

# Construction of International Cooperation Community Model of Higher Education Between Yunnan Province and ASEAN\*

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**Abstract**—Chinese leaders solemnly put forward the concept of “China-ASEAN Community of Common Destiny” in October 2013. The values contained in the “China-ASEAN Community of Common Destiny” are of great theoretical significance for promoting the current international exchange and cooperation in higher education. It also plans the future outlook and conditions for realizing international cooperation of higher education worldwide. Under this situation, this paper presents the strategic concept of higher education cooperation between Yunnan and ASEAN, clarifies the overall ideas and strategic objectives, draws lessons from the successful experience of international cooperation mode of higher education in China and abroad, and scientifically chooses the community model. It also puts forward four ways to construct the community model of international cooperation of higher education between Yunnan and ASEAN.

**Keywords**—international cooperation community model; higher education; Yunnan and ASEAN

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the construction of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area and the implementation of the proposal of Western development, Yunnan has gradually become the frontier of China's reform and opening up to South Asia and Southeast Asia. Over the years, Yunnan Province has made remarkable achievements in international exchanges and cooperation of education by giving full play to its unique advantages and characteristics such as geographic, literary, academic and economic ties. The overall development trend of “going out” and “introducing in” is good. The bilateral and multilateral cooperation and exchanges between colleges and universities

in the whole province continue to expand. The regional radiation power of higher education of Yunnan province has been significantly enhanced, and the international competitiveness has been significantly improved. Strengthening higher education cooperation between Yunnan and ASEAN countries is not only an important part of national education opening to the outside world, but also a realistic need for the construction of radiation centers in South Asia and Southeast Asia in Yunnan. With the publication of Yunnan provincial government's documents on “Accelerating the Implementation of ‘Going Out’ Strategy and Improving the Internationalization Level in Yunnan Universities”, Yunnan provincial government had put forward higher requirements and pointed out the direction for the reform and development of higher education in Yunnan Province. How to implement this goal of higher education in stages and make Yunnan's higher education truly “go out” and become the first-class international education in Southeast Asia, there are still many problems worthy of our serious discussion. With the advance of “the Belt and Road” initiative, and in order to better promote the international cooperation of higher education between Yunnan and ASEAN, this paper put forward some suggestions and countermeasures for the cooperation of higher education between Yunnan and ASEAN.

## II. GENERAL THOUGHT OF HIGHER EDUCATION COOPERATION BETWEEN YUNNAN PROVINCE AND ASEAN

Serving the construction of “the Belt and Road” initiative, we should adhere to the principle of good neighborliness and companionship, highlight the concepts of kindness, sincerity, benefit and tolerance, and are to reciprocity and mutual benefit, so as to develop higher education cooperation with Southeast Asian countries with a more open mind, a more positive attitude and a more confident attitude. We should constantly enhance the influence and competitiveness of Yunnan's higher education towards Southeast Asian countries, and strive to enhance Yunnan's ability to serve “the Belt and Road” initiative, economic and social development and educational reform and development, so as to make Yunnan's higher education play an important

\*Sponsor: Education and Teaching Reform Research Project “Research and Practice on Teaching Management System and Operating Mechanism of Foreign Student Education in Agricultural Colleges and Universities (2017YAUJY130)” approved by Yunnan Agricultural University in 2017; Young and Middle-aged Social Sciences Project “Running Schools of Higher Education Abroad for Yunnan universities facing ‘the Belt and Road’ countries (2017SK06)” approved by Yunnan Agricultural University in 2017; Yunnan Philosophy and Social Sciences Innovation Team Scientific Research Project “Yunnan's Overseas School-running Model and Development Path to Southeast Asia and South Asia” approved in 2018.

fundamental role in the process of development and construction of Southeast Asian countries.

### III. DESIGN IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION BETWEEN CHINA AND ASEAN

The Outline of Yunnan Province's Medium and Long Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) points out that we strive to build an international educational home, an international educational infrastructure platform, an international educational talent training platform and an international educational exchange and cooperation platform after five to 10 years of efforts. Taking the implementation of "the Belt and Road" as an opportunity, we will gradually build a high-level platform for the cooperation of higher education between Yunnan and Southeast Asian countries. With Laos, Vietnam and Burma as a breakthrough, we will gradually achieve bilateral and multilateral cooperation of higher education between Yunnan and Southeast Asian countries. Focusing on international Chinese education, overseas students' education and cooperative school-running, Yunnan and Southeast Asian countries will gradually promote all-round cooperation in various fields of higher education and provide intellectual support and policy guarantee for higher education cooperation between Yunnan and Southeast Asian countries on the basis of regional and national research in Southeast Asian countries. We will build Yunnan into a base for student exchange, teacher training and scientific research cooperation in Southeast Asian countries, a highland for higher education in Southeast Asia, an important medium and channel for cooperation between universities in mainland China and those in Southeast Asian countries, so as to provide guarantee for the goal of building Yunnan into a radiation center in Southeast Asia.

