although legitimate income

A.G.Flor
generation should be accommodated, platforms should not encourage the corporatization of higher education.

Finally, an ODL Consortium policy covering ASEAN higher education should be initiated or strengthened. The Consortium policy should cover course content, cross enrollments, joint offerings, credit transfer, pedagogy and standards.

Key points of ASEAN’s vision to connect its community

C. Policy Agenda

From the policy statement generated by the Delphi exercise, individual comments of the expert panel, and discussions on related initiatives found in the body of this draft report, we arrive at a list of discursive points, a policy agenda if you will, that ASEAN education stakeholders may wish to pursue and elevate to a higher institutional level of discussion.

ODeL to Promote Regional Integration. Policies that would promote regional integration through ODeL are ambiguous. At the regional level these policies are non-existent. At the national level, policies on ODeL, if any, tend to promote national advantage instead of regional competitiveness. ODeL programs offered in one country may undermine the economic gain of another by presenting alternative educational opportunities to the latter’s nationals and siphoning potential income.

Cross-Border Higher Education. Apart from the Revised Convention 2011, de facto accreditation and degree recognition mechanisms exist on an institution-to-institution basis across ASEAN. Qualifications and quality assurance frameworks are national in coverage. In October 2012, a concept paper for an ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework or AQRF was presented. The design for an AQRF was formally endorsed by ASEAN Economic Ministers during the 46th AEM meeting in 25th August 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. Subsequently, the ASEAN Education Ministers endorsed the AQRF on 11 September 2014 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Although this year, an AQRF Board was established, it will not be until 2018 when actual qualifications referencing processes will be introduced regionally. Thus, 2018 will be the landmark year for the implementation of a regional quality assurance framework covering higher education as well. Hence, quality standards still differ from country to country within ASEAN.

However, there are isolated cases of formal regional accreditation such as the ASEAN Studies Master’s Program of the Southeast Asian members of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU). Furthermore, the UNESCO Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific may provide a starting point and a solid foundation to devise ODeL-based higher education with regionally agreed recognition, accreditation, and a quality assurance framework within the ASEAN region.

Over the last two decades, cross-border higher education through student, academic staff, program or institutional mobility and professional mobility has grown considerably. In parallel, new cross-border providers and delivery modes have appeared, such as for-profit providers,
campuses abroad and distance education. These new forms of cross-border delivery of higher education provide new opportunities and increase the possibilities for the improvement of the skills of individual students and the quality of national higher education systems, provided that they are managed appropriately in order to benefit the human, social and economic development of the receiving country.

However, national frameworks for quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications in many countries are not geared to addressing the quality of cross-border and private for-profit provision. The challenge for the current quality assurance and accreditation systems is to develop appropriate procedures and systems to cover foreign providers and programs in addition to national providers and programs in order to maximize the benefits and limit the potential downsides of the internationalization of higher education. At the same time, the increase in cross-border student, academic staff, researcher and professional mobility has put the issue of recognition of academic and professional qualifications high on the international agenda.

There is a need for additional national initiatives, strengthened international co-operation and networking, and more transparent information on quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications procedures and systems. These initiatives should have a global range and put emphasis on supporting the needs of developing countries in the process of establishing robust higher education systems. Given that some countries lack comprehensive frameworks for quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications, capacity building will need to form an important part of the overall strengthening and co-ordination of national and international initiatives. In this light, UNESCO and the OECD have worked closely together in the development of these Guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education (the “Joint Guidelines”).

**Sustainability and Mainstreaming ODeL.** The acceptability status of distance education programs, in general, and ODeL programs, in particular, is undefined regionally. Six ASEAN countries - Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and VietNam - have fully-established, nationally and internationally recognized open universities. However, there is no ASEAN-wide policy pronouncement on the sustainability and mainstreaming of ODeL. An active ASEAN advocacy for employing ODeL for the regional integration of the workforce has not yet been tabled.
APPENDIX A.
ONLINE, OPEN AND FLEXIBLE HIGHER EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE WE WANT.
FROM STATEMENTS TO ACTION:
EQUITY, ACCESS, AND QUALITY LEARNING OUTCOMES
(9-11 June 2015, UNESCO, Paris)

PARIS MESSAGE

Preamble

Some 150 policy-makers, leading practitioners and stakeholders, including rectors/vice chancellors/presidents of universities, academic staff, students, UNESCO Chairs in ICT and OER, ICDE Chairs in OER, members of international nongovernmental organizations, from all over the world and from more than 55 countries gathered at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 9 to 11 June 2015 in the Global High-Level Forum organized by UNESCO in partnership with the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE).

