BRITISH COUNCIL

Going Global Partnerships

—

South Asia Regional Deep Dialogues

Widening Access to Quality Tertiary Education through Transnational Education

Report

10–11 December 2024

Colombo, Sri Lanka

About Deep Dialogues

Deep Dialogues, an initiative under British Council's Going Global Partnerships programme was launched in October 2023.

Conceptualised as global conversations, Deep Dialogues is an event series that brings together tertiary education from across the world to enable focused and meaningful discussions on key themes.

Convened and managed by the British Council, Deep Dialogues is an event series co-curated with UK and international sector experts that brings together higher education practitioners, leaders and experts from across the world. They take form of focussed discussion around key thematic areas that influence higher and further education around the globe.

The target audience for Deep Dialogues are policy makers and regulators, heads of apex bodies and regulatory bodies, and higher education institution leaders.

The first Deep Dialogue event, 'Building Resilient Futures: Ensuring Inclusive and Sustainable Quality in Higher Education' took place in London in October 2023, followed by the second event explored 'Scalable and Sustainable Internationalisation and Transnational Education: Locally relevant and globally connected'. The third edition of the event was held in Manchester in November 2024 focused on 'Transnational Education: A deeper insight into TNE regulatory and policy environment'.

The South Asia Deep Dialogues held in December 2024 in Colombo took these conversations outside of the UK and for the first time, it was held at a regional level. This event focused on 'Widening access to quality tertiary education through transnational education', particularly as a significant driver of educational transformation, knowledge economy and sustainable development goals.

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Executive summary

This report outlines the summary of the South Asia Deep Dialogues event, which took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 10–11 December 2024. This event organised by the wider South Asia education team brought together 112 participants from six countries. Attendees included stakeholders from UK universities, UK regulatory and industry bodies as well as higher education and government professionals from across South Asia. The event aimed to explore the global trend of internationalisaion of higher education, examine the significance of TNE for South Asia, and discuss strategies to increase higher education participation by expanding TNE opportunities.

Day one started with the opening remarks from the British Council's Regional Director followed by programme overview shared by Regional Director of Education. Professor Mary Stiasny from University of London delivered the keynote speech on the theme of 'International Education Today and Tomorrow'. Her speech addressed the evolution of internationalisation over the past century, discussing its emergence, growth, and offering insights into future predictions versus current realities. The subsequent session focused on the purpose and potential of TNE, moderated by Nishat Riaz, Director and Global Head of HE Systems at the British Council. This was followed by curated discussions on operationalising TNE in South Asia, featuring expert insights from Dr. Gopalkrishna Joshi, Vice Chancellor of MIT Vishwaprayag University, India. The afternoon sessions explored the TNE regulatory framework, particularly in the context of International Branch Campuses, led by Mr. David Sadler, International Higher Education Consultant from the UK. The discussion extended to exploring the potential of open, distance, and digitally delivered programmes in TNE with expert inputs Prof Ami Upadhyay, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Open University, India. Day one concluded with closing remarks by Salvador Lopez, Director of Education, South Asia. An evening reception hosted by the UK High Commission in Sri Lanka offered valuable networking opportunities for participants.

Day two began with a well-received site visit to the TNE institution at the SLIIT campus, located on the outskirts of Colombo. Participants had the chance to tour the campus facilities and observe firsthand how a successful TNE provider operates, along with its value and scale. A thought-provoking panel discussion on TNE partnership management was held at SLIIT site, moderated by Mr. Griff Ryan, Head of Transnational Education, UUKI. In the afternoon, sessions focused on TNE quality assurance frameworks, with expert insights from Eduardo Ramos, Director of International and Professional Services, QAA and Joshua Fleming, Director of Strategy and Delivery, Office for Students. This was followed by a masterclass from Rittika Chanda Parruck on mutual recognition of qualifications, drawing on the Indian experience with input from Prof. V.N. Varghese of IIT Mumbai. The closing plenary was delivered by Prof. Alison John from Advance HE, UK, who explored how leadership can transform international higher education into a force for good. The day concluded with closing remarks by Kate Joyce, Director of Business and Cultural Engagement, British Council, South Asia.

South Asia Deep Dialogues: Widening access to quality tertiary education through transnational education

A. Introduction

South Asia is of critical importance to UK higher education, accounting for over 30% of international students in the UK in 2023, however, while studying in the UK makes a significant contribution to developing the skills base countries need, is not by itself sufficient. Following a strong reform agenda across South Asia such as significant regulatory changes in India to allow foreign institutions to deliver qualifications in country, the UK has a unique opportunity to be a world leader in transnational education (TNE) and to support partners to build capacity and improve the quality in their domestic tertiary education systems.

British Council research launched in 2023 on the social value of TNE suggests that TNE not only provides an opportunity for affordable international education but also facilitates 'brain circulation' rather than 'brain drain', something heavily valued by governments in these countries, as well as improving quality of teaching, research and supporting national competitiveness. Likewise, the report by The International Higher Education Commission titled "evidence versus emotion, the facts about international student recruitment" show that UK TNE and international student mobility to the UK complement each other and TNE plays a crucial role in securing resilient international student recruitment, both through direct means such as articulations and transfers and through profile raising and brand building. This is particularly important in times of significant downturns in international student demand.

However, TNE requires in-depth expertise in internationalisation. In India, the government has required all the 1100 HEIs to establish an international office, but according to the University Grants Commission, only 179 universities have established one and 158 universities have set up an alumni connect cell. There is a significant gap in vision and reality, and this is true across all South Asian countries. TNE regulatory environment in South Asia is varied with extremely de-regulated Sri-Lankan policy to the highly closed Bangladesh market. The size of the market is also variable with very little traction in Pakistan to very high in Sri Lanka (now second largest for UK qualifications), and with India having the most unrealised potential, and Nepal doing surprisingly well in foundational courses.

Insights suggests that the potential of South Asia can be realised through raising awareness on the scope and impact of a robust TNE policy within these countries. There is need to address issues and challenges around upskilling, responsiveness to local manpower requirement driving economy, finding solutions to global challenges and upscaling local solutions for global impact. With this context, the SA region hosted a first regional **South Asia Deep Dialogues on Widening Access to Quality Tertiary Education through Transnational Education.**

B. Objectives

- To create awareness amongst policy makers, regulatory bodies, and higher education institutions in South Asia about the various models and the advantages and disadvantages of different models
- Create an understanding of how TNE can make positive contribution to social development goals and support the ambition of the host country through development of human capital to support the economy of each of the nations
- Build capacity of regulatory bodies and policy makers in knowledge of quality assurance process, equivalence, and articulating arrangements to help informed policy making in the space of Transnational Education

- To help generate confidence and trust in the quality of UK's TNE provisions and gain support for expansion of the provisions in South Asia through appropriate policy and regulatory measures

C. Themes

- TNE trends in global and South Asian contexts
- SDGs and socio-economic development
- Policy and frameworks for operationalising TNE
- Networking and TNE alumni insights
- University visit
- TNE partnership management strategies
- Importance of quality assurance in TNE
- Master Class on mutual recognition of qualifications
- Closing plenary on TNE's impact
- Reflections and close

D. Structure

- Focused and in-depth conversations that explored critical issues, challenges, and opportunities facing Transnational Education across South Asia
- Drawing on British Council research carried out in each country on the landscape of TNE over the last year
- Plenary keynote sessions at the start and end, thematic panel discussions, masterclass, best practice exhibits, world café, speed dating
- Networking session
- Local institution visits

E. Discussion topics

Discussions considered key questions:
- What are the global trends in international higher education and their implications on TNE?
- What are TNE regulations and what good do they do?
- What are the strengths and advantages of various models and examples of where these have operated successfully?
- What are equitable TNE partnerships? How to build and sustain them?
- How is quality seen and practiced in different contexts?
- What are the modes of international cooperation and approaches to Mutual Recognition of Qualification?
- How is TNE seen and delivered as a force for good and what are the perspectives from the UK as well as from South Asia?
- How can TNE help to widen HE access to excluded, vulnerable or marginalised populations and act as a driver for enhancing equality?

Note: Detailed presentations are available in Annex 2.

F. Key discussion highlights with future suggestions

Broaden perspectives on quality assurance in TNE

Future discussions on this should involve a broader, more global representation. Specifically, it would be beneficial to include non-UK regulators from countries like China and the UAE to provide a more balanced dialogue. This would help understand the diverse drivers behind QA policies across different nations and create a more inclusive and comprehensive conversation about QA challenges and opportunities in the global context of TNE.

Prioritise open and distance learning discussion in South Asia

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) should be positioned as a central focus within TNE given its growing importance to expand access to education across borders, enabling institutions to reach a broader, more diverse student population. Future events and dialogues should allocate comparable time and focus to exploring the potential of ODL, ensuring it is integrated as a core component in the development of TNE strategies and policies.

Shift focus from bilateral partnerships to network based collaboration

Encourage a shift in thinking from bilateral partnerships to exploring the potential of multi-institutional partnership networks. Future sessions could focus on the possibilities of collaborative models that involve more than just two institutions. Investigating successful existing models and lessons learned from such partnerships could open up new avenues for impactful and scalable collaborations in TNE.

Reframe the discussion on the costs of QA in TNE

Reconsider the way we approach and measure the costs of quality assurance in TNE. A deeper inquiry into the following key questions could yield valuable insights:

- o   How can we accurately measure the costs involved in QA across different countries and contexts?
- o   Are the costs of QA justified in relation to the benefits it brings to TNE provision?
- o   Are the costs being incurred at the right points in the TNE process?

A more nuanced understanding of these aspects can help address the challenges posed by QA in the cross-border education model and lead to more efficient and effective solutions.

Encourage challenging the North-South paradigm in higher education

Future dialogues should aim to break down the traditional North-South paradigm in global education. This can be achieved by:

- Fostering open discussions that allow for multiple voices, particularly from non-western institutions, to lead the conversation.
- Challenging existing assumptions about regulatory frameworks and exploring how these can evolve in a way that better serves the global community, not just the traditional western models of education.

Integrate a global context into discussions

Ensure that all institutional initiatives and discussions are framed within a global context, emphasising international trends, challenges, and opportunities. This will help participants understand how their local efforts fit into the global landscape and identify opportunities for international collaboration.

Incorporate case studies for deeper insight

Incorporate impactful, real-world case studies that offer practical insights and exemplify best practices to participants that they can learn from and apply to their own contexts. This could serve as a tool for driving actionable outcomes at the institutional and regional level.
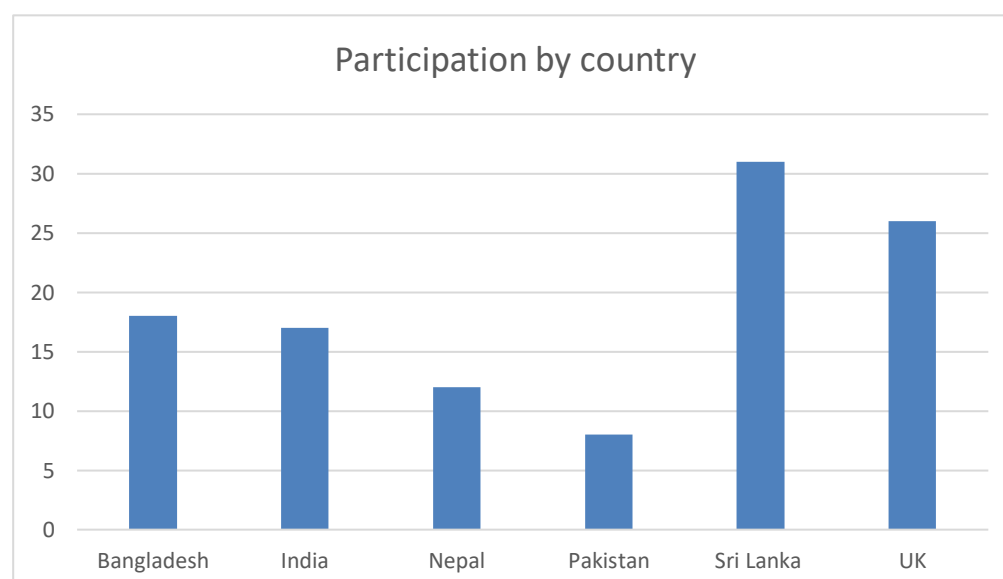
Expand accessibility through hybrid formats

Explore hybrid event models by offering virtual attendance options and session recordings. This will broaden access to the event's content, increasing its global reach and ensuring that key insights can be shared with a wider audience, including those unable to attend in person.

G. Participants

A total of 112 participants from six countries attended the event, including government representatives, quality assurance agencies, sector experts, senior leaders and academics from higher education institutions and British Council.

Among this diverse group, 32 speakers from government, expert organisations, and the British Council covered a wide range of discussion topics. The speakers played key roles in ten panel discussions and plenary sessions, serving as panel members, moderators, and subject matter experts. These thought leaders shared their perspectives on the future of international education, the purpose and potential of TNE, collaborative partnerships, TNE regulatory frameworks, TNE partnership management, quality assurance in TNE, mutual recognition of qualifications, and institutional and personal leadership.

Participation by country

In terms of participation of higher education institutions, 68 institutions took part including 14 from the UK, 15 from Bangladesh, 10 from Nepal, 6 from India, 2 from Pakistan, and 21 from Sri Lanka. The wide representation from across South Asia and the UK enabled a comprehensive discussion on the challenges and opportunities facing TNE in the region, contributing to a rich exchange of ideas and experiences.

(Participants at the end of day 2)

UK sector bodies, including the Office for Students (OfS), AdvanceHE, QAA, and Universities UK International (UUKi), offered valuable insights into regulatory frameworks, quality assurance practices, and evolving trends in international higher education.

Representatives from the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) in the UK, South Asia, and Sri Lanka also played an active role as panel members, moderators, and participants, further enriching the discussions on strengthening educational collaborations between the regions. The platform also facilitated knowledge exchange and insights through best practices and case studies from various countries.

These varied contributions ensured that the event was both informative and collaborative, laying a solid foundation for future partnerships and developments in transnational education.

In summary,

Total of 112 participants comprising 31 from Sri Lanka, 26 from UK, 18 from Bangladesh, 17 from India, 12 from Nepal and 8 from Pakistan.

32 speakers constituted 10 from UK, 7 from India, 7 from Sri Lanka (includes speaker from World Bank Sei Lanka), 5 from Pakistan, 2 from Nepal and 1 from Bangladesh.
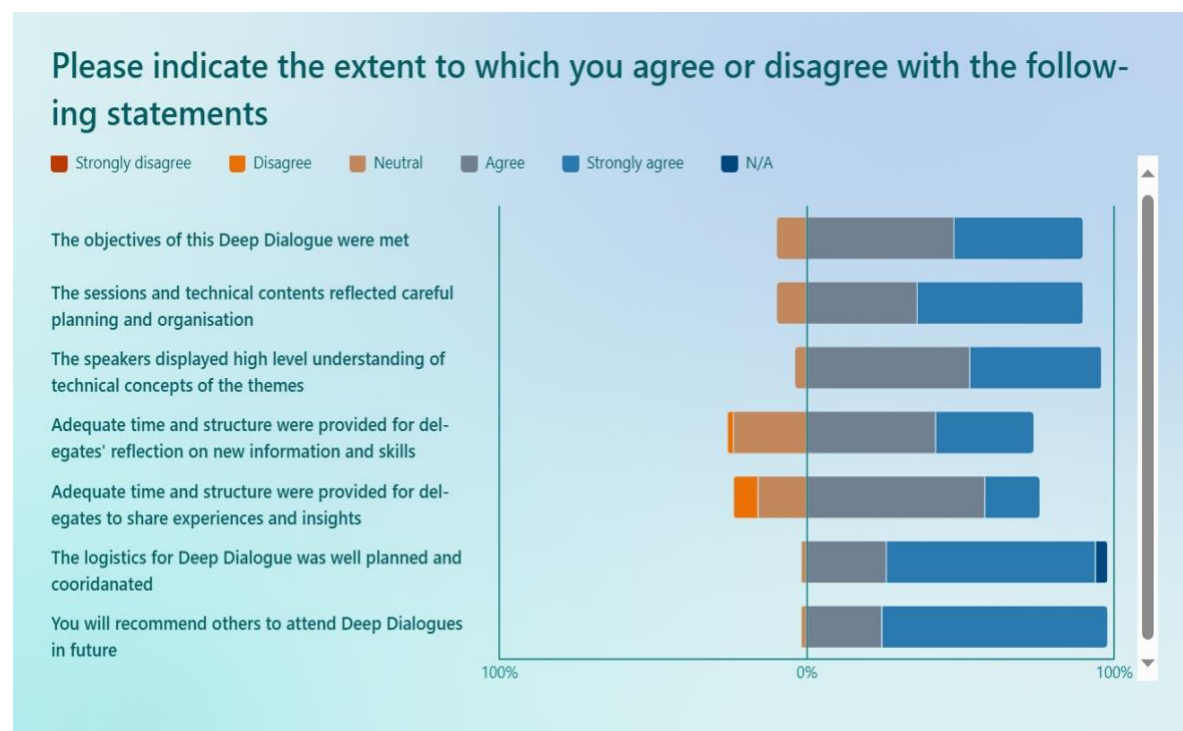
68 HEIs which included 21 institutions from Sri Lanka, 14 institutions from the UK, 10 from Nepal, 6 from India, 5 from Bangladesh and 2 from Pakistan

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Two photos from institutional visit and panel discussion

H. Reflections from participants

The event received feedback from 50 delegates, and the following sections highlight some of the qualitative reflections shared by participants and partners. A complete summary of the feedback can be found here. With an impressive 88% satisfaction rating, the event was a resounding success, leaving attendees better informed, inspired, and motivated to take action.