### IV. SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION MODEL OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN CHINA AND ABROAD

The world is in the process of development and change, and the ways and forms of international cooperation of higher education are constantly changing, adjusting and innovating. In the field of international cooperation of higher education, the community model is the common mode of international cooperation at present, which deserves our reference. The Alliance of Pacific Universities, consisting of top-ranking research universities in the Pacific Rim region formed in 1997, the European Higher Education Reform Plan put forward by 29 European countries in 1999, the non-entity cooperation network "the University of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization" covering 74 universities from five member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) established in 2007, and the Association of Southeast Asian Universities (1965) and the Association of ASEAN Universities (1995), all belong to the community models in the field of international cooperation of higher education. The community model of international cooperation of higher education is formed either by the government as the main body of cooperation or spontaneously by universities. Cooperation is carried out through consultation within the allowable scope of the

national policies of the cooperating parties, mostly by virtual means in their respective countries or universities, which is not subject to site restrictions and easy to form. The community model greatly promotes exchanges and dialogues among educational institutions in different countries and regions, promotes the interaction and integration of knowledge, and builds a more open, inclusive and diversified international cultural exchange network platform.

The community model of international cooperation of higher education has the following successful experience for us to draw lessons as follows.

#### A. To Establish Authoritative Cooperation and Coordination Organizations or Institutions

Its main functions include research and formulation of regional education cooperation policies, organization and consultation, arbitration disputes and supervision, providing cooperation carriers for promoting higher education, as well as communication and coordination platform.

#### B. To Formulate a Clear Plan for International Cooperation

As an international system or mechanism, the community must be led by the governments of all countries and be well designed at the top level. Considering from the national level, we can go beyond the geographical restrictions and cover the existing social background, and define the overall objectives and phased tasks of international cooperation of higher education.

#### C. To Establish a Standardized Cooperation System

Due to the different development levels of member countries or members and their own higher education, the needs and interests of each party are also different. In order to restrict and regulate the factors that are harmful to the international cooperation of higher education, we must establish a series of effective systems, including the establishment of consultation mechanism for educational cooperation, the formulation of conventions, rules and regulations that all Member States abide by together, and the implementation rules at all levels.

#### D. To Build a Common International Market

Each member country or party gradually opens up educational products and services, breaks down various barriers, cultivates and constructs a unified, open, standardized and orderly common international market for education, so as to achieve the free flow of elements of educational resources within the community.

### V. THE PATH OF IMPLEMENTING THE COMMUNITY MODEL OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION BETWEEN YUNNAN PROVINCE AND ASEAN

Based on the internationalization experience of higher education abroad and the actual situation, the cooperation of higher education between Yunnan and ASEAN can be

promoted by community model firstly, and then by entity model in time.

#### *A. To Standardize and Stratify the Organizational Structure System of Higher Education Community*

The construction of international cooperation community model of higher education between Yunnan and ASEAN does not emphasize the establishment of supranational authority mechanism or supranational institutions for political sovereignty transfer, nor does it intend to form a collective identity with strong boundaries and exclusiveness. It focuses on building a community that can achieve regional common development on the premise of respecting national sovereignty. Although the actors are pluralistic, different actors do not demand a common education policy, but are committed to building a community that can cooperate to solve regional education problems, let the people of member countries enjoy regional peace and prosperity, and put people first. So it highlights the community's regional governance function.

Government-led and high-level promotion (cooperation at the national level) plays a decisive role in the construction of international cooperation community model of higher education between Yunnan and ASEAN. We should first establish the cooperation mechanism at the national level through top-level design and high-level promotion, and establish the overall goal and framework of the model of international cooperation community of higher education between Yunnan and ASEAN. In view of the characteristics and needs of higher education development in China-ASEAN region, the key directions of international cooperation of higher education are determined to ensure the directivity of cooperative behavior. According to the overall goal orientation, a series of complete cooperative plans and specific plans are formulated to promote the practical development of the practice activities of actors at different levels. In addition, a series of binding systems should be established to regulate cooperation at different levels. At the national level, there are operational rules for decision-making, such as establishing annual meeting mechanism and consultation mechanism for educational cooperation through the meetings of heads of government and ministers, etc., and regularly studying major decision-making issues in educational cooperation. At the local government level, there are implementation rules. According to the provisions and tasks of each country, a new implementation framework is established to specify the scope and methods of assistance, and to decompose and implement the corresponding responsibilities. At the school level, there are specific operational rules, such as the school principal meeting system, the school principal system, etc. At the mixed level, there should also be appropriate rules to ensure the decision-making efficiency and operational ability of higher education cooperation.

#### *B. To Construct Quality Assurance System of Higher Education Between China and ASEAN*

The international cooperation community model of higher education between Yunnan and ASEAN can take the

quality assurance of higher education as its priority area of higher education development. Through the comparative analysis of the AUN-QA evaluation criteria and indicators system between China and AUN in ASEAN, we can clarify the differences in the quality assurance system of higher education between China and AUN-QA, to explore the common points of future cooperation. On the basis of recognizing and respecting differences, including differences in higher education resources, management system, institutional settings, discipline and specialty settings, and academic framework, we should strive to establish a quality standard system that is binding and acceptable to both sides, so as to make the higher education system and standards of both sides more consistent. It will greatly enhance the exchanges and cooperation between China and ASEAN institutions of higher education, promote the flow of teachers and students in universities, and establish a cross-regional credit exchange and academic recognition system in universities, and establish a regional higher education quality assurance system and evaluation system in line with the quality assurance system of international higher education.

#### *C. To Promote the Intergovernmental Connection and Mutual Recognition of Academic Degree and Credits*

The international recognition of academic qualifications and degrees of higher education is a major institutional issue concerning the smooth development of cross-border higher education activities. Since 1988, China has signed agreements on mutual recognition of academic degrees with 41 countries and regions. Among the ASEAN countries, only the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia have signed agreements on mutual recognition of academic qualifications and degrees in higher education. China and ASEAN should actively promote the signing of bilateral, multilateral and sub-regional framework agreements on educational cooperation, speed up the formulation of international conventions on educational cooperation and exchange among countries, sign agreements on recognition of academic degrees, so as to achieve the connection and mutual recognition of bilateral and multilateral academic degrees within the region. The two sides should gradually ease the policy bottlenecks of educational cooperation and exchange, facilitate the cross-border flow of higher education, standardize various cross-border higher education activities, and provide legal protection for international students' academic qualifications and cross-border employment from the government level. In addition, international recognition of academic qualifications and credits not only helps to expand the coverage of higher education and promote the sharing of high-quality higher education resources, but also creates favorable conditions for the free flow of international students in the region, and more conducive to promoting academic exchanges between China and ASEAN.

#### *D. To Focus on Promoting International Flow of Teachers and Students in Colleges and Universities*

Under the background of "the Belt and Road" initiative, we should give full play to the advantages of location and discipline, and make full use of the existing platform to further study the system foundation and driving force

resources, international requirements and development needs of China and ASEAN, so as to seek the meeting point of higher education cooperation between China and ASEAN. We should accelerate the transformation and upgrading in the aspects of path selection, project design, personnel training and mode innovation, attach equal importance to expanding the scale and improving the quality of personnel in the process of international mobility, as well as the cultivation of talents and the full play of their roles, and to build a high-quality and efficient international cooperation and exchange system of higher education.

1) *To implement the cooperative school-running promotion plan:* To actively develop new forms of overseas education, qualified colleges and universities should go abroad to run schools in ASEAN countries according to the situation and their own conditions, and export Chinese educational service products to ASEAN countries under the restructuring system. We should promote the association of universities or vocational colleges with industry enterprises to establish vocational colleges and training centers, cooperate in the development of teaching resources and projects, and carry out vocational education and training suited to the development needs of ASEAN.

2) *To implement the teacher training promotion plan:* Through the two-way training of teachers, strengthening the mutual learning of advanced educational experience and advanced educational models in different countries will help to enhance teachers' understanding of the development needs of higher education and "hematopoietic function" of higher education in the region.

3) *To implement the joint training of talents and the two-way promotion plan for studying abroad:* We should encourage China and ASEAN to jointly train students in the fields and specialties that are urgently needed to meet the requirements of regional development for talents with multi-cultural backgrounds. We will continue to expand the scale of exchange of foreign students, promote bilateral educational exchanges between China and ASEAN, and provide more intellectual and talent support for the development of bilateral relations.

## VI. CONCLUSION

With the advancement of the ASEAN Community, ASEAN's institutional arrangements for international education cooperation in education will promote the integration of higher education within ASEAN. By attracting more ASEAN students and closer educational cooperation and exchanges with ASEAN countries, in the foreseeable future, in the construction of China and ASEAN's higher education international mechanism, the main body of cooperation in higher education will be more diversified, the content of cooperation will be more practical, the scope of cooperation will be more comprehensive, and the cooperation effect will be more international. In the end, the highest level of international mechanisms will be established: the China-ASEAN Higher Education Community. Yunnan should actively participate in the initiative of "One Belt and

Road" and actively participate in the construction of China-ASEAN higher education international cooperation mechanism to create more favorable conditions for the improvement of Yunnan higher education development level.

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