Addressing the issues of access, equity and quality learning outcomes as key features shaping the new vision for the post-2015 education agenda, the participants highlighted the contribution of Higher Education to the future global sustainable development agenda and to helping countries, particularly developing ones, achieve “equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030”.

In spite of progress made, there are still inequalities in higher education worldwide, multiple digital divides still present in many countries, particularly in developing and least developed ones. The rising costs, ongoing massification and rising student expectations pose ever more complex challenges to the higher education sector.

Building on the Incheon and Qingdao Declarations, the global education community has a new point of departure to respond to the scale and urgency of demand for accessible, affordable and quality higher education in the period 2015 to 2030. Globally, the number of students enrolled in higher education by 2030 is forecast to rise from 99.4 million in 2000 to above 414 million in 2030. The need to increase enrolment will be particularly great in the South. Online, Open and Flexible education represents a core range of strategies within a variety of contexts, utilising media and information and communication technologies (ICT), to contribute to meeting this growing demand, while ensuring equity, access, and quality learning outcomes.

Teaching, Research and Innovation are critical to the mission of higher education institutions. Education has a vital contribution to make to the overall Sustainable Development Goals, supporting the capacity of a well-educated population for citizenship, personal development and economic growth. The suggested Sustainable Development Goal 4 proposes ‘to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030’. Online, Open and Flexible education systems provide capacity for Higher Education, supported by robust quality assurance and regulation, to provide routes for student success.
delivering large-scale and cost-effective pathways for certificates, diplomas, degrees, and higher level qualifications, and a range of non-formal learning activities such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

A Call To Action

1. To achieve the desired impact declared in Incheon and Qingdao, we call on Higher Education to be transformed in order to be able to deliver change in scale and speed of response, realising the potential of the digital technologies within a humanistic framework. Online, Open and Flexible programmes represent an essential component of the global response, recognising the systemic and cultural diversity in Higher Education systems.

2. There is no time to lose. Now is the time for action.

We call on Governments to:

3. Recognise the important contribution of Online, Open and Flexible systems to meet the challenge of scale and quality in the provision of Higher Education and Lifelong Learning for the period 2015-2030.

4. Create effective policies and enable regulations for Online, Open and Flexible systems at all levels based on equity principles. These should include contributions from both public and private initiatives (not for profit and for profit) for the next 15 year-period.

5. Recognise that funding is critical, and needs to include both initial and ongoing investment in high-capacity network infrastructure, faculty development, quality assurance and regulation and to encourage multistakeholder co-operation, including the business community, in order to provide adequate technology infrastructure as well as equitable and affordable access to quality education.

Governments and Higher Education Institutions should:

6. Put in place policies for teaching that foster a culture of excellence, supporting and motivating teachers' engagement in professional learning and competence development in Higher Education, in particular with regard to the adoption of Online, Open and Flexible systems practice; and to support funding of research in enhancing teacher ICT competencies in higher education in order to ensure continuing innovation and quality enhancement. We note that Higher Education has a particular responsibility to engage in building competencies and capacities for initial and continuing teacher education for schools.

7. Promote Higher Education policies that encompass Lifelong Learning, learner-centred flexible approaches and inclusive quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms.
8. Give priority to the use of new pedagogical approaches, utilising digital affordances; to prequalification courses to improve access; to recognition of prior learning; and to guidance and student support.

9. Reform the curriculum to ensure student engagement and success, lifelong learning in order to generate better employment and life outcomes. The curriculum should be informed by content supported by digital access, including quality Open Educational Resources (OER), and in support of local languages and diversity of cultures.

10. Recognise skills and qualifications on the basis of demonstrated learning outcomes, not mode of study.

11. Create a supportive environment for the development of leadership in Higher Education to assure high quality institutional performance in the practice of Online, Open and Flexible systems.

12. Support funding of research in Online, Open and Flexible education methods.

With support of Higher Education institutions, academic staff should:

13. Be empowered with technology-enhanced pedagogical skills and supported to engage with Online, Open and Flexible education practice.

14. Be supported to take on new roles, such as learning coaches or mentors, dedicated to teaching students how to learn in a digital environment, as opposed to teaching them content.