Things learnt which you plan to implement	Enhance students experience by student's exchange, cross country student project joint academic group project between UK based and institution-based students
	Technical aspects of TNE, I would continue to work to facilitate for better enabling policy environment for TNE in Bangladesh
	Q & A Process Process on establishing TNE partnerships View on sustainability
	Look into innovative models for TNE to bring blended learning
	I have learned some insights about TNE in other countries in the region, which will be helpful for benchmarking
	I have better understanding and clarity of TNE and I would be able to feedback to UK team (Global Partnership) for Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Last 2 days also helped me to understand India/SL/Nepal and Bangladesh University prospective and that will help to now develop TNE model and Landscape
	Widening the possibility of association with UK universities

- Time management for the speakers, so everyone gets equal and enough time to shine their experience and important policies
- Less number of speakers in a panel. Make it more interactive (I mean the panels) rather than monotonises presentation one after another speaker.
- The panel discussion needs to be less with presentation and to engage more on deep dialogue and action plan
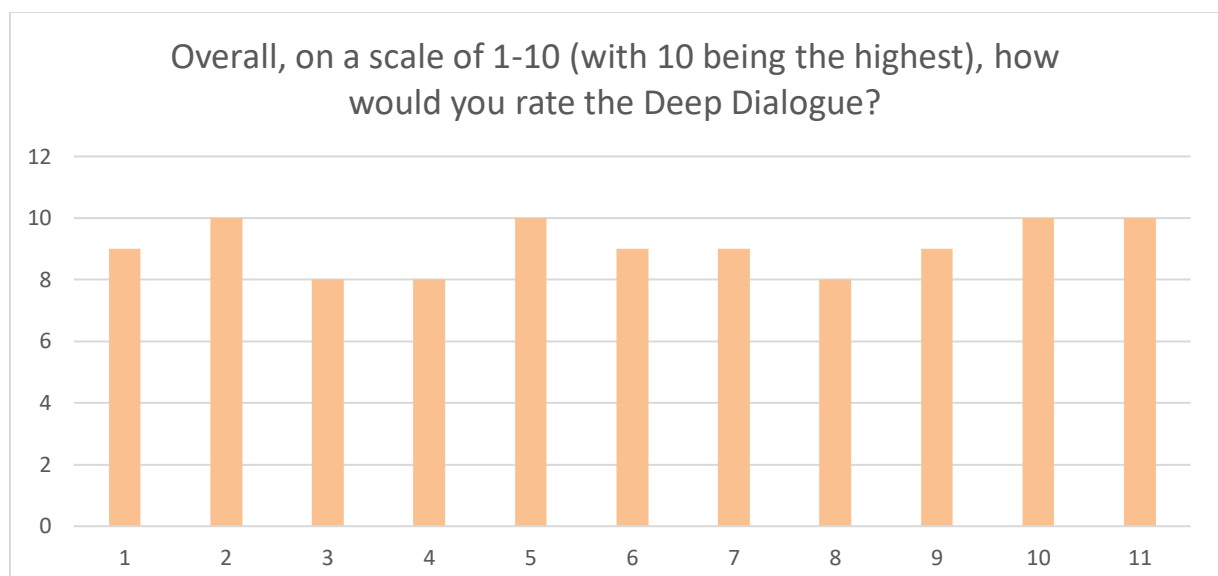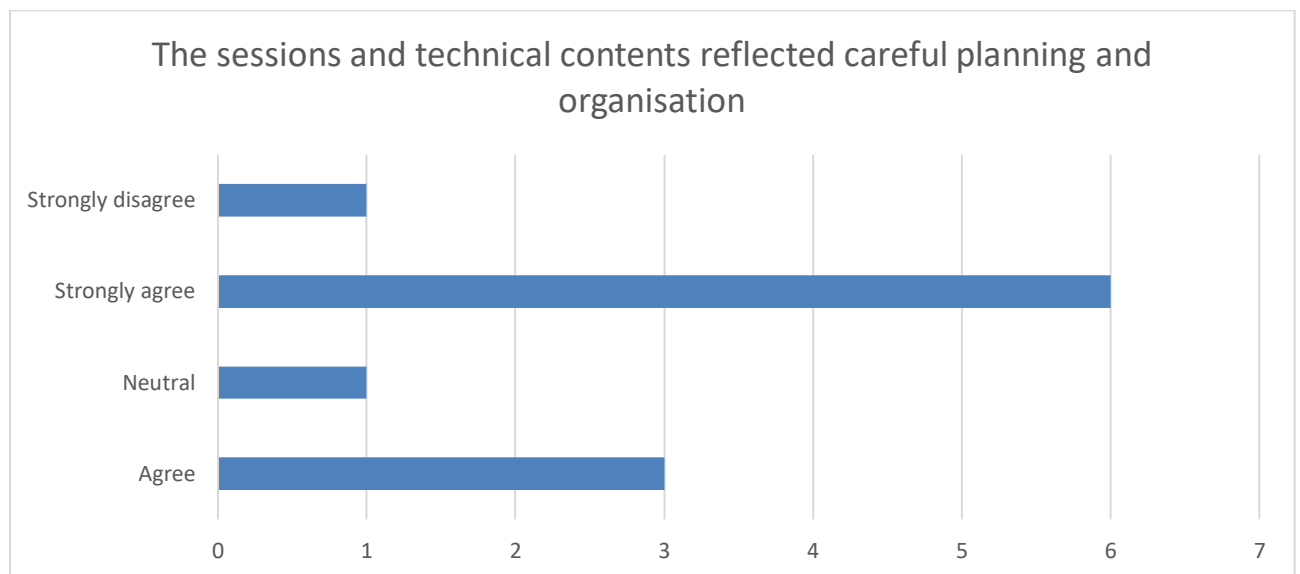
- Include Alumni and students - One session
- Include vocational courses/programmes to increase employment opportunities in counties with Bangladesh
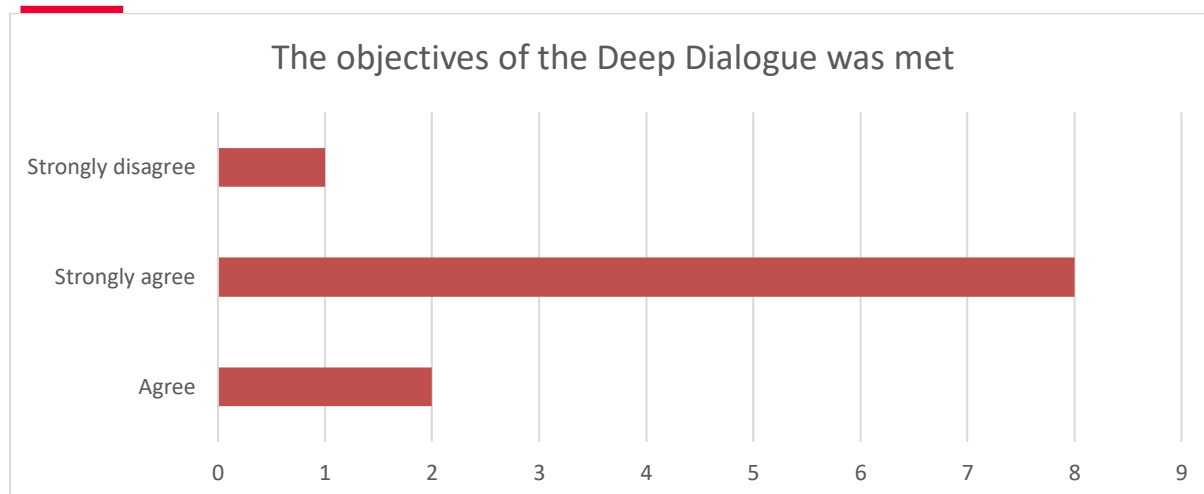
Bringing industry/research and development, how they can enhance experience of students by bringing industry into classroom through TNE arrangement and how SDGs can be linked to development of host nation.

- Intra south Asian collaboration, which is almost zero. may be British council could take the lead in creating this eco system.
- ODL in the future education and this opens up much layer's canvas for TNE, this should have given comparable share of time
- It is very important to discuss and share the business modes of some success stories with time that would help making decisions

I. Reflections from speakers

Total of 11 speakers had responded to the survey and some of the selected responses are listed below. You can read the complete responses **here.**

The sessions and technical contents reflected careful planning and organisation

Response	Count
Strongly disagree	1
Strongly agree	6
Neutral	1
Agree	3

Overall, on a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being the highest), how would you rate the Deep Dialogue?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9	10	8	8	10	9	9	8	9	10	10

The objectives of the Deep Dialogue was met

Response	Count
Strongly disagree	1
Strongly agree	8
Agree	2

(Bar chart, horizontal axis 0 to 9)

What went well?	It was a very well structured and organized event. It had sessions reflecting deep understanding and policy relevant discussions. Most of the technical sessions and master classes brought our relevant technical detail and even the limited audience participation brought out the relevant views. The conference was well-organised and engaging. I especially valued the focus on inclusivity and sustainability in international education, the diverse perspectives, and the networking opportunities. Fantastic to have such broad representation from across the S Asia region, but also across the breadth of UK HE as well. Good sessions and range of topics covered. There was a clear structure and progression to proceedings, and the opportunity to attend the annual SLANSHEI conference beforehand was welcome, adding extra local context. Each session of the deep dialogue genuinely did leave time for reflection as well as present interesting inputs.
Recommendations for improvement	To enhance the conference, consider adding more interactive elements like workshops, providing more time for networking, and sending a post-event summary of key takeaways and action points. This would help attendees solidify their learning and apply it to their work. More participation from women, some times it may need some affirmative action. I would have valued more structured, group based

discussions to complement the panels. There was a lot of expertise in the room, and these kinds of focussed conversations around different topics, with open discussion and feedback would have resulted in greater learning, and stronger professional connections I think.

Create dedicated networking sessions with structured activities to help participants connect more meaningfully and build stronger relationships. Consider also offering a virtual attendance option or recording sessions for later viewing.

J. Communications and engagement

- As part of our thought leadership strategy, we invited select leading media in Sri Lanka to interview the senior stakeholders from the South Asia region and the UK participating in the event. We did this to bring further awareness of British Council's work in increasing the understanding of potential of TNE in South Asia, and building awareness and reputation of the UK TNE sector.

  We also disseminated a post-event press release to all leading publications in Sri Lanka.

- The press release and interviews generated a combined reach **3.4 million** through print and online media**.**

- Through our owned media channels, we reached **11,000** views on our LinkedIn, X, and Facebook posts.

BUSINESS

British Council's South Asia Deep Dialogues event in Colombo

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British Council's South Asia Deep Dialogues event in Colombo

The British Council's South Asia Deep Dialogues event took place from 10-11 December in Colombo. With the theme of: "'Widening access to quality tertiary education through transnational education', Deep Dialogues brought leading experts, policymakers, and education sector professionals from the UK and South Asia to discuss the potential of transnational education (TNE), particularly as a significant driver of educational transformation, the knowledge economy and sustainable development goals.

Key insights that emerged from the sessions included:

Trust and respect are fundamental to establishing mutually beneficial partnerships that will significantly improve the quality of teaching, curricula, policies, and, ultimately, the student experience.

