

EDITORIAL

Volume 17 Issue 2 2025

DOI: 10.21315/eimj2025.17.2.1

ARTICLE INFO

Submitted: 07-12-2024

Accepted: 28-01-2025

Online: 30-06-2025

The ASEAN-Australia Education Dialogue's Insights on Key Drivers for ASEAN 2025: Implications for Medical and Health Professions Education

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To cite this article: Yusoff MSB. The ASEAN-Australia education dialogue's insights on key drivers for ASEAN 2025: implications for medical and health professions education. *Education in Medicine Journal*. 2025;17(2):1–3. <https://doi.org/10.21315/eimj2025.17.2.1>

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.21315/eimj2025.17.2.1>

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As Malaysia takes the helm of ASEAN in 2025 (1), the region embarks on a journey of transformation that will be guided by Resilient partnerships, Inclusivity-oriented initiatives, Sustainability-driven approaches, and Empowering people (i.e., the RISE vision) (2–5). These pillars are underpinned by a commitment to translating strategies into impactful actions, bridging the gap between discussions and outcomes, fostering active collaborations, and delivering tangible benefits to stakeholders. The principles, such as “from policy to practice”, “from talking to walking”, “from dialogue to action”, and “from idea to implementation” (2) form the foundation of ASEAN’s approach to fostering progress and unity (3–5). The implications of this vision will extend deeply into medical and health professions education, reshaping the future of healthcare training and practice across the ASEAN region.

Resilient partnerships are the backbone of ASEAN’s collaborative efforts, emphasising enduring relationships that can adapt to challenges in an increasingly complex global landscape (2–5). The focus is on fostering cross-border connections, strengthening institutional ties, and ensuring cooperative efforts endure crises like pandemics, climate change, or geopolitical tensions. These partnerships must move from talking to walking, translating dialogues into initiatives such as enhanced student mobility programmes, youth leadership exchanges, and networks of alumni dedicated to regional stability and peacebuilding. In medical and health professions education, resilient partnerships enable cross-border training, shared research endeavours, and collaborative solutions to health challenges (6). By focusing on practical implementation, these partnerships build a healthcare workforce prepared to innovate and respond effectively to evolving health needs.

The commitment to inclusivity-oriented initiatives ensures that education is accessible and equitable for all, especially marginalised communities (2–5). ASEAN seeks to deliver benefits from policy to practice by prioritising programmes like Australia for ASEAN Scholarships, capacity-building initiatives, and cultural exchanges that bridge gaps in access. For medical and health professions education, this principle entails creating pathways for underserved populations to enter the healthcare profession, addressing inequities in workforce representation. Inclusive approaches such as community-based education and targeted

outreach programmes bring healthcare training closer to rural and marginalised areas. By fostering cultural competence and diversity in the healthcare workforce, medical educators can ensure that graduates are equipped to address health disparities and deliver equitable care (7).

A sustainability-driven approach integrates environmental, economic, and sociocultural dimensions into ASEAN's development agenda, turning ideas from dialogue to action (2–5). This includes embedding sustainability into education to prepare future leaders for challenges such as climate change, digital transformation, and green energy transitions. For medical and health professions education, sustainability must become a core principle of training. Curricula should address the intersection of environmental health and clinical care, focusing on green healthcare practices, disaster preparedness, and sustainable healthcare systems (8). These tangible benefits, aligned with regional and global goals, empower healthcare professionals to champion long-term health solutions that serve both people and the planet (9).

Finally, empowering people underscores education's transformative potential to equip individuals with the skills, knowledge, and resources to lead societal change (2–5). ASEAN's vision is to move from idea to implementation, ensuring educational systems deliver practical, future-ready outcomes (10). For medical and health professions education, this means fostering stronger industry-academic collaborations to align curricula with the demands of modern healthcare (11). Initiatives such as experiential learning opportunities, clinical simulations, and interprofessional education empower students to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical skills to support their future roles in the field (12). Furthermore, leadership development programmes prepare healthcare professionals to advocate for policies that advance public health, equity, and innovation.

The RISE vision, anchored by its guiding principles, offers a comprehensive framework for ASEAN's progress under Malaysia's leadership. It challenges stakeholders to turn discussions into action, ideas into implementation, and policies into impactful practices. For medical and health professions education, these priorities underscore the importance of resilience, inclusivity, sustainability, and empowerment in preparing a workforce capable of addressing regional and global health challenges. By integrating these principles into medical and health professions education, we can ensure the next generation of professionals is ready to lead transformative change, contributing to the shared prosperity, equity, and sustainability of ASEAN. As educators and healthcare leaders, we must rise to these opportunities and responsibilities, fostering a brighter, healthier future for all.

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