15. Be encouraged to create, develop, adapt and share high-quality accessible digital resources, taking into account local needs and diversity of learners. Continued and enhanced access to a growing inventory of quality OER represents a cornerstone for online, open and flexible learning worldwide.

Students should:

16. Be supported in ways to engage effectively with Online, Open, and Flexible education practice, particular attention being given to students with learning challenges, to new groups of learners, and to building skills for lifelong learning, not just initial education.

17. Be empowered with knowledge and skills enabling them not only to be successful online learners but also successful employment creators and entrepreneurs.

International Cooperation

We call on Governments and Intergovernmental Organisations to:
18. Undertake continuous monitoring and evaluation, including uptake and outcomes of Online, Open and Flexible systems.

19. Promote North-South-South collaboration in Online, Open, Flexible Higher Education to support development in the developing and least developed countries. Financial support will be needed for seed money to engage in collaborative initiatives.

20. Give consideration to:

- Initiatives for quality summits setting policy directions in the world regions.
- Promotion of doctoral student programmes to create opportunities for collaboration, networking and support for participation and visibility in events, networks and projects.
- Strengthening global collaboration on R&D relevant to online, open and flexible higher education.

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Participants in the Paris High-Level Policy Forum:

- Urge governments and stakeholders in regions and nations to address existing challenges related to the adoption of Online, Open and Flexible learning and take concrete and urgent action.

- Invite UNESCO to carry forward and advocate this message to international fora relevant for such actions.

- Commit to advocating for and taking this message to their governments, institutions, organizations, companies and associations.

- Call upon UNESCO and ICDE to collect, share, disseminate and network for good practices in Online, Open and Flexible education.
APPENDIX B.
STATEMENT ON ASEAN CONNECTIVITY
FORM THE ASEAN SECRETARIAT

ASEAN's vision is to forge a better future for the Southeast Asian region, strengthen the links between countries, peoples and businesses, and enhance the region’s prosperity. The goal of ASEAN connectivity is make this vision come true for the ASEAN community, and ASEAN communicates about it.

ASEAN has a great potential to attract business and economic development in its ten member countries, with a large population and important combined GDP, as detailed in these infographics on the population, market and economy of ASEAN.

Through the connectivity of ASEAN, its potential will become more and more real, thanks to the region becoming more competitive and relevant. ASEAN connectivity focuses on three key dimensions:

1. Physical connectivity: improving infrastructure for transport, communication and energy.
2. Institutional connectivity: enhancing trade, investment, border management and regulatory frameworks to foster economic growth and prosperity
3. People to people connectivity: promoting education, human resources management, ASEAN culture and tourism, mobility and welfare in Southeast Asia

The purpose of ASEAN connectivity is to improve the lives of the citizens of all ASEAN member states: providing more opportunities, enhancing economic and social development, and uniting the ten countries to leverage their power as a whole.

With the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community on 31 December 2015, the year 2015 will be a major milestone for ASEAN connectivity. 2015 will be an official signal for the world that ASEAN is connected and ready to stand forward for the significant force it represents.

ASEAN connectivity will benefit the ASEAN peoples and businesses: here are the benefits of the ASEAN Economic Community for business. ASEAN connectivity will help its member states to become stronger, safer and better prepared for the future. From the launch of the AEC in 2015, ASEAN will be closer together; ASEAN will be stronger.
APPENDIX C1.
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Perception Survey on Open, Distance and eLearning
For the Promotion of ASEAN Integration

Dear Colleague,

The UNESCO Asia Pacific Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok) is currently conducting a Scoping Study on the Promotion of ASEAN Integration through Open, Distance and eLearning, supported by the ASEAN Cyber University (ACU). The study makes use of mixed methods, among them a short online survey that looks into perceptions of higher education stakeholders in the region. Being a partner of ACU, you have been selected as one of the respondents.

Found below is a short questionnaire with 10 questions that you can answerable by “Yes” or “No” that can be accomplished in five minutes. We appreciate the time you will take in answering them.

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<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS (INDICATIVE)</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tr>
<td>Are you familiar with Open, Distance and eLearning (ODeL) programs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there ODeL programs offered in your country?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you believe ODeL programs should be offered in your country?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you participated in any ODeL program offered in your country?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If given the opportunity, would you participate in an ODeL program at the bachelor’s/master’s(doctoral level offered in your country?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you believe ODeL programs offered in other ASEAN countries should be open to all ASEAN nationals?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you participated in any ODeL program in an ASEAN country other than your own?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If given the opportunity, would you participate in an ODeL program at the bachelor’s/master’s(doctoral level offered by an ASEAN country other than your own?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you believe that ASEAN-wide ODeL programs at the bachelor’s/master’s(doctoral level are useful?</td>
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<td>Will ASEAN-wide ODeL programs at the bachelor’s/master’s(doctoral level promote ASEAN integration?</td>
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ALEXANDER G. FLOR
Professor, U.P. Open University
APPENDIX C2.
THE POLICY DELPHI PROCEDURE

Background. This Policy Delphi is being conducted as part of a scoping study to determine the open, distance and eLearning (ODeL) state-of-play in ASEAN member countries and determine how ODeL can be tapped for regional integration. The study adopts a neo-positivist approach employing an integrated multi-level mixed methods design, involving quantitative (QUAN) and qualitative (QUAL) strands. The QUAN strands include an online survey (Survey Monkey) and the analysis of secondary data on ODeL enrollment and completion rates. The QUAL strands are made up of: a Policy Delphi; online key informant interviews (KII) and documents analysis.

The objective of the Policy Delphi, in particular, is to draft national and regional policy statements on ODeL that address ASEAN Integration. In the past, this technique has been employed online in two regional studies: for the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research which looked into the founding of a global food and agriculture university (Flor and Librero, 2005); and for SEAMEO SEARCA which explored the design of a regional curriculum on natural resources management (Flor and Sampong, 2009).

Method. The Delphi Procedure begins with the formation of a panel representing major policy stakeholders, i.e., groups that have something to gain or lose with a given policy. Thus, an ODeL/higher education/human resource authority from each ASEAN country will part of the panel as much as possible.

The Delphi Study will be conducted via email from Sunday, 4 October to Saturday, 24 October. It will be initiated by a moderator who will email the members of the panel separately.

There will be three Delphi rounds.

1. On the first round (4 to 10 October), each member will be asked separately to answer an identical question on the regionalization of higher education using ODeL. The answers of the Delphi Panel will be consolidated by the moderator and will be crafted into two brief policy statements: a national policy statement and a regional policy statement.

2. On the second round (11 to 17 October), the policy statements are sent individually to the members of the panel. Each will be asked to revise or modify the statements according to his/her best judgment. The revisions (in MSWord track changes mode) will be sent back to the moderator along with a short justification for each revision made. The revisions will once again be consolidated by the moderator and crafted into Version 2 of the policy statements.

3. On the third and final round (18 to 24 October), Version 2 will be sent individually to the members of the panel for further revisions and modifications. Again, the revisions (in
track changes mode) will be sent back to the moderator for consolidation and crafted into Version 3.

The version will be presented to the UNESCO-ACU Regional Policy Forum on 23-24 November 2015 in Bangkok for vetting by the forum participants. As in all Delphi exercises, confidentiality of inputs is assured.

**Moderator’s Role.** The moderator will ensure that the policy statements crafted reflect the opinions of all members of the panel. In other words, a policy consensus should be reached as much as possible. In cases of contradicting opinions, the justifications given by the individual panel members will be considered by the moderator in the crafting of the policy statement which will again be subjected to the panel’s review.

**Participation in Regional Forum.** Members of the Delphi Panel will be invited as sponsored participants in the UNESCO-ACU Regional Policy Forum on ODeL for ASEAN Integration, tentatively scheduled from 23 to 24 November 2015 in Bangkok. They will be encouraged to share their respective country’s concerns, if any, on the matter by actively participating in the discussions even beyond the regional ODeL policy agenda.

**DELPHI Question:** As an education professional, how would you describe the potential of open and distance learning (ODL) in the regionalization of higher education in the ASEAN? What policy directions should be pursued by national education systems of ASEAN countries with regard to ODL, mobility of professionals and harmonization of qualifications?
APPENDIX C3.
INDICATIVE KII GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. What is the state of play of open, distance and eLearning (ODEL) within your country?
2. How should MOOCs be designed, developed and delivered to ensure mutually inclusive benefits and co-benefits to ASEAN stakeholders?
3. What arrangements and pedagogies should be employed?
4. What efforts may be planned within and among ASEAN to employ ODeL to promote economic integration?