Quality assurance needs to be at the heart of TNE development and delivery so that students

The Role of Quality Transnational Education in Sri Lanka's Future

Transnational Education (TNE) has emerged as a cornerstone in the transformation of higher education systems worldwide, enabling students to obtain internationally recognised qualifications while studying in their home countries. In South Asia, and particularly in Sri Lanka, TNE is making a profound impact. The British Council is working with local policymakers and international institutions to ensure the delivery of quality TNE.

Sri Lanka has now emerged as the second-largest and fastest-growing partner for UK TNE, accounting for 10% of all UK TNE enrolments globally. With 45 UK institutions catering to 55,000 students locally, this growth is driven by the country's ambition to position itself as a regional education hub. Between 2020-2021 and 2022-2023, Sri Lankan enrolments in TNE programs increased by 50 percent, underscoring its significance in the education landscape.

The Parliamentary Select Committee on Education has proposed establishing 25 universities across the country through public-private partnerships, aiming to expand both academic and vocational education. Additionally, a British Council report in August 2024 highlighted aspirations to attract students from neighbouring countries, further cementing Sri Lanka's position as a regional hub for TNE. Mr Salvador Carbajal Lopez, Director Education, South Asia, British Council, describes this initiative as a space for open exchange under Chatham House rules, bringing together public officials, academic leaders, and regulators to discuss quality assurance and policy alignment.

Regionally, there is a significant disparity in access to public higher education. In Sri Lanka, for instance, only approximately 25% of eligible students gain access to public universities annually. TNE offers a crucial alternative for those unable to secure placements, though it remains a paid option. The growing middle class in South Asia has further fuelled the demand for high-quality international qualifications.

Mr Eduardo Ramos, Director of International & Professional Services at Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), emphasises this trend, noting a shift toward regional mobility: "More people are opting to stay in their regions, making Sri Lanka an attractive destination for obtaining UK qualifications without leaving the region."

Maintaining high standards in TNE is crucial. Quality assurance measures focus on assessments, student support, and institutional alignment to ensure that students receive the resources, skills, and experiences necessary to thrive. The British Council plays a pivotal role in this process, facilitating partnerships and supporting institutions in aligning with international standards.

Mr Ramos highlighted the quality assurance process, stating, "Self-evaluation reports are submitted and independently verified, particularly through individual stakeholders like vice-chancellors and students. We collect contact details of students for interviews and implement checks and balances to avoid conflicts of interest."

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges, requiring institutions to adapt rapidly to maintain qual-

Mr Eduardo Ramos, Director of International & Professional Services at Quality Assurance Agency

Mr Josh Fleming, Director of Strategy and Delivery, Office for Students, UK

Mr Salvador Carbajal Lopez, Director, Education, South Asia, British Council

ity. Mr Josh Fleming, Director of Strategy and Delivery, Office for Students, UK, highlights the innovation during this period, particularly the integration of hybrid learning models. "As long as assessments remain credible, innovation is always welcome," he notes.

Fleming elaborates on the comprehensive approach to monitoring quality. "Overall quality depends on the actual course and its unique requirements in terms of practical facilities, equipment, and academic guidance and resources. Students bring in their contexts based on their backgrounds and experiences, which is great, but institutions need to ensure these unique needs are met. Tailoring academic programmes to this diversity is essential," he adds. He also underscores the importance of regulatory mechanisms: "Currently, our monitoring system involves data and event reports because TNE providers are obligated to keep the regulator informed of standards. Individual grievance handling starts at the university level, ensuring reports can be trusted, with regulatory intervention acting as a secondary safeguard."

Mr Ramos adds that quality assurance systems have evolved to monitor and measure key aspects more effectively, though he stresses that ultimate responsibility lies with the institutions. "We aim for continuity and consistency, ensuring students achieve their academic goals," he affirms.

Regulation is integral to the sustainability of TNE. Sri Lanka's relatively unregulated TNE environment has facilitated rapid expansion. Quality assurance plays a central role in delivering quality education outcomes. Universities have expressed a willingness to welcome some level of regulation to ensure minimum standards are met. Proposed reforms to Sri Lanka's higher education sector include quality assurance measures for TNE partnerships.

Mr Fleming and Mr Ramos highlight the British Council's role as a facilitator in aligning local and UK regulations. "We're open to engaging with local regulators to identify friction points and harmonise standards," Mr Ramos states. This collaborative approach ensures that students benefit from consistent, high-quality education regardless of location.

As South Asia's demand for higher education continues to grow, TNE's role in meeting this demand cannot be overstated. For Sri Lanka, the challenge lies in balancing rapid expansion with quality assurance. By fostering partnerships, supporting regulatory reforms, and leveraging innovation, stakeholders aim to create a resilient and inclusive TNE ecosystem.

"Ultimately, it's about ensuring students get what they need to thrive," Mr Fleming concludes. British Council and UK institutions would continue to support in that endeavour. Sri Lanka is well-positioned to lead the way in transnational education in the region, helping to support young people in gaining the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life and work within a global society.

Sri Lanka's leap as a hub for transnational education and global opportunities

20 Dec 2024   ● -175

BY NUZLA RIZKIYA

A recent report by the British Council revealed that Sri Lanka is now the second largest transnational education (TNE) partner for the UK, with the island accounting for an impressive 10 percent UK TNE enrolments in the recent academic period.

According to the report, the Sri Lankan enrolments increased significantly by 50 percent over the past two academic years, with 53,915 TNE enrolments alone in 2022-2023, making it the fastest-growing country among the top 10 host countries for UK TNE.

The statistics indicate that the TNE programmes are becoming an increasingly popular option among Sri Lankan students, aligning with the growing demand worldwide for quality education and international accreditations.

Delving deeper into Sri Lanka's TNE landscape, Mirror Business recently spoke with two TNE experts, University of London Professor Emerita Mary Stiasny OBE and British Council South Asia Director of Cultural Engagement Kate Joyce, to understand the socioeconomic benefits, impact and challenges the avenue faces within the local context.

TNE and South Asian context

The experts defined TNE as an avenue that provides the local students an opportunity to earn an internationally recognised qualification from foreign institutions while studying in their home country. The TNE programmes in general operate under various models such as branch campuses, franchise arrangements or dual-degree programmes, to offer students optimum accessibility.

The avenue has become significant in the South Asian region, where large youth populations face limited higher education opportunities. With 150 million people expected to enter the job market by 2030, creating sufficient capacity within the higher education systems, to accommodate millions of students, is a major challenge.

University of London Professor Emerita Mary Stiasny OBE

K. Lessons learned

In addition to the recommendations suggested by the participants, following are some of the observations that would be useful to consider in the future:

- A comprehensive start-to-end approach in our branding, marketing, and communication strategies played a key role to the success of the event. The cohesive approach to these areas contributed to delivering an impactful experience and fostering meaningful engagement with participants.
- Whilst there were female delegates, they did not participate in the discussions unless they were on the panels. In future, we could advise the panel chairs to encourage more women to participate and to always take a question/comment from a female participant in the audience first as this has been shown to encourage others to raise their hands.
- More closer briefing and preparation with panel members before the event and focus more on curation including English, articulation, quality assurance and ensure every panel has a gender balance and that there are no all-male panels.
- Before site visit delegates must be briefed well on what they are going to experience. Site access also should plan well depending on the needs of the delegates.
- Focus more on-site visits, more time for visits, add more conversations/roundtables over PPTs.

L. Next steps

As part of our thought leadership strategy, we will be completing our TNE research series in South Asia by August 2025 with India and Sri Lanka already launched, and Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan coming soon, engaging with key stakeholders in these countries and consolidating our networks.

Further thought leadership activities are being planned to build on the momentum. These include policy dialogues as part of our report launches, press articles, social media posts, participation in external partner events (e.g., QS, THE, QAA, AdvanceHE, UUKi, etc). Additionally, we will continue to work closely with DBT as they have commissioned work in the region to remove barriers in TNE in Nepal and Bangladesh.

Likewise, country teams are using insights from TNE reports to design Going Global activities in 25/26, together with local governments and organisations like the World Bank, to address challenges cited and offer evidence-based solutions.

Finally, we are planning to have a smaller follow up regional event in 2025/26 based on suggestions received from the SA Deep Dialogues participants, particularly in exploring the power of online and distance education in TNE, and will lead to Going Global in the UK in Q3.

Annex 1- Agenda

Day 1

Time	Session
8:30	Registration at Mont Blanc Room, 5th floor, NH Collection
9:30-10:05	Inaugural ▪ Opening and welcome address by Helen Silvester, Regional Director, South Asia ▪ Programme overview by Salvador Lopez, Director, Education, South Asia
10:15-11:00	Plenary address International Higher Education- today and tomorrow Keynote by Prof Mary Stiasny OBE, Professor Emerita, University of London, UK
11:00 -11:30	Tea Break
11:30 -13:00	Panel discussion Beyond money: TNE's purpose and potential Moderator: Dr Nishat Riaz MBE, Global Head of Higher Education Systems and Internationalisation and TNE lead, British Council Panellists: ▪ Dr Suzanna Tomassi, Higher Education Specialist, Department for Business and Trade (DBT), UK ▪ Prof Uma Kanjilal, Vice Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University, India ▪ Nizam Razzaq, Chief Executive Officer, Business Management School Campus, Sri Lanka ▪ Dr Harsha Aturupane, Lead Economist, World Bank
13:00 -14:00	Lunch at Ayu Restaurant, 4th Floor, NH Collection Hotel
14:00 - 15:15	Panel discussion
	Operationalising TNE in South Asia: Collaborative partnerships (articulation, franchise, dual and joint degree models) (part 1) Expert Input: Dr Gopalkrishna Joshi, Vice Chancellor, MIT Vishwaprayag University, India Moderator: Mara Waters, Director of Trade - Sri Lanka, South Asia Trade Policy Advisor DBT Panellists: • Gamindu Hemachandra, Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer,

	Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology, Sri Lanka • Prof Dr SMA Faiz, Chairman, University Grants Commission, Bangladesh • Mahendra Raj Kandel, Executive Director, The British Education Group, Nepal • Prof Shankar Das, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, and Dean of the School of Health Systems Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India
15:15 - 15:45	Tea break
15:45 -16:35	Panel discussion Operationalising TNE and regulatory frameworks: Unlocking the potential of international branch campuses (part 2) Moderator: David Sadler, Independent Consultant, UK Panellists: • Rittika Chanda Parruck MBE, Director Education India, British Council • Puneeta Mathur, Senior Director, GUS Global Services India • Griff Ryan, Head of Transnational Education at Universities UK International, UK
16:40 - 17:30	Panel discussion Operationalising TNE and regulatory frameworks: Unlocking the potential of open, distance and digitally delivered qualifications (part 3) Expert Input: Prof Ami Upadhyay, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Open University, India Moderator: Rittika Chanda Parruck MBE, Director Education India, British Council Panellists: • Prof Ami Upadhyaya, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Open University, India • Dr Fauzia Idrees, Associate Professor, Royal Holloway University, UK • Dr Arshad Bhatti, Vice Chancellor, Virtual University of Pakistan
17:30-17:45	Close and brief on next day's programme by Salvador Lopez, Director, Education, South Asia
18:30 -21:30	Evening reception The power of the UK-Sri Lanka living bridge Venue: Residence of the British High Commission Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07 Dress code: Smart casual Welcome address by Orlando Edwards, Country Director, British Council Sri Lanka Special remarks by Lisa Whanstall, Deputy High Commissioner, British High Commission, Sri Lanka Guest speaker- TBC Transport information Transport will leave NH Collection Hotel at 18:00 for the residence of the British High Commission. Please make your own travel arrangements should you wish to leave after 18:00.

	Transport will be provided back to NH Collection Hotel after the event. Please let your country focal point know your transport requirements so that he/she can make the necessary arrangements.
End of Day 1	

Day 2

Time	Session
08:15	Meet at Meet at NH Collection Hotel reception
08:30	Transport departs for Institutional visit: Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT), Malabe* *Please stay in touch with your country focal contact for changes in departure time
09:45 -10:15	Tour of the institution and presentation by Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT)
10:30 -11:30	Panel discussion TNE partnership management Moderator: Griff Ryan, Head of Transnational Education at Universities UK International, UK Panellists: • Sampath Perera, General Manager, ICBT, Sri Lanka • Saad Wasim, Regional Advisor, University of London, UK • Kenneth Fleming, Director SLIIT Global Education, SLIIT, Sri Lanka • Dr Theresa Cronin, Queen Margaret University, Transnational Partnership Manager, UK
11:45 - 13:00	Transportation leaves for NH Collection hotel
13:00 -14:00	Lunch at Ayu Restaurant, 4th Floor, NH Collection Hotel
14:00 - 15:15	Panel discussion The importance of quality assurance in TNE – frameworks, policies and the reality Expert input: - Eduardo Ramos, Director International and professional services, Quality Assurance Association, UK - Joshua Fleming, Director of Strategy and Delivery at the Office for Students, UK Moderator: Salvador Lopez, Director, Education South Asia, British Council Panellists: • Eduardo Ramos, Director International and Professional Services, QAA, UK • Joshua Fleming, Director of Strategy and Delivery, Office for Students, UK • Dr Usman Ghani, Director, Institute of Management Sciences, Pakistan

	• Ashish Jaiswar, General Manager India, University of Reading, UK
15:15 - 15:45	Tea break
15:45 - 16:30	Masterclass Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Expert Input: Prof N V Varghese, Distinguished Visiting Faculty at Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies, IIT Mumbai, India Rittika Chanda Parruck, MBE, Director Education India, British Council
16:30 - 17:15	Closing plenary How leaders can make transnational education a force for good Keynote by Prof Alison Johns, Chief Executive, Advance HE, UK
17:15 - 17:30	Closing remarks Kate Joyce, Director, Cultural Engagement, South Asia, British Council
End of Deep Dialogues	

Annex 2 – Key areas of discussion

A. Keynote- International higher education- today and tomorrow. Prof Mary Stiasny OBE, Professor Emerita, University of London, UK
Link to presentation

B. Beyond money: TNE's purpose and potential
Dr Nishat Riaz MBE, Global Head of Higher Education Systems and Internationalisation and TNE lead, British Council
Prof Uma Kanjilal, Vice Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University, India
Link to presentation

C. Unlocking the potential of IBCs
Prof. David Sadler- International higher education adviser
Puneeta Mathur, Senior director, GUS Global Services, India
Link to presentation
Link to presentation

D. Demystifying Distance Learning for Accessible, Inclusive and Future Ready Cyber Security Education
Ami Upadhyay
Fauzia Idrees Abro, Director Cyber Security Distance Learning Programme, Royal Holloway, University of London
Arshad Saleem Bhatti, Virtual University of Pakistan
Link to presentation
Link to presentation

E. The importance of quality assurance in TNE – frameworks, policies and reality
Eduardo Ramos, Director International and Professional Services, QAA, UK
Josh Fleming, Director of Strategy and Delivery, Office for Students, UK
Dr Usman Ghani, Director, Institute of Management Sciences, Pakistan
Ashish Jaiswar, General Manager India, University of Reading, UK
Link to presentation
Link to presentation

F. Master class: Recognition of Higher Education Qualification
Professor N V Varghese, Distinguished Visiting Professor, IIT Bombay
Link to presentation

G. How leaders can make transnational education a force for good
Alison Johns, Chief Executive, Advance HE
Link to presentation

Annex 3 – Institution participation list

University of Staffordshire, UK
University of East Anglia, UK
University of Nottingham, UK
University of Reading, UK
Warwick Manufacturing Group, University of Warwick, UK
City University London
University of Leeds, UK
University of Huddersfield, UK
De Montfort University, UK
University of Westminster, UK
Queen Margaret University, UK
University of Portsmouth, UK
University of Salford Manchester, UK
Queen's University Belfast, UK
Keele University, UK
University Grant Commission, Bangladesh
University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
Bangladesh Accreditation Council, Bangladesh
Secondary and Higher Education Division, Ministry of Education, Bangladesh
Jahangir Nagar University, Bangladesh
Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Bangladesh
Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), India
IIT Bombay, India
Haryana Higher Education Council, India
TISS, India
Anna University, India
Global University Systems, India

Campus of Open Learning (University of Delhi), India
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open university, India
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India
School of Business Amrita Vishwavidyapeetam, India
MIT Vishwaprayag University, India
Chairman Office/International Relation Section, Nepal
Kathmandu University, Nepal
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Nepal
The Westminster College, Nepal
Techspire College, Nepal
The British College, Nepal
Kings College, Nepal
Softwarica College, Nepal
IEPAN, Nepal
Institute of Management Sciences (IM Sciences), Pakistan
Kohsar University, Pakistan
Pak-Austria Fachhochschule Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology, Pakistan
Virtual University of Pakistan
The World Bank, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka
National Institute of Business Management, Sri Lanka
University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka (Quality Assurance Council)
Spectrum Institute of Science & Technology (SIST), Sri Lanka
Open University, Sri Lanka
University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
BCAS Campus, Sri Lanka
BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, Sri Lanka
ICBT Campus, Sri Lanka
Informatics Institute of Technology (IIT), Sri Lanka

British High Commission, Sri Lanka
Department for Business and Trade, Sri Lanka
Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT), Sri Lanka
Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology (APIIT), Sri Lanka
ESOFT Computer Studies Pvt Ltd, Sri Lanka
Business Management School, Sri Lanka