



The future of internationalization in higher education

Return to old habits or developing new forms?

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Internationalization in Higher Education

**Not one single
model that fits all**

**Not a goal in itself
but a means to
enhance the
quality of
education,
research and
service to society**

As a strategic concept a relatively young phenomenon

Institutional, local, national and regional context are essential in defining the why, what, how and outcomes of internationalization

Internationalization is driven by a broad range of rationales (political, economic, social-cultural, and academic) and stakeholders

Contexts and Rationales change over time, so it is a process and requires intentional actions

Internationalization can be fragmented, ad hoc, marginal or central and comprehensive.





A changing global landscape

Key challenges

Geopolitical developments and tensions

Increased competition for global talent

Health concerns

Sustainability/environment

Other SDGs

Nationalism

Racism

and other factors

Key questions

How will internationalization be shaped by the momentous events of 2020?

How will those working in internationalization respond to the challenges they face?

And how will they therefore contribute to shaping the future?



Looking Back

Education abroad in all its forms is more driving the agenda than internationalization at home

Increasing focus on international rankings are the rules favor some over others.

The divide between the North and the South and between those universities classified as top world-class universities and the “Others” persists.

Internationalization has become more synonym to competition and marketization than to its traditional values (cooperation, exchange and service to society).

Inequality and exclusiveness increased nationally and internationally, in part due to elitist approaches to internationalization.

Recognition of the importance of addressing all aspects of education in an integrated way in university policy and strategy progress is only slowly and unevenly increasing.



Internationalization challenges

Internationalization at Home (curriculum, competencies, learning outcomes for all students) encounters more recognition in words, but lacks action and strategic approach

North-South Partnerships are still strongly unequal

Internationalization is still mostly marginal, fragmented and ad hoc, and not integrated in the overall mission of higher education

Internationalization is still mainly institutionally driven, isolated from the local, national, regional and global context



A need for change

Concerns about elitist, competitive and market-oriented approaches to internationalization have persisted.

An urgent need for more attention to the qualitative, human dimensions of internationalization, including global citizenship development; employability; improvement of the quality of research, education, and service to society is required.

When assessing results, a move from output to outcome and impact is needed.



But.....

One has to be realistic, and acknowledge that there is much work to be done if internationalization really is to enter a new phase.

Old habits are difficult to change, even though the risks of dependence on income from international students and on a few countries they come from, have become more manifest than ever during the pandemic.

Still we see little lessons learned in its plans for the future.

The social impact of universities on a global scale is a key feature of the evolution of higher education. It is one of the main lessons of the pandemic. But geopolitical tensions, national security and the inclination of returning to old habits are challenges.



Defining Internationalization of Higher Education for the Future

Reflects increased awareness that

- **IoHE must become more inclusive and less elitist**
- **Mobility must become an integral part of the internationalized curriculum that ensures internationalisation for all**

Re-emphasises that

- **Internationalization is not a goal in itself, but a means to enhance quality**
- **Should not focus solely on economic rationales**

Updated definition

(de Wit et al, 2015, European
Parliament Study)

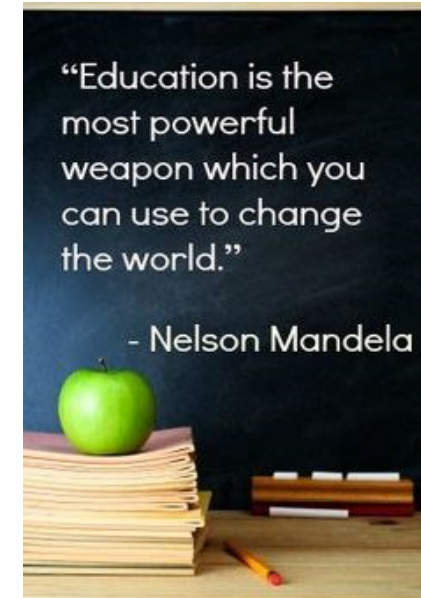
The **intentional** process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society





Why is it important to focus on global learning for all students?

- Mobility programs are out of the reach of the majority of students attending colleges and universities.
- All students will live and work as professionals and citizens in this increasingly connected and divided world.
- Universities have a responsibility to contribute to the creation of dynamic and sustainable global communities, 'no less caring for human values than the pursuit of material wealth'.





“Aligning the practice of internationalization with human values and the common global good”.

This itself requires that those working in international higher education *push the boundaries of their own and others’ thinking*, that as a community we challenge some of our long-held views about what it is to ‘be international’ as a university, a teacher, a student, and a human being as we look to the future of internationalization (De Wit and Leask, 2019).

Think out of the box of traditional internationalization and align international and intercultural to other key values and themes, such as racism, multiculturalism, climate, health, poverty, the SDGs.



Strategic Partnerships are key forces for the future of education, research and service to society

Quality, not quantity of MoUs count

Look at each level (departments/centers, faculties, institution) which strategic partnerships are relevant

Look at same level playing field to complementarity: each partner has to gain out of the relationship

Multi-partner networks, small, can be useful: EUI alliances!

Strategic partnerships include a package of actions, not single actions. Benchmarking is a key part of strategic partnership

Invest in partner relations, look for sustainability, do not depend on external sources

Partnerships are not for leaders only, faculty students and external partners are key actors



Internationalization policies and strategies require answers to four questions

The Why, based on Internal and External Context analysis

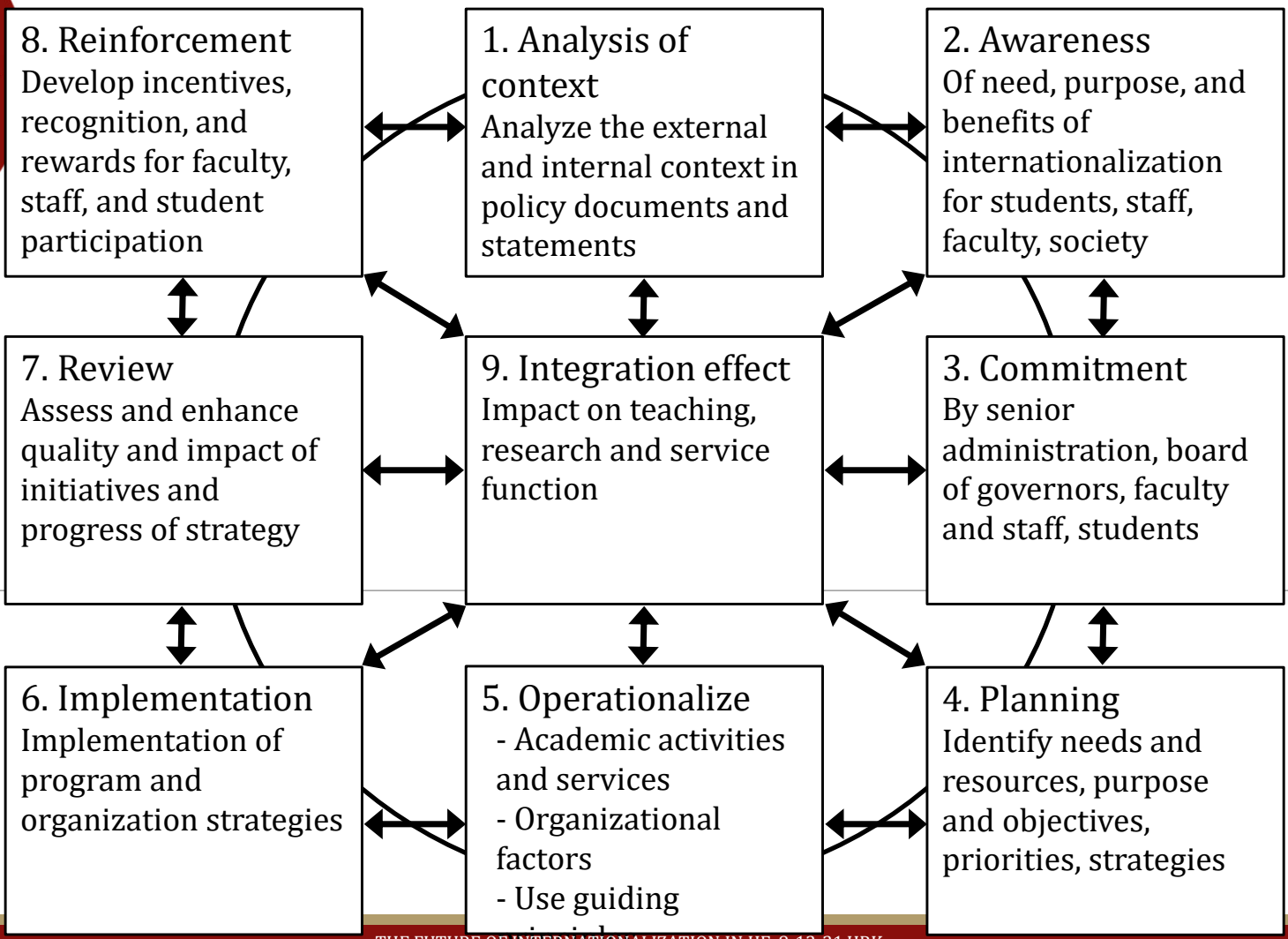
The What, program policies and strategies

The How, organizational policies and strategies

And the **Outcomes/Impact**



Internationalization Circle





Looking Forward

Universities now have a responsibility not only to ensure national prosperity, but also to contribute to the global common good, through the creation of knowledge and its application to improve the lives of people all over the world, and contributing to the growth of dynamic and sustainable global.

International higher education can and should make a significant contribution to this agenda, through shaping the next generation of world citizens and supporting research and education that will improve the lives of the bottom billion people living in poverty on our planet (Knight and de Wit, 2018).



Requirements for the next decade (post Covid-19)

A return to a more cooperative and less market oriented approach

Moving away from English as the dominant language in higher education and towards a national and institutional language policy

Taking advantage of lessons learned in the pandemic: Realizing global learning for all, making use of online expertise, not by replacing onsite by online learning

Focus on all students and all staff, not exclusively on a very small elite of mobile ones

Link internationalization to innovation and the needs of local/regional development

Link internationalization to the third mission, service to society (SDGs) and make global
Local and local Global



Key Questions we have to ask ourselves to realize a transformative internationalization for the future

Who is engaged in internationalization, within and beyond institutions? Who is being left out?

What might equitable and inclusive internationalization look like? And what types of leadership are needed to achieve it?

How can internationalization be deployed as a tool of decolonization?

How can internationalization better prepare all graduates and society to face future global challenges, including environmental decimation and the decline of systems and institutions?

What deeper systemic changes need to be made, for example, to internationalization practices and policies, power structures, teaching methods, tuition policies and other aspects of internationalization to address inequities in society?

How can internationalization efforts be strengthened in order to make a more meaningful contribution to society?

What do re-imagined mobility and blended mobility models look like moving forward?

What would a more holistic approach to internationalization look like, one that includes students' well-being, support and meaningful mutual engagement with communities?

How might the digital transformation of higher education lead to new approaches in internationalization?



Seven Themes for the future

Inclusivity and equity

A decolonialized internationalization

Internationalization for society

Forced internationalization

Internationalization of the curriculum at home

Digital internationalization, and

The affordability of internationalization.



Thank you

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