GLOBAL EDUCATION

a narrative

editor Hanneke Teekens
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Colofon

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Preface: the importance of internationalisation

In the early 1990s, right in the middle of Bill Clinton’s first presidential term, I was an international student in San Francisco. Not only did I have a great time there, my stay in the US has also been the most intensive learning experience I had during my study career. One experience cannot go unmentioned: for the first time in my life, I had an email address. Back in Holland, only a small minority of my friends knew what that was.

Last year, thousands of emails later, I joined Nuffic. Since then, I have cast my mind back to my (too) brief period in California many times. I would never have guessed how important this experience would be in the years to come, especially now at Nuffic. It is only one individual example of the impact internationalisation can have.

Speaking of impact, maybe the same can be said about working with Hanneke Teekens. When I started out at Nuffic, I already knew Hanneke was going to retire. All in all, we have been fellow board members for only six months. But what a learning experience it has been!

Hanneke has been a great instructor in current ‘internationalisation speak’. Whether we discussed mobility themes, scholarships, MOOCs, double degrees, or internationalisation at home – a term she partly coined herself – Hanneke’s ideas were profound and influential. I have also had the pleasure of seeing Hanneke act in international settings, where it becomes particularly clear that she is indeed one of the Grande Dames of internationalisation.

It is therefore a great honour to introduce this book full of internationalisation stories. It reminds us of the meaning of international education, but also, on many occasions, of Hanneke’s tremendous contribution to it. Although Hanneke is leaving Nuffic, I am sure this contribution will go on for many years, and I am looking forward to that.

I hope you will enjoy these stories, and that you will remain convinced of the importance of making our education a little bit more international.

Freddy Weima,
Director-General
Nuffic
Learning is transforming what you know into something new: international learning is transforming that which is familiar into something different

Acknowledgement

Hanneke Teekens

The idea for this collection of short reflections on the internationalisation of higher education resulted from my own personal situation. Retirement is one of those moments when one cannot help looking back! After working for more than twenty-five years in ‘the field’ I realised that some things stand out for me.

In the first place there is the strong personal involvement of so many people working in international education. And for many it is more than a job! That certainly was the case for me. Secondly, internationalisation is a term that is easily dropped, but one that means very different things to different people. The complexity of the process challenges education and training everywhere. Different and similar issues and developments surface in various places, but often with completely different effects. This makes working in an international context both a professional challenge and reward. I felt it would be nice to reflect on this diversity. And last but not least, I found that people are always the key to success, everywhere. For me working with so many dedicated people has been a major inspiration and has offered me a never-ending learning curve. It was the reason behind my boldness in inviting such a great number of colleagues to write a personal reflection on international education. People I got to know over the years and have worked with in various degrees of collaboration. I am honoured and delighted that so many have answered my call.

The collection of these short impressions does not pretend to be comprehensive or scientific. But I do feel that they represent a tradition that I find extremely important. It is testimony of a rich cultural practice that considers the personal international experience an important added value in academia. In many cases it represents a ‘turning point’ in thinking and attitude. This personal engagement does not usually show up in research papers or official publications. It is rather elusive and difficult to measure. And yet it is an essential qualitative aspect of the work we do and the way we act. What motivates people who are involved in internationalisation? What are some of the ideas – and emotions – behind this motivation. What has it meant for career choices. Where does self-interest come in? How does it impact professional responsibility and integrity and what are some of the doubts and disappointments. Just to mention a few of the issues that come up in this volume.
Over the past few decades, the internationalisation of higher education has seen tremendous growth. More than four million students are mobile and represent ‘the market’. International education has become an industry, and cooperation and competition in higher education are increasingly two sides of the same coin. This raises concerns about quality and the rationale of purely economic-driven policies. Are institutions well enough prepared – and willing – to address the educational and cultural impact on their institutions and the effects this has on students and staff? An important challenge is the internationalisation of the curriculum. Is it keeping pace with developments? How do we create an international classroom that truly brings together home students and international students. In essence, all these questions are about inclusion and intercultural learning. Various contributions elaborate on the necessity to make these themes more prominent in the future discourse on the development of international education.

But at the same time, let’s not forget that these mobility figures still represent less than 2% of enrolments worldwide. The overall majority of students are ‘home students’, often not inclined to engage in international and intercultural activity. It was about fifteen years ago that the term ‘Internationalisation at Home’ came into use to address this issue. A group of people, myself amongst them, were concerned that not enough students would be educated to obtain the intercultural life skills necessary for the 21st century. How do we bring together ‘regular’ higher education, international student mobility and teaching for diversity. How do we reposition higher education in an increasingly multicultural society where more and more students in higher education are first-generation students? They do not bring ‘international’ experience in the traditional sense, but they represent the picture of a world where national borders blur. Big questions for all of us ‘at home’ and ones that are increasingly relevant today. Many of the contributors to this book describe the dilemmas and rewards of taking a different road and crossing borders, the real ones and the mental ones of reaching out to ‘otherness’.

While the impact of international interconnectivity is evident and important, the actual practice of most universities is very local, and sometimes downright parochial. The personal agendas of students and staff, institutional strategy, political aims and economic pressures do not necessarily overlap. It means that those working in the field are often faced with the big gap between policy and ambition. Some would argue between reality and rhetoric. In other words there is still a long way to go and that is the message in several contributions.
It is clear and understandable that young people seek the best opportunities for study and career prospects. Talent is on the move. But if ‘sameness’ becomes the norm, also as a result of only using English in international communication, mobility in higher education will become less of an added value. And this is even more true when students are online all the time, never leaving the virtual reassurance of ‘home’ and not willing to really confront the physical reality of being a stranger in an unknown environment. Learning another language is the only key to really interact and an important academic asset. An aspect that should not be overlooked in our ‘Anglicising’ world. A number of contributions show that language and culture were often the initial trigger for engagement in international activities.

Trans-national education and the growing impact of MOOCs will greatly challenge the issue of ‘mobility’ in higher education. If the curriculum is mobile, why should people move? I hope that, in spite of the great new opportunities offered by technology and the concerns over the carbon footprint generated by mass transportation, the taste and smell of real mobility will not be lost. To go abroad, to really leave home, to seek adventure, is a life-changing experience and one that, in my view, should remain an important element of global education. I think many of the stories are testimony to this.

Internationalisation is a somewhat ‘European’ term and came into use in the 1980s. It heralded the change from elitist individual international study under the personal patronage and supervision of interested professors to the institutional organisation of mass mobility and project work. The ‘field’ came into being, consisting of professionals who assisted in this newly-developing process. It was to some extent also ‘the split’ between the academic and the administrative sides of internationalisation. Most contributors to this volume represent the administrative professionals, not only from universities but from the various organisations that play such an important role in facilitating communication, scholarships, exchanges and large-scale projects. Other contributions come from university leaders, researchers and teachers in international education. Increasingly they will be in the driver’s seat again. International students have become ‘students’.

The beginning of the Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci and Tempus programmes gave a great boost to European student and staff mobility. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the political opening up of many Asian countries, especially China, were important political events that further stimulated ‘internationalisation’. The US had already had a much longer tradition in ‘study abroad’ and exchanges with institutions all over the world. But international activity in Europe was of course not new either. The old ties between European countries and their former colonies had resulted in large aid programmes, also in the area of higher education.
It created the division between ‘development cooperation’ and ‘internationalisation’. Two worlds that do not come together easily. The assessment of the impact of development cooperation on higher education is judged markedly differently by various participants, as also evidenced in this volume.

The internationalisation of higher education is a reactive process. It follows political and economic trends. In spite of globalisation, universities and academic traditions are deeply embedded in national economic and political interests and in dominant cultural values and norms. Universities usually move with the tide. But those in academia have a role in critically challenging society and the prevailing winds of power. Through soft diplomacy, international educators and students can open doors that otherwise would remain closed.

It is good to see that some contributions tell about encounters in times of political freeze and in countries that were not ‘on the list’.

It is clear that international cooperation – and competition – in higher education is now a worldwide phenomenon. We see a shift from the ‘West’ to the ‘East’ and from the ‘North’ to the ‘South’. This will have a profound impact on institutions all over the globe.

That brings me to the title of this narrative. I have chosen ‘Global Education’ because your contributions represent a world view. Moreover, higher education will be more and more global, everywhere. I would like to define global education as education for all students, where they are exposed to intercultural learning and international encounters to prepare them to acquire and develop the necessary competencies to live and work in the technological and multicultural knowledge society of the 21st century. Internationalising education is never an end in itself, but an important tool and only one of the components that go toward constituting global education. Integrity, diversity and inclusion are essential aspects.

Not all persons I have invited to contribute have done so. Understandably. Time and other concerns intervene. Some said that their story was not ‘special’ enough, or that their expertise was insufficient. Although I would not agree, of course I fully respect their choice. Some just did not like the idea. That in itself produced some interesting and fruitful exchanges on the nature and use of illuminating personal experiences and views in the manner I had in mind. Perhaps others were afraid this book would simply turn out to
be a festive celebration of ‘internationalisation’, self-congratulatory to the people who make a career out of it. And to some extent that is true. The content of this volume reads as an advocacy, albeit an informed, critical and reflective one, of the merits of global education. I feel that is important. The educational ideals and cultural aspirations of international mobility and an intercultural curriculum are under pressure as a result of globalisation and the for-profit higher education sector. But – much more dangerous – also because of the increasingly anti-internationalist, ultra-conservative and so-called ‘patriotic’ views of – usually right-wing – politicians. That, too, is a global development – and a serious threat. I am convinced that we have to voice a different opinion and defend the added value of learning in an intercultural environment with respect for diversity as an intrinsic value in and of itself. And, simply put: this is good education for everybody, everywhere. It calls for people to support that view. I am very happy that so many did.

To write a 400-word piece is much more difficult than to have 2,000 words at your disposal as many of the authors have kindly reminded me. But independent of rank, position, nationality or age, I have been very adamant about editing and bringing back the number of words. But I have also used the typically Dutch method of ‘gedogen’, a term that expresses how unclear a situation can be where something that is actually prohibited is accepted anyway – even if you don’t understand when or why. So most contributions have come down in number of words to fit on one page. I trust nobody will recount. In terms of spelling the language editor has referred to the Nuffic house style, which mostly follows the Oxford English Dictionary, with the exception of words such as internationalisation. For these words the house style favours the spelling with an ‘s’, as opposed to internationalization with a ‘z’.

Another challenge was the order of presentation. Neither an alphabetical ordering nor grouping per country or position seemed very attractive. The reader will realise that in the end there is not really a clear sequence. I do admit that this is another Dutch way of solving a problem: egalitarianism as an organising principle. But then I assume nobody will want to read the following pages starting at the beginning and reading through till the end. I wish for the reader to go back and forth, re-read and reflect. What I have done in the end is to use the thoughts expressed in this introduction as a loosely guiding principle. I have done so on the basis of quotes that I have chosen from the text and placed in the blue frames. Where the title expresses the main idea of the writer, the quote is what has struck me as an additional thought worthy of highlighting. In a way reading the quotes provides
the frame of the narrative. It meanders from the question of what internationalisation really means – as an institutional process and as a personal experience – to issues of career, identity, mobility, curriculum, culture and language. Then it turns to the realities and dilemmas of conflicting interests, pressures and ideals.

In the case of three pieces I have made a determined choice. The first piece is from Josef Mestenhauser, because I received his contribution first, within days of my request. It also makes a very good start. What is this really all about? Professor Mestenhauser’s own biography, although not part of this book, is a fine example of how an international background has profoundly influenced a career. We are very fortunate that for such a long time Joe has continued to share his thoughts and ideas with us. I am very happy he starts the narrative.

The contribution from Merle McOmbrin Hodges is twice as long as what was allotted to the other writers. In her account it all fell into place. Together we tried several times to make it a shorter piece. It just did not work. It deserves two pages.

The final words - and picture - are from Jef Stapel, a colleague at Nuffic. His wonderful story reads like an Aesop fable and holds an important message for the future.

Lastly, I would like to wholeheartedly thank all contributors for wanting to be part of this book, for their generous contributions in time and warm support and for sharing their thoughts and ideas. It has been a wonderful experience for me to see this volume become a reality. It has been a collaborative endeavour, but in effect it is your book. I feel it makes excellent reading and illuminates in widely divergent ways the roads that lead to involvement in global education and what it means for people to engage in international activities. What connects these stories is that there was always a ‘turning point’.

I feel very honoured and privileged to have worked with so many of you on this project and over the years on many other occasions. I thank you for the kind and complimentary words I received along the way. I have kept them to myself and will fondly remember them and the people who wrote them to me.
I feel honoured and privileged to have worked with so many of you in the internationalisation of higher education
What is internationalisation of higher education?
Where’s the beef?

Josef Mestenhauser

Josef A. Mestenhauser is Distinguished International Professor Emeritus at the University of Minnesota, US, where he has served over the course of some 60 years as a teacher, researcher, administrator, counsellor, and consultant. He has written 150 books, monographs, articles and book chapters on international education. He was awarded three senior Fulbright grants and was president of the NAFSA, ISECSI, and the Fulbright Association of Minnesota. He holds a Juris Utrisque Doctor from the Charles University in Prague, the Czech Republic, and a PhD from the University of Minnesota. For ten years he was Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic.

The title is a metaphor I use to decry the lack of theoretical underpinning of the field. It appeared as a caption in an ad for a hamburger restaurant aimed against the competition in which an old lady, seeing only a smidge of meat, asked “where is the beef?”. I substitute ‘theory’ for ‘beef’ and commiserate that most projects, programmes and even definitions of international education do not have theoretical foundations. The only differences between the ad and my metaphor is that theory is digested in the brain, not in the gut, and that the meat doesn’t get integrated with the bun until it enters the stomach.

Not only did I realise that theory informs the practice and vice versa, but that it also explains what we do, why, how well, and with what limitations. The ‘trouble’ is greater than any single theory as international education is multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary and intercultural field with as many theories as there are disciplines. Two examples may illustrate my point. One relates to the most cited definition of the field that international perspectives must be mainstreamed into every aspect of a university. This definition does not only lack theoretical foundation, but it is wishful thinking that is theoretically impossible to attain and may be an invitation to failure. The second example is a recently announced ‘new’ approach to assess internationalisation by the American Council on Education. It reduced the ‘assessment’ to a ‘simple process’ that could be completed in a few ‘simple steps’.

There has been an explosion of publications in the past few decades. Many are guidebooks on ‘how to do things’, on educating ‘global citizens’ or developing ‘global competence’. Many promote (and sell) simple instruments that include questions based at best on a single, usually, US theory. Such efforts ignore not only the fact that the field borrows many theories from these disciplines, but that it also has its own history, economics, politics, philosophy, administration, social psychology – and especially culture – and that these disciplinary theories are different in many countries and are likely ‘culture-bound’ in all of them.

The question is where is the ‘beef’ in international education, and where are the people who, with ever-increasing knowledge, both practical and theoretical, are to take the field to a higher and deeper level of functioning.
Internationalisation over the years - My story

Nico Jooste

Dr Nico Jooste, has been the senior director of international education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University since 2000. He holds a PhD in History and is currently actively engaged in research into the internationalisation of higher education in the developing world. He is also actively involved in the management of IEASA as its current vice-president.

The internationalisation of higher education is more than just another activity practised by universities. It has moved from being a side show to a critical success factor that cannot be ignored. As such, South African higher education institutions were real latecomers to internationalisation. During the seventies and eighties, the academic boycott against Apartheid not only isolated South African universities from most of the world, but also excluded them from the real debates on the internationalisation of higher education.

From the early 2000s, South African universities became part of these mainstream debates as well as the debates on internationalisation as part of the academic project. It was at this time that I joined this very dynamic but challenging profession. During this period we had to manage between national debates and the restructuring of the segregated system into a unified national system while at the same time not forgetting to connect the South African system and its institutions to the rest of the world. Most professionals working in South African international education developed networks with fellow professionals involved in global internationalisation. Without these networks and the development of professional friendships globally, most of us would still be struggling to escape our intellectual isolation. The willingness of the rest of the world to connect with South African universities formally and informally over the past fifteen years is an illustration of how the world rallied to help South Africa reconnect globally. National interests played a subsidiary role, and connecting to the international and global community of professionals working in international higher education became the focus for all.

This journey to be part of both the internationalisation of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and that of the South African system through the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) changed who I was. It was not only an intense intellectual journey that required studying the phenomena of the internationalisation of higher education by asking the question, “Can it be developed into a separate discipline within higher education?” but it also further challenged me to set aside my academic field to become a student of the internationalisation of higher education with a specific focus on the developing world. By becoming a student of internationalisation, living it and studying it, I became an internationalist. The real challenge was to stay relevant globally without losing touch of local needs. This very special journey would not have been possible without special friends. Nuffic, and many other organisations, not only engaged with IEASA from the beginning, but many colleagues also became personal friends and mentors who guided us all to mainstream internationalisation.
The two faces of Internationalisation

Peter Scott

Peter Scott is professor of Higher Education Studies at the Institute of Education, University of London. He was president of the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) from 2000 until 2008. He was also vice-chancellor of Kingston University in London from 1998 until 2010. Previously he was pro-vice-chancellor at the University of Leeds responsible for external affairs.

Two reflections on the internationalisation of higher education occur to me - one personal and the other political.

The personal one is that my own experience of being an international student, at the University of California at Berkeley, was a transformative one - in two senses. The first was that I have never felt more ‘European’ than on the west coast of America. That probably sounds strange coming from an Anglophone. But language, by presenting such an obvious cultural barrier, may tend to muffle some of the other more nuanced but perhaps more fundamental cultural differences. And I say this as someone who is a great admirer of the United States, still 250 years later, one of the world’s greatest experiments in putting the values of the Enlightenment into practice. So I learnt a lot about both solidarity and ‘difference’, the two poles around which the internationalisation of higher education must be organised. The second sense was that I saw my own system, in the United Kingdom, through different eyes. Until I went to Berkeley, like most English people I assumed excellence and access to higher education were a zero-sum game - the more universities opened their doors, the greater the threat to standards. America taught me differently. The belief that you can have both a democratic and an excellent higher education system has remained with me ever since - as a vice-chancellor, as a professor and as a journalist and commentator. My whole approach would have been different if I had not had that experience of being an international student.

My second reflection is that there a really two very different forms of internationalisation, a bright side and a dark side (rather like the doubled character of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in the novel by the 19th-century Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson). The bright side, so hopefully expressed by Nuffic over the years, is to link internationalisation with wider global agendas on equity, peace and social justice. The dark side is to see the internationalisation of universities mainly in the context of global capitalism, and the neo-liberal world order. Universities have come to be regarded as powerful (and domineering) brands, as producers of knowledge services as tradable (and, potentially, profitable) as financial services. My worry is that, although our rhetoric continues to celebrate the first form of internationalisation, the real political and institutional drivers are more and more derived from the second. The risk is that new forms of cultural and economic imperialism are lurking in the wings. Instead we need to turn back to the bright side, and find new confidence, faith and resources in the idealism of our international students, and the transformative and emancipatory potential of their experience - which takes me back to my own experiences beside the Pacific more than three decades ago.
Looking to the bottom

George Harada

George R. Harada is professor of Law and director of the Office of International Exchange, Hiroshima University of Economics. He is a specialist in the field of constitutional law. He has been the director of the Office of International Exchange at Hiroshima University of Economics since 1991. He has also contributed to Japan’s internationalisation of higher education through his involvement with JAFSA as its vice-president.

The internationalisation of higher education is hard work! As much as we desire internationalisation to be a part of the mainstream structure of the university, in many cases it is not. Furthermore, depending on the country or region, and/or on how protective governments and peoples are of their traditional ways of doing things, the internationalisation of an education system can be difficult.

I consider international education as a tool to promote the internationalisation of higher education. I picture it as the ‘ocean’ moving constantly in many directions, taking people on its currents to far-off lands, connecting continents, and not to mention the grandeur of its waves as pictured by the famous Japanese woodblock artist Katsushika Hokusai. However, for all the grandeur of its surface, the ocean, like international education, is much more significant below the surface. What I mean to say here is that international education and the internationalisation of higher education in general involves much more than just studying abroad and international student exchange programmes. It is about people, the environment we live in, and how we need to take care of it all if we want to live peacefully far into the future.

Professionally, we will need to ‘look to the bottom’ if we are to comprehensively internationalise our systems of higher education. Of course, the meaning of ‘comprehensive’, as well as the approaches we use, may be different depending on the country we work in or our cultural mindsets. To be sure, many universities in Japan are very domestically oriented and prefer not to pursue internationalisation. Many top-level administrators feel that implementing international education-related programmes are too expensive, and that it is the responsibility of the students themselves to engage in such programmes independently. Consequently, the challenges are immense and what makes it more difficult is that the effects of our efforts are not immediate. However, our efforts will provide answers to the many difficult problems we face today through the intercultural competencies that faculty and students acquire and by the professional knowledge that is available through our affiliation with international networks.

My job as director of an office promoting the internationalisation of the university is to identify these challenges and lower the barriers to promote flexibility in the education environment to create opportunities for international education to flourish.
Changes in international education

Marlene Johnson


I welcome this opportunity to reflect on the changes in international education. As executive director of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, it has been exciting to observe the changing landscape of the internationalisation of higher education over the past fifteen years. The field has expanded dramatically from recruiting and serving international students, to embracing the importance of students studying abroad, to the emerging campus-wide focus on the internationalisation of curriculum and global engagement.

For those serving international students, the initial focus was on helping international students adjust successfully to their new campus environment and connect to friends and colleagues who could help them integrate into their host communities. But today in the US, there is growing tension among campus staff between, on the one hand, that core role of serving the students and, on the other, the newer, legally required responsibilities of ensuring accurate and timely information about students’ immigration status.

Historically, most study-abroad programmes were offered at the large research universities and four-year liberal arts colleges, involving mostly semester or year-long immersion experiences. One of today’s exciting developments is the expansion of study abroad programmes at public four-year institutions and community colleges, and the increased diversity of types of programmes and of students studying abroad. The leaders of these study-abroad programmes are often new to the field, some with an academic background but perhaps without study-abroad programme experience. They are charged by campus leadership to create study-abroad opportunities to serve first-generation college attendees and ‘non-traditional’ adult students who must integrate a study-abroad experience into a complex personal schedule that often includes work and family, in addition to their college study programmes.

The third trend is the increase in the numbers of chief international officers. Twenty-five years ago, this position existed primarily at the large research universities, where access to international development research grants influenced the campuses. Today, institutions of every type are seeking to internationalise the curriculum, integrate study-abroad and international student experiences into the life of the campus, and ultimately develop their students’ capacities as global citizens. Campus leaders recognise that a chief international officer can lead the integration of the various aspects of internationalisation and determine the most strategic approaches to building this capacity.

Finally, the increased interest of faculty in curriculum internationalisation is an encouraging sign. It is well documented that individual faculty have tremendous influence on the decisions students make about their choice of study and other experiences such as study abroad. A curriculum which actively guides students’ understanding of the global context of a range of issues will foster active global engagement whether or not the student studies abroad.
My story of the internationalisation of higher education

Adinda van Gaalen

Adinda van Gaalen is Senior Policy Officer at Nuffic. Adinda carries out studies and projects on the internationalisation of higher education, including policy, strategy and quality assurance. She works as a trainer and contributes to publications as an author and editor. Before joining Nuffic, she was a policy advisor and head of the international office at the HES in Amsterdam.

One thing that has become clear to me over the past decade is that the internationalisation of higher education has many faces. Some experts even wonder whether internationalisation is undergoing an identity crisis. It has also been claimed that the concept of internationalisation is misused by some education providers and that we should return to a focus on values. Perhaps we should. But will we all hold the same values? Most likely not, given our diverse national, cultural and educational backgrounds.

Personally, I feel internationalisation should be aimed at enhancing the quality, sustainability and accessibility of education and/or research. Revenue and prestige may be short-term aims, but they should be viewed as supporting vehicles that serve to ultimately contribute to the mission of a higher education institution.

Perhaps we should look at internationalisation from a different angle: internationalisation as a tool which can be used for a wide variety of aims. Some of these we may consider desirable, others undesirable, but there is no universal agreement on what is right or wrong. Just like money or ICT, they are used according to the values of the user. We therefore need a tailored approach.

First we need to consider what counts for an individual institution or programme rather than what can be counted for all. Different levels of importance are attributed to particular impacts. The importance of a type of impact seems to depend largely on two factors: the (institutional) aim of internationalisation and the context in which it takes place.

Second we need to establish proof of attribution. Which internationalisation activity leads to which consequence(s) in terms of (learning) outcome(s) or (career) impact, and not merely output (i.e., numbers of students involved)? It is still unusual to structurally measure competences achieved through internationalisation activities. In addition, we need to be aware of unintended impacts.

Third, we need to find new methods of measuring. Some activities, such as the internationalisation of teaching methods, affect many individual students, while others, such as student mobility, affect only a few. Yet most available data concern mobility simply because this is an activity that is easy to measure.

In conclusion, I believe that there is no such thing as universal values or aims of internationalisation in higher education. The only thing we can do as professionals involved in internationalisation is to promote and provide tools for what we think is a positive and valuable contribution of internationalisation to higher education.
What is the point of internationalisation?

Fiona Hunter

After 33 years of working in universities, first as a language teacher and then as international director, Fiona Hunter has recently become an independent higher education consultant. She has been active for many years in the European Association for International Education (EAIE), the Journal of Studies in International Education (JSIE) and more recently at the newly founded Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) in Milan. She is also Chair of the Board of Directors at Educational Credential Evaluators Inc. (ECE) in the US.

Lunching recently with a regular visiting professor whose thought-provoking conversation always keeps my mind busy long after he has returned to his university, I stumbled at his departing question: “So Fiona, why should universities internationalise then?” Before I could begin to assemble a coherent answer, his taxi arrived and he was off, but the question has been at the back of my mind ever since. Not because I could not answer it, but because I could not instantly condense my thoughts into a concise, overarching statement on the one compelling rationale for internationalisation.

Was that because so much of the discourse is around the ‘many rationales’ and the ‘no one size fits all’ approach, or was it because for so many of us who see ourselves as the pioneering generation in what has become known as the internationalisation of higher education, it has been a personal story of disposition and circumstance, with more passion and engagement than purpose and plan?

Working for internationalisation is also to experience it. Travelling the world, engaging professionally across cultures, learning from others, belonging to a global community has become so much of what ‘our generation’ is today, one that has shaped our identities and enriched our lives.

Much of our work over the years has been convincing others to create space for internationalisation in the academic enterprise, and now that it has been identified as a priority it runs the risk of being less about experience and transformation, and more about compliance and competition. That is not what I would wish for internationalisation, nor for universities for that matter.

I believe in the power of higher education to make a difference but I also believe it needs to change. We are living in an economically interconnected and culturally complicated world without precedent and to respond to the imperatives of the 21st century, we need to think creatively about a new university model. Internationalisation can be one of those transformative pathways to redefining the purpose of the university, one that educates people to be innovative and adaptive, to engage responsibly in their own communities and with the world around them.

Of course, how that is understood, unpacked and embedded will be unique to each university, but if internationalisation becomes core to mission, it means significant change. Paradoxically, if universities wish to remain relevant institutions – both to individuals and to society – internationalisation means changing to stay the same. And that is my short answer to the initial question.
Internationalisation: developing a sixth sense

Jeroen Huisman

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Internationalisation means two rather different things to me, depending on which cap I’m wearing. As a researcher I welcomed and continue to appreciate the rise of internationalisation in all its facets, because it offers wonderful opportunities for research. Irrespective of whether internationalisation relates to governmental policies, student mobility, organisational strategies, the emergence of international branch campuses or cross-border cooperation, these are all very interesting phenomena of investigation. The increasing attention to internationalisation within the higher education community and the emergence of specific journals, seminars and conferences are proof of a healthy development. Although I am passionate about the topic, there is always scope for keeping a professional distance, in that one can close the door of the office at any moment (well, almost any moment.).

If I put on a personal cap, internationalisation is different. Work in and outside academia is global and, hence, one meets numerous persons from different countries. Particularly when work requires continuous and close cooperation with international students and staff, I realise that such interactions require developing a sixth sense. What does my English colleague actually mean when he says “I am not sure whether I would agree”? Even closer to home, conversations between persons from neighbouring countries – speaking more or less the same language – can lead to confusion. I recently replied to the following offer from my Belgian colleague “Would you like a cup of coffee?” with a firm “lekker”. She looked puzzled and replied: “I know coffee is ‘lekker’, but would you like some?” I did not realise that my Dutch ‘lekker’ would be taken literally ….

As a result, one always needs to carefully listen and often ‘read’ the accompanying non-verbal communication when engaging in an international exchange. But, come to think of it, one should not exaggerate and overemphasise international confusion. When I was a student in Groningen, the interaction with students from Friesland (a neighbouring region within the Netherlands) could lead to hilarious situations. For instance, the expression ‘t kan net’ means two opposite things in the two regional languages: ‘It is just about possible’ (Groningen) versus ‘It is impossible’ (Friesland). Bringing academic and personal reflections full circle, I quote my American colleague John Douglass in saying, “All globalisation is local”. But … I am not sure he meant it the way I interpret it!
Internationalisation of higher education

Andrejs Rauhvargers

Andrejs Rauhvargers is a professor at the University of Latvia and senior advisor at the European University Association. Andrejs is the author of major reports on university rankings, recognition of qualifications, quality assurance, qualification frameworks, etc. He chairs a working group which has prepared the Bologna Process Implementation reports since 2005.

Internationalisation. What is this development which European universities identified as being among the three most-important drivers in European higher education? (Trends 2010).

First - a provocative question - but why not simply ‘globalisation’? What’s the difference? The term ‘global village’ had already been coined in 1968 with regard to the new opportunities brought about by developments in telecommunications. Still in the last decade of the 20th century, some educators talked in good faith about the positive sides of globalisation. The subsequent GATS negotiations clearly demonstrated that some countries were highly interested in opening all borders for the export of education. What’s wrong, one may ask?!

In those countries where the education systems are not strong, the invasion of foreign education offerings may hinder or completely stop the development of the national system. It is no secret that the strongest in the education business are the Anglo-Saxon education systems. Americanisation or not, globalisation draws the world towards a ‘one size fits all’ education system.

Contrary to globalisation, the internationalisation of education, as I understand it, is voluntary cooperation between universities originating from different higher education systems or, alternatively, cooperation at the level of educational systems. What are the key differences if we compare internationalisation to globalisation? First, internationalisation is voluntary rather than something imposed under pressure from a more powerful higher education system. Second, the university or higher education system is able to regulate the scope of internationalisation – hence there should be no threat to national culture, language and, after all, education systems. This also means that the internationalisation may take place with various cultures and languages. It is the choice of the university whether its internationalisation activities are targeted at the whole world, part of it, a certain group of countries or a single country. Globalisation, on the other hand, ‘internationalises’ higher education institutions towards a limited number of cultures linked to the world’s strongest education systems and some of the most widely spoken languages.

Third, the win-win approach of those universities where internationalisation takes place bilaterally or multilaterally. Of course, a university can also internationalise without cooperating by simply campaigning for and recruiting foreign students, teaching staff and research. However, in many cases, internationalisation activities at universities are linked to bilateral or multilateral cooperation whereby it is highly important that the cooperation leads to mutual enrichment rather than the ‘importation’ of other country’s education.

I personally also believe that the main gain of the internationalisation effort is the cross-fertilisation created by bringing together students and academics who come from other cultures. They think in different ways, they ask different questions and suggest different solutions. And, like in international working groups, the discussions are more difficult but the solution is better.
From conservatism to flexibility, paving roads towards fair recognition

Lucie de Bruin, Jenneke Lokhoff, Bas Wegewijs

Our experience in the evaluation of foreign qualifications goes back to the nineties of the last century. At that time, the basic attitude was not so much focused on the recognition of qualifications; nor was it the intention to tear down obstacles impeding the free movement of students around the world. Quite the contrary: the typical credential evaluator had a conservative and protectionist attitude, working according to a personal methodology. Evaluation of foreign qualifications was therefore often a subjective process and recognition was not easy to obtain.

Fortunately, we have witnessed many changes since that decade. And change was necessary, because internationalisation is not possible if the educational achievements obtained in one country are not accepted in another. The international Lisbon Recognition Convention (1999) and its subsidiary texts were a major step forward and provided the credential evaluator with a set of rules and guidelines to follow for the first time. Furthermore, the need for fair recognition as an essential precondition for the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was high on the agenda of the Bologna process right from the beginning, and is even now more urgent since the EHEA has been established.

Nuffic’s International Recognition Department has played a major role in the advancement and spreading of good practice in recognition, both now and in the past. The development of the European Area of Recognition projects, coordinated by Nuffic, has been pivotal in this respect. These projects have resulted in separate manuals with LRC-based recommendations on the application of good practice for both national recognition bodies and staff involved in recognition at higher education institutions. The use of these manuals has been recommended in the EHEA Communiqué of the European Ministers of Education, which represents a great achievement in the field of recognition. We expect that the manuals will make a beneficial difference to all those students who study abroad. Not only do the manuals strongly support an attitude geared towards recognition, but they also promote a consistent and fair application of recognition methodology. In this respect, the manuals can also be very useful in regions outside Europe that are rapidly building infrastructures for recognition.

We are very happy that we may contribute in this way to the creation of a truly international educational society, in which students may move freely from one country to another according to their talents and choices.
Internationalisation? What comes to my mind?

Dr Wedigo de Vivanco

Dr Wedigo de Vivanco, Dean Emeritus of International Affairs at Freie Universität Berlin, served during his career as the director of the DAAD New York office, as EAIE president and as an experienced consultant in the field of the internationalisation of higher education.

With each new year, I realise more and more the complexity with which the field of the internationalisation of higher education is fraught. Numbers are only one indicator of a more open education. Does a high number of international students make an institution international? Can this attribute be granted if a respectable number of your own institution’s students go abroad? Does the curriculum have to contain elements of a broader view? Which part does interculturalism play? These are questions that can be answered in great detail, but the skill required in the art of sustainable internationalisation is the interweaving of the various aspects into a single holistic concept, with due attention paid to the curiosity and sensibilities of the other.

Institutions concentrating on high mobility numbers (students, teachers, staff) and acting within tried and tested networks of equal interests will be most successful educating international-minded graduates who will qualify for a labour market way beyond their national borders. Joint and double degrees bear the full potential of long-lasting success. Students with profound international experience will be globally mobile and important ambassadors for different cultures.

English is proving to become the singular academic lingua franca. Without profound language skills, a subtle academic dialogue is impossible. Therefore we will have to cope with a difficult situation in international academia: the fortunate ones whose mother tongue is English and the disadvantaged majority who use English as a second language, not feeling fully at ease when it comes to the subtle use of the language. Math, the sciences and engineering have their formulas as a unifying language supporting mobility and understanding. In the humanities and social sciences in particular, there is an ongoing struggle with the insoluble problem of language, where faculty are haunted and terrorised by English-language quotation and publication indices.

Interculturalism is a skill that can be acquired with one’s experience abroad but also in the classroom at home, learning to communicate with the international students and faculty, accepting that life and higher education can be approached in different ways and that these should be treated with equal respect.
Internationalisation: a new challenge!

Beer Schröder

R.E.V.M. Schröder grew up in New Guinea, Spain and the Netherlands, studied cultural anthropology, Dutch and Spanish literature and earned a Master’s degree in General and Comparative Literary Criticism, specialising in (oral) literature in Africa at VU Amsterdam University. Since 1982, he has worked for Nuffic in management and expert positions.

From 1960 onwards, holidays abroad for the masses developed quickly in Europe. For many it became the very first close encounter of the third degree with other languages, cultures and systems. And many developed a solid appreciation for it.

When I was fourteen, my parents, for some unclear reason, decided to go to Romania. We were all thrilled, but with no real awareness of what Romania was all about. We learned quickly and got to appreciate Romania’s exoticism and its first year of openness under Ceausescu. So, the following year we went again. For me these trips laid the foundation for a ‘plus ultra’, resulting in visits to over half the planet’s countries. I think these visits have taught me good life lessons. I daresay I would have turned out differently without these trips, but that of course is something I can never know for sure.

I would distinguish four attitudes these visits stimulated: empathy, awareness, understanding and appreciation. Empathy with people and the circumstances they live in and the way they deal with life’s issues; awareness that there is more than one road that leads to Jerusalem; understanding differences; appreciation for what has been achieved elsewhere, also back home. For me these attitudes are important in dealing on a day-to-day basis with both my personal and professional activities. But I missed them during my core university education.

From 1990 onwards, mobility in education also became an issue. Initially, it was almost a synonym for internationalisation. More recently, it has become one of a broader array of internationalisation aspects or activities. In Europe, internationalisation was propelled by the integration processes of the EU and by parallel globalisation processes elsewhere in the world. Higher education institutions initially reacted rather slowly to it, but over time they also developed other areas related to the broader theme of internationalisation, such as internationalisation at home, the international classroom, international cooperation, capacity building, learning other languages and studying other cultures or systems, as well as many other smaller and comprehensive internationalisation-related activities – but only gradually. Mobility, however, apparently remains a spearhead.

I doubt international mobility can substantially contribute to education objectives if isolated from other aspects of internationalisation. Mobility is an instrument that proves worthwhile in the education process only if its seed falls on fertile – that is: well-prepared – soil. Institutions have a small role to play in international mobility, unless it’s institutionalised, structured and integrated into the learning objectives and embedded in a systemic approach. That implies that institutions embed, prepare, monitor and evaluate with all stakeholders involved the intrinsic values of mobility in a learning process and clearly define learning outcomes. But so far this has been done only a little. Hence, this is the new challenge for us working in the internationalisation of higher education.
Institutional development
Internationalisation and strategic profiling

Frans van Vught

Frans van Vught is currently a high-level policy advisor to the European Commission and a board member of several international organisations. He has been a higher education researcher for most of his life and was president of the University of Twente in the Netherlands.

During my career I have addressed the phenomenon of ‘internationalisation’ in several ways. I have analysed and studied it, both as an effect of other processes like the ‘information explosion’ and globalisation, and as a source of the changing contexts of higher education systems and institutions. I have assisted in designing policies to make use of its promises, both at national and international level. And I tried to make sure that the university that I had the honour to lead could adapt to its effects. The latter task was the most challenging for me. Looking back at this task now, I would like to suggest that for any higher education institution there are at least three major conditions resulting from the internationalisation process that force these institutions to strategically analyse their positions and profiles. Let me briefly address these three conditions.

Mission overload
Worldwide there is widespread expectation that universities and other institutions should research an increasingly broad range of problems in an ever-growing holistic fashion and at an accelerated pace. As our societies become more knowledgeable, universities are coming under increasing pressure to expand the production and the transfer of knowledge and to apply this knowledge to solve the problems confronting the world. The result is an accumulation of mission elements, leading to the risk of mission overload.

Global research competition
On a worldwide scale, industry is increasingly ceasing its fundamental research activities. Companies are concentrating on short-term results, while adopting a strategic global approach to more fundamental research. Companies are increasingly reliant on offshore partnerships, academic collaboration and outsourcing, thereby forming their own networks of scientific collaboration and expertise. As a result, universities are confronted with the challenge of responding to this trend and of selecting and investing in those research fields in which they can compete on a global scale. This often requires risky investments in research teams, major facilities and equipment, forcing universities to make major strategic choices regarding their research portfolios and to marshal their resources effectively and efficiently.

Higher education system diversity
In the context of innovation, higher education institutions are being urged to increase participation rates and particularly the supply of well-trained ‘knowledge workers’ in prioritised sectors. Globalisation and the focus on innovation in many countries seem to be triggering governments to implement diversification policies in higher education. As a result, universities are expected to develop their education portfolios and to find their position in a diversifying higher education system.

Strategic challenges, the need for profiling
Bringing these three elements together, it is clear that increasing global competitiveness strengthens the need for profiling. Strategic institutional profiling – including a conscious choice of competitors and partners – is therefore one of the most important aspects of modern higher education leadership.
A one sided affair

Hans Melle van Dijk

Hans Melle van Dijk is head of the Grants Office of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences at Utrecht University. During the last 30 years he has been active in the internationalisation of both education and research. Hans’ has held various positions throughout his career: as a credential evaluator at Nuffic, as executive director at the EAIE, again at Nuffic as policy advisor and then as head of the national Erasmus office. In 2001 he moved to Utrecht University to become research policy advisor to the Executive Board of the university. Over the past four years he held the position of EU Liaison Officer for the university, before moving to the faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences earlier this year.

From an institutional perspective, the internationalisation of higher education when restricted to student mobility is a one-sided affair. Let me explain what I mean.

Utrecht University (UU) is a major comprehensive research university, ranking in the international sub-top. Twenty-five years ago UU was quick to understand the importance of the wave of internationalisation in higher education that descended over Europe, thanks to the launch of the Erasmus programme. The Utrecht Network was created and, in the meantime, hundreds of students have exchanged places with students at partner institutions. In 1998 the residential honours college UCU opened its doors to the first group of 200 students. Half of the Master’s programmes at UU are English taught. Still, this is only one side of the coin.

In 1984, the first European Framework Programme for Research (FP) was started. During the first 20 years of their existence, these programmes did not get the full attention they deserved. The Bologna process and the Erasmus programme were in the forefront. But with the quantum leap taken from the 6th FP (€ 18 billion) to the 7th (over € 50 billion), the impulse being generated for universities could no longer be neglected. The FP Horizon 2020, which starts in 2014, will have a budget of € 70 billion. The prestige of a European Research Council (ERC) grant is enormous. The Marie Curie fellowships offer training to many young researchers, and other parts of the programme offer many more exciting challenges. For research universities, their international strategies must be based on research and teaching, with research probably being the most important. A focus solely on teaching does not fit our profile.

Swiss science, for example, has an excellent reputation. The percentage of international research staff is high. In Switzerland, international doctoral students outnumber the locals owing to a steadily growing cohort of foreign PhDs. As a portion of the number of researchers, Swiss universities, together with their Dutch and Israeli counterparts, have the most ERC grantees.

The importance of research cooperation is probably best manifested by the budget. FP7 is expected to bring Utrecht University over € 150 million of research income over a seven-year period. It is time for an comprehensive discourse on the international strategy of European universities.
Internationalisation...the contemporary jabberwocky of higher education

Ann O’ Brien

Ann O’ Brien studied Biochemistry at the University of Cork, Ireland, and graduated cum laude in 1982. First working in the pharmaceutical industry and then in research (Oncology, VU Medical Center Amsterdam), she joined the Life Sciences division of the academic publishing house of Elsevier Science in Amsterdam in 1987. From 1999-2008, Ann was pioneering and prominent in steering the internationalisation process of the Delft University of Technology. Ann obtained her MBA degree (with distinction) from the University of Durham, UK, in 2006. She is currently the Executive Director of the T.M.C. Asser Instituut in The Hague, the Netherlands.

My reflections on the (ongoing) internationalisation of higher education are rooted in the experiences of my time spent at the Delft University of Technology. If anything, I can say that the term ‘internationalisation of higher education’ is a widely interpreted one, and hardly fully comprehended by many of its exponents. The literatures abounds with many definitions but I argue that the true meaning of the term remains elusive and that it is a blanket term that enables users to fill in at will.

In my professional capacity, I experienced ‘internationalisation’ as the proactive ‘opening up’ of the university to include the rich diversity of talent and culture, previously mostly excluded. The university, whilst always home to incidental international faculty and student body, was now making concerted efforts to recruit and ‘cater’ for what was markedly perceived as ‘another category’ of student - the international student. Yes, the main thrust towards internationalisation begun with recruiting international students to participate in graduate degree programmes.

Major issues for international students were the language barrier, the university grading system (hardly ever awarding a 10!), the attitude of the Dutch students to their studies, the search for food that reminded them of home and isolation. The Dutch students were sceptical of the international students’ cramming style of study and their propensity to spend long hours in the library. The latter group’s study discipline and high career expectations were initially ridiculed.

The reticence of faculty and students to be ‘internationalised’, the reluctance to embrace and share, the initial arrogance of the university to expect incoming students to adapt completely to the Dutch way and the realisation that one’s command of the English language was not as wonderful as one thought presented the ‘internationalisers’ with many challenges.

Critics regularly queried the investment versus payback for the university. Few appeared to be willing to comprehend that the university was (and is) preparing for its future. Fortunately, much progress has been booked during the years and man’s ability to accept, learn and adapt has shone through.

Personally, I look at my involvement as a unique, enriching experience. I have met some remarkable persons along the way and have been truly humbled on many occasions by other people’s grace and ability to transcend prejudices, overcome challenges and embrace a new culture.

Much has changed since 1999. The internationalisation of higher education, for what it may mean, is by no means complete. Rather, the process is a longitudinal evolution meandering along an uncertain pathway towards an indefinite horizon.
Internationalisation in South Africa

Fazela Haniff

Educated at Ryerson University in HR Management, Fazela Haniff is the former director of the international office of the University of Witwatersrand (‘Wits’) and former president and chair of the Director’s Forum at IEASA. She is passionate about building strategic partnerships and developing human capacity. She was an article contributor to the 2010 edition of the Routledge International Encyclopaedia of Education.

Entering the internationalisation arena was a complete accident. However, since my first job in South Africa, at SAIDE, the South African Institute for Distance Education, I was taken in by the challenges of the education sector. As the last born, I was always with my mother; she was a resourceful and entrepreneurial person, and I learnt from her first hand that there is a solution to every problem.

In March 2006, I was asked to assist Wits University as they needed someone to take charge of their ailing international office. Thinking I had a short time to make an impact in fixing the department and developing a management team, I plunged into the work. Before I knew it, I had been bitten by the internationalisation bug. Analysing the problems and implementing solutions earned me a place as well as direct access to the leadership of the university. This led to my successful application for the directorship.

I wanted to learn as much as I could about the state of internationalisation in South Africa, the government’s position compared to the rest of the world, and joined the IEASA, the International Education Association of South Africa, where I was elected president of the association in August 2006.

Resuscitating the international office at Wits and leading IEASA simultaneously had its challenges, but in some ways the challenges complemented each other. Improving services, forging relationships with the home affairs department for Wits and IEASA, developing solutions for medical aid products of international students and, most importantly, regaining the trust of international students and repositioning the Wits international office internally and externally were among the highlights. The most challenging aspect of this work was the absence of a governmental internationalisation position, policy or support.

Representing Wits, IEASA and the South African internationalisation position at international forums has been both exhilarating and developmental. Developmental for me as many of Wits’ projects were based on African partnerships and this allowed me to learn about the higher education systems in other African countries. This involved work with many countries. Outside of Africa, other projects involved relationships with institutions in the rest of the world. Managing interdisciplinary, multilingual and multicultural projects was both enriching and rewarding. The rewarding part stems back to my own discipline, human resources development. In some instances it is referred to as capacity development for a country or for an institution. However, without the development of individuals, there is little chance that any project can be accomplished.
The personal aspect in internationalisation

Marijke Delemarre

Presently a programme officer for international projects at Radboud University Nijmegen, Marijke Delemarre has been working in the field of internationalisation for over 20 years, both at national and at institutional level. She has ample experience in international project management, institutional cooperation as well as issues related to mobility of students and staff.

All professionals engaged in the internationalisation of higher education will support the need for structural, embedded activities, such as frequent, mutual exchanges, internationalised curricula and ongoing cooperative research. However, these same professionals will also need to agree on the importance of the personal aspect.

The personal click between two academics may lead to intensive cooperation – be it in the field of teaching or research. The personal contacts are important and should be cherished, because they are often the start of a lasting and structural relationship that is of interest to the higher education institutions involved. Good personal relations are essential to make any cooperation – including international cooperation – work. This is true both for the academics and for the administrative staff. Partners have to know and trust each other in order to cooperate successfully, not only because the rather short deadlines of donor organisations, such as the European Commission, sometimes leave you little time to thoroughly discuss all details of a project proposal, but merely because trust is an essential precondition in cooperation.

Academics have to trust each other and appreciate each other’s academic achievements in order to exchange their students and be confident that the training the students receive at the host institution will be as good as any they might receive at their home institution. Thus there can be no doubt regarding the quality of the exchange period and its recognition. Trust and academic appreciation may be even more important when it comes to research cooperation.

Administrative staff will be inclined to respond positively and quickly to an appeal from a colleague they like and trust. Sometimes a little extra effort may prove crucial to the success of collaboration. Thus personal appreciation is important in getting cooperation started and in keeping it going.

Nowadays, because of the (justified) focus on academic results, it sometimes seems as though we are no longer allowed to point out the importance of the personal aspect in internationalisation. However, if we are honest with ourselves we cannot deny the importance of personal relations – including personal ‘clicks’ with colleagues abroad – for the success of international relationships between our higher education institutions. Moreover, if we are supposed to be preparing young people for future key roles in various aspects of society, from innovative researchers who will move mankind forward to leading politicians, from future mentors to responsible and broadminded parents of a new generation, then we cannot ignore the importance of the personal aspect in their development.
With a suitable degree of irreverence for the rules

Jeroen Torenbeek

Jeroen Torenbeek is currently director of the Utrecht University Summer School. Jeroen studied history and Italian language at Utrecht University, and bassoon at the conservatory. Jeroen has been involved in international relations since 1986 and was director of the University’s International Relations Office for fifteen years. In that period he was founder and chairman of the Utrecht Network, interim director and later president of the EAIE, and chair of numerous foundations and committees. He is the editor of the first volume of the EAIE Professional Development Series for International Educators, Managing an international office, and editor/author of the last one: International Summer Schools.

I ended up in the world of the internationalisation of higher education by chance – like virtually everyone else of my generation, I think. As a young policy advisor working at the Faculty of Arts, I was asked by the Executive Board of the University to look for a suitable summer exchange partner in Italy. Why did we need a summer exchange? And why me? I never got an answer to the first question. And the answer to the second question was something to do with my enterprising spirit. I packed my backpack and set off for Italy (by train of course) and I returned with an agreement with Bologna. An excellent choice, I can say now, some 30 years later. A Summer School was born.

The mid-1980s was a great time to work in the field of internationalisation. The European Community had fantastic plans for international exchanges between students. At the time it seemed incredible that it might be possible. But the EC actually found significant amounts of money, national governments embraced the plan, and the colleges and universities were happy to oblige.

But the start of the Erasmus programme led to major problems – or ‘challenges’ as we called them – for the institutions involved. We had to think of everything and build it all up from nothing. There were concerns relating to quality, cultural differences and a host of practical issues. Should you make all the students take a crash course in the local language, or should you do something even more unimaginable – start teaching in English? And how should you look after them when they arrived? Come to think of it, how should you do everything?

For twenty years, I have been free to work on all the initiatives that seemed useful and necessary to me. One marvellous thing was that I had control over both strategy and implementation at the same time. Combining policy and implementation is still an ‘article of faith’ for me.

Another key moment was when I first received the Erasmus Prize from the European Commission. I got that for the creative way in which the Utrecht Network had been set up. Rather than cooperating at the level of academic discipline, as prescribed, I set up cooperation at the institutional level. What the committee described at the ceremony in Brussels as ‘creative’, had in fact been ‘forbidden and against the rules’ a year earlier. Since then I have always sought to follow the spirit of laws and regulations, but never to follow them blindly.

Over seven years, and with a carefully measured degree of disregard for the rules, I have managed to make the Summer School ten times larger than it was. I believe that we are now the largest in Europe. And what is even more impressive is that we have the smallest team of managers. But when it came to the 25th anniversary of the Summer School, I did experience a moment of confusion. We thought that we should involve the original founder of the Summer School, but I just could not recall the identity of that person.
Making world citizens

Susana Menéndez

Susana Menéndez left her native Argentina after studying Law at the University of Buenos Aires. She came to the Netherlands in 1978. She has immersed herself in academic life ever since and completed her academic education with a PhD thesis on gender in Latin America. Several research, teaching and managerial positions in higher education followed, including at the University of Amsterdam, the Erasmus University in Rotterdam and the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. In April 2008 she joined The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS), where she is now vice president.

As a native of Argentina who’s spent the past 30 years in a very international country, the Netherlands, my international credentials speak for themselves. I’m a fervent advocate of the internationalisation of higher education. Nowadays, at THUAS, I am responsible for academic and international affairs. ‘International’, there it is again!

Globalisation has made inroads into societies over the past 30 years and to meet industry’s and governments’ appetite for talented graduates with international experience, we, the world’s universities, have been ramping up our internationalisation programmes. Currently – and I think this is a throwback to the policies of the 1990s – I feel it’s still too biased towards quantity – how many exchange students? how many English-language programmes? – I’d prefer internationalisation to take a more qualitative approach.

But whatever approach it takes, it’s a fact that internationalisation most benefits our students. Twenty or so years ago if a university made students do an international exchange and exposed them to different cultures it gave them a distinct advantage in the job market. Nowadays, if a university fails to do so, it puts them at a distinct disadvantage.

I won’t argue that internationalisation plays a more important role at a university of applied sciences than a research university, but it certainly plays a key role at THUAS. Local employers recruit many of our graduates. Our local employers are the cream of international judicial and public administration organisations, as well as several multinationals. From my position then, perhaps that’s all the justification I need to give, except…

…except that the continued need for this internationalisation will be driven by people, future generations. For THUAS, embracing and celebrating diversity goes beyond pragmatic issues. Through internationalisation we promote the examination of and reflection on shared human experiences across contexts to engage learners in critical thinking about a range of perspectives. Developing an inclusive practice also means questioning and rethinking current assumptions. The international perspective plays a key role in this. Recently, I read many of several hundred essays themed on world citizenship and submitted by prospective THUAS students, some as young as seventeen. It was uplifting and surprising to learn that so many young people, who’d spent all their lives in countries ranging from Mongolia to Ukraine, had such clear views on the subject. They expressed yearnings for world peace, solidarity and to be part of a world community. Such wonderful sentiments from so many young people, eloquently explaining why they wanted to learn with and from their peers from different countries and cultures. I couldn’t have made it up!
Internationalisation

Renée Zicman

Renée Zicman is professor at the School of Social Sciences and former director for International Affairs (1994-2012) at Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo. She is the executive director of FAUBAI – the Association of Brazilian Higher Education Institutions Officers for International Relations – as well as vice-president of Alliance Française in São Paulo. Renée has authored books and articles on the internationalisation of higher education and religious movements.

Internationalisation is an important change agent in the strategic missions of higher education institutions around the world, presenting new opportunities and challenges, offering new environments to facilitate and promote language, intercultural and professional skills, and fostering employability in an increasingly complex, interdependent, competitive and global world.

The internationalisation of higher education demands more professional and strategic planning of its management, establishing new models and paradigms, forming technical staff, disseminating internationalisation as a priority as well as strategic action for education institutions in their goals, actions and budgets, combining flexibility and adaptability. Countries have to promote their own national systems of higher education in the world, participate in international education forums, articulate international agreements and partnerships and require investments from the education institutions and governments in terms of public policy priority.

Best practices must be considered with regard to the choice of partners, establishment of agreements, class credit transfers, implementation of strategies, etc. The education institutions and the countries have to know each other better and work together, learning from the best practices in order to succeed. There are many challenges in internationalisation: language of instruction, costs involved, infrastructure required, promotion actions, etc, which require collaboration, reciprocity (horizontal cooperation), resources and sustainability of the actions developed.

In 2010, 4.1 million students studied outside their home countries, and in 2025 that number is believed to reach 7.2 million. This year, 370,000 Brazilian students are studying abroad, especially through the Science without Borders Programme. An investment of over US$ 1.2 billion and 101,000 scholarships (30% for undergraduate student mobility) are highlighting the quality of the Brazilian education institutions to the world. Brazil, as the world’s 5th largest economy, 2nd largest agricultural exporter, 3rd largest computer market, 4th most important investor in transnational companies (after China, USA and India) and accounting for 5% of global industrial GDP and 50% of Latin American income, could explore more its huge economic and educational potential, based on successful examples, such as the Brazilian Post-Graduate System.

Internationalisation is a powerful tool for increasing quality and requiring political action on the part of education institutions and governments in institutional, local, regional, national and international spheres. It is also a special way to define values and to contribute to the education of citizens and professionals while preparing them to act and live in an increasingly complex, interdependent, integrated, less-unequal and more tolerant world.
Internationalisation in higher education: Still a long way to go

Marianne L. Wiesebron

Dr Marianne L. Wiesebron is associate professor for the degree programme of Latin American Studies at the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University. She is a specialist in the history of Latin America and in Brazilian history, politics and society in particular. Recently she has focused more on the international relations of Brazil, bilateral as well as multilateral, and Brazil’s role in regional integration, for instance in Mercosur and Unasur, South-South developments and relations with the European Union.

Although contacts between universities has increased tremendously in recent years and internationalisation has taken off in different forms, how far has it really come? Student and staff exchanges take place, but exchange only works well when it is a compulsory part of a programme. Bilateral agreements between universities and multilateral agreements between networks have multiplied these last years. This latter form can lead to increased cooperation between universities that have not established joint projects and can do so in a broader framework. A further advantage is that exchange programmes need only to respect a certain balance in exchange numbers, while sending students and staff to different universities, rather than sending them to the same universities that the incoming students are from. This is certainly a good development.

There are also the multilateral programmes set up by the European Commission within the framework of Erasmus Mundus, which implies a tremendous amount of work for the coordinating university. It involves networks of twenty universities, ten in the European Union and ten in the partner country or region. Furthermore, there are complicated specific requirements and an – extremely high – minimum required number of students. The question is, what is the multiplier effect of all this? In most cases, it is quite enriching for the student, but will this help create long-term cooperation between the universities sending staff and students and those receiving them? Or will the cooperation only last for the duration of the programme? The staff meetings between the institutions are mostly done by administrative staff, involved in all kind of practical issues, all of which are crucial to the programme, but not useful for implementing long-time structural research cooperation.

Meanwhile, the possibility of joint degrees is still in an embryonic state, certainly in the Netherlands, while this would foster internationalisation in a big way. While projects of co-tutelle for PhDs have become possible, PhD students still receive two diplomas for one thesis. This seems neither very fair nor correct. For structural cooperation, the way forward is joint master’s programmes, preferably research master’s programmes, and joint PhD degrees, with one diploma from both universities.

Another issue which seems crucial for improving internationalisation is for Dutch universities to really start viewing bilateral relations as two-way exchanges, where they do not only expect foreign graduate students to want to come to the Netherlands, but also expect Dutch students to gain extremely useful experience conducting research at the partner university. This partner university might be lower in the world rankings, to the extent that rankings should be taken into consideration, but it may still develop research in ways that might prove inspiring for the Dutch graduate student and open some very different perspectives, especially if this happens at a university far away. In short, internationalisation could be hugely improved if Dutch universities, especially the more traditional ones, proved more open to what is happening elsewhere in the world.
From working in one higher education system to working in fifty countries

Jon File

Jon File has been director of Development and Consultancy at the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at University of Twente since 1998. Before that he was academic secretary of the University of Cape Town. He was also a member of the 13-person National Commission on Higher Education (1995/6) appointed by President Mandela. His work at CHEPS has taken him to over 50 countries.

I am not an expert on the internationalisation of higher education (some of my good friends are) but my work in higher education policy and management has been almost entirely international since I joined CHEPS. This is in stark contrast to the first twenty years of my working life where the focus was more or less exclusively on South African higher education in the context of the struggle for democracy and the fundamental changes brought about by its achievement. Thus, the explanation of my own internationalisation is simple: moving from an internationally isolated country (until 1994) to one of the world’s leading higher education policy centres.

But is it that simple? Two nuances: if I had stayed in Cape Town I would have been internationalised as well. The rainbow nation’s re-emergence into the world changed its higher education institutions dramatically. The University of Cape Town today has almost 5,000 international students (19%) from 112 countries (one of the factors behind its 113th place in THE’s ranking), whereas for most of my time there internationalisation was no more than a tiny blip on the policy radar. Second, yes, CHEPS from its foundation in 1984 has always placed a strong emphasis on comparative higher education studies, but from the late 1990s we developed an international portfolio of capacity building and policy-oriented projects alongside our international research work. Two of the most important elements of this portfolio were made possible by the Dutch government’s commitment to development cooperation and to its support to the – then – ten EU pre-accession countries in the period 1999 – 2004. The first enabled us to run ten – and counting – multi-year capacity building projects in developing countries (Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia, Yemen, Indonesia) and the second resulted in twenty CHEPS higher education policy seminars for senior university and ministry staff from the ten countries which have formed the basis for ongoing cooperation.

So if my internationalisation was inevitable, then the form it has taken was significantly influenced by two world-historical events – the end of Apartheid and the fall of the Berlin Wall – and it continues to be shaped by the place and role of the Netherlands in Europe and in the world.

Great experiences, I’ve had many, too many to mention. Except perhaps one: 25 of the countries that I have been fortunate to work in are wine producers (including Ethiopia!) but in this, my second major interest, I am staunchly anti-internationalist, supporting the resistance of local varietals to the global flow of over-wooded chardonnay.
The effect on us as persons
Fascination for the dynamism of the world and international higher education

Hans de Wit

Hans de Wit is director of the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation at the Università Cattolica Sacro Cuore in Milan, and Professor of Internationalisation at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. He is co-editor of the ‘Journal of Studies in International Education’. He has written and co-written several other books and articles on international education and is actively involved in assessment and consultancy in international education. He is a founding member and past president of the European Association for International Education (EAIE).

There are as many rationales for the internationalisation of higher education as there are approaches, strategies and activities in it. We have an inclination to look primarily at rationales from a national, international, institutional or programme perspective, or at the drivers for students and academics. But what about our own personal motivations as international educators? What inspires us to dedicate our professional but also private lives? And what about the nature of the work, work which implies much travel, different time zones, long days and many weekends. Is it the 24/7 aspect?

Each of us will have more than one answer to this question. My drive started with an interest in the world and people around me, and a decision to study social and cultural anthropology. It was further driven by solidarity with the people in developing countries, suffering under military and economic dictatorship, and by an experience abroad doing field work in Lima, Peru in 1976 for my master's thesis. During that year and the following five years, finalising my thesis and working as an assistant professor in Latin American studies, I started to understand the complexities and dynamisms of the world, and that not everything was black or white.

International educators have a romantic inclination to think that their work is helping to create peace and mutual understanding. During those years in the 1970s working in and with Latin America, my idealism had already been challenged enough for me to question the automatism of that romantic view of international education. There is no guarantee. There are probably as many examples of negative experiences as there are positive. It may be ‘a life changing experience’ as many students write in their reports of their time studying abroad. It certainly impacted my life! But it does not always automatically mean peace and mutual understanding, as evidenced by dictators who studied in Europe or the US.

So what drives me? It is the fascination for the complex and ever-evolving dynamism of the world we live in, both positive and negative, and the way higher education operates in and reacts to these developments. Over the 35 years that I have been involved in international education in several capacities, as a director of an international office, a vice-president for international affairs, a dean, a senior policy advisor, and a scholar and professor, higher education and its international dimensions have evolved, adding new perspectives, rationales and new approaches, creating new opportunities as well as challenges. It is this constant evolution of the world and international higher education and its implications for students, academics, institutions and national and international bodies and entities that fascinates and drives me, and will continue to drive me as new players and new emerging regions and countries start to reshape the internationalisation of higher education as we know it.
‘To thine own self be true’

Els van der Werf

Dr Els van der Werf studied English language and literature at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands and the University of Sheffield, UK. She has worked in the internationalisation of higher education since 1990 and is now the senior policy advisor on internationalisation and international relations for Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen. In addition, she is a member of the Dutch team of Bologna Experts.

When I talk about the internationalisation of higher education, I am often tempted to focus on the big issues involved: globalisation, harmonisation, transparency, equivalence, mobility, cross-cultural understanding, etc. Deep down, I suppose, I would like to think that my work contributes, however modestly, to the good of mankind and world peace. But why be modest? After all, I am a true believer, convinced that good education should have an international dimension and prepare students of all ages to live and work in a world that is larger, but at the same time so much smaller, than that of past generations.

But perhaps internationalisation is essentially about our personal experiences. The effects that international mobility and collaboration has on us as persons may be more important than the consequences which the process of internationalisation has on higher education as a whole. We are all aware of the historical tradition of the medieval travelling scholar, who, with his quest for knowledge beyond borders, lay the foundations for internationalisation as we know it today and who is therefore often seen as the original Erasmus student. But we each have our own story of internationalisation too, either because we studied or worked abroad ourselves, or because we are the parent, sibling, or friend of someone who went abroad. Living abroad changes us and we witness how it changes people. It is an age-old mechanism.

William Shakespeare’s Hamlet offers a wonderful literary representation of this. I can never watch a production of the play without seeing one of ‘my’ students in Laertes, who is ready to return to France when his father, Polonius, insists on a final man-to-man talk. Polonius may be long-winded and sermonic, but much of what he has to say to his son is sound advice, even today: be open-minded and civil to strangers, don’t get into fights, think before you speak, and keep your finances in order. And:

        This above all: to thine own self be true,
        And it must follow, as the night the day,
        Thou canst not then be false to any man.

This may sound like a New Age platitude. But to me, these lines still say something very significant about the personal international experience: be prepared to share your strengths and weaknesses, be open to change by adapting to others, and you may make a difference on a global scale.
I define internationalisation as a network of people, practices, experiences and ideas that help in maximising potentials, breaking moulds and creating new identities.

Internationalisation: an identity shaping experience

Rahul Choudaha

Dr Rahul Choudaha is the director of research and strategic development at World Education Services (WES.org/nes) in New York. He also edits DrEducation.com – a blog on higher education trends. Choudaha earned his doctorate in Higher Education from the University of Denver.

What do you think of an engineer who does not work in IT, an MBA who does not work in the corporate world, and a PhD who does not work in a university? Perhaps, someone taking an unusual career path at best or, at worst, someone with an identity crisis! My story of internationalisation is about identity.

As a small-town, middle-class Indian boy, I was destined to work in the IT industry. And I did so, after earning engineering and MBA degrees (at the time, and even today, there is no culture of career counselling in India; parents ‘counsel’ their children as to what they should do). However, I did not identify myself with the ‘product’ of accounting software and started questioning, if it was worth spending the rest of my life in a job with no passion. This was a turning point in my career: I decided to forsake six years of my post-secondary education to go for something which I might identify with.

After introspection, I came to the conclusion that, given my interest in academics and learning, I was best fitted to be in the education sector. This is when I decided to take a career risk and moved to work with an education institution. Subsequently, I worked with a global business school in India, which deepened my interest in the international dimensions of higher education and triggered my goal to become a specialist in international higher education. It was then I decided to go to the US to pursue a doctorate.

After graduating – five years ago now – I started working with World Education Services – a forward-looking non-profit organisation, which recognised and rewarded the diversity of my experiences. In addition, it provided me with a platform to connect with some of the best minds in the field of international higher education. In hindsight, moving off the traditional path and engaging with international higher education, was the best decision of my life.

Based on my experiences as an international student and a professional in the field of the internationalisation of higher education, I define it as a network of people, practices, experiences and ideas that help in maximising potentials, breaking moulds and creating new identities.

Although, most of my family and friends still find it hard to understand what I do for living, I am glad to have found a global network of international higher education professionals who have given me an identity as a professional and continue to educate and support me.
Internationalisation – a way of life

By Nina Lemmens

Dr Nina Lemmens studied art history and worked as a freelance journalist for ten years during her time at university. She joined the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in 1997 and since then has held numerous positions. In July 2009, she was appointed director of the Department for Internationalisation and Communication.

When you work in the field of the internationalisation of higher education and you have been around the block a few times, you think that you might have read every theory about this topic, have held every possible discussion about it with every kind of audience, and that you have seen all the PowerPoint presentations around the globe. But then, all of a sudden, Hanneke asks you to think about internationalisation one more time – and you really start to wonder: What is it all about? What does it mean to me?

A very famous quote is attributed to Henry Kissinger: “Who do I call if I want to call Europe?” Allegedly, he was wishing for one single number – and not a whole telephone book of all his European colleagues. For a US secretary of state, this wish might be understandable. For somebody working in the internationalisation of higher education, I think the opposite holds true: we want and we need many partners and colleagues, not only in Europe but all over the world. We thrive on the exchange of thoughts with all of them. We cherish their expertise and regional knowledge. And, even in our own home country, we could not do our work without them. This is the institutional perspective.

To me, personally, internationalisation means even more. Before I started working for the DAAD, I could not have imagined the wealth of ideas I was buying into. In my office, we have a strong focus on the international mobility of students and academics – and thus we ourselves have to be mobile, both in theory and in reality. So, for example, it is pretty normal when you want to learn something from another institution not to travel to a partner organisation in your own country, but to call Hanneke and ask if you can come and learn the tricks of the trade from her and her colleagues at Nuffic.

My business trips to other countries, neighbouring countries or those farther away, have not only broadened my professional view of the world. Everything I have learned while working in the internationalisation of higher education has changed me as a person. I have met incredibly inspiring people. I have immersed myself in the most challenging and creative discussions. I have seen many wonderful places. Internationalisation has made me more experienced, more thoughtful, more humble and very happy.
The internationalisation mindset

Elspeth Jones

Emerita Professor of the Internationalisation of Higher Education, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK, Elspeth Jones has worked in international education for over 30 years and has published extensively. She is the editor of a new book series for Routledge, ‘Internationalization in Higher Education’. She is a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Studies in International Education and of the Scientific Committee of the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, where she is also Honorary Visiting Fellow. She is Visiting Professor at the University of Zagreb and Edge Hill University, UK. More information about her work can be found at www.elspethjones.com.

My internationalisation journey began when I started learning French, aged seven. I was fascinated by the idea that completely different words could signify the same thing, depending on where you came from. Since then I’ve learned other languages, lived in various countries, travelled around the world and met people from many different cultural and national backgrounds. Internationalisation has helped me to try and treat people with respect, regardless of background, to attempt to understand the different contexts in which people live and to seek to view life from alternative perspectives. I have grown to realise that this approach is of equal relevance, whether I am in my home country or overseas. We experience alternative cultures and viewpoints on a daily basis. The cultural enrichment we gain from learning other languages or visiting different countries has a parallel in diverse cultural contexts of any kind. How we respond when faced with values, opinions or lifestyles with which we fundamentally disagree is the real test of our tolerance and intercultural competence whether at home or abroad.

But it is not simply about challenges. In my view that wide-ranging term, ‘internationalisation’, encapsulates a way of life and a way of thinking about the world. It embodies curiosity about others, their experiences and perspectives. At the root of this mindset is the questioning of personal identity, values and perspectives which necessarily accompany an understanding of the viewpoints of others.

For higher education the question is how to support students in the development of these far-reaching notions, advance their curiosity and broaden their perspectives to encompass alternative standpoints. How do we encourage reflection on the global dimensions of their disciplinary field? Importantly, if students are unable to benefit from international experience as part of their study programmes, to what extent can we internationalise the curriculum to offer opportunities for perspective transformation in domestic contexts? In future I feel we will see an increasing acceptance of the correspondence between the international and the intercultural, with both being incorporated into curriculum content and approaches to teaching, learning and assessment in higher education. Indeed I believe we will be failing to do justice to our students if we do not incorporate global and intercultural dimensions into their programmes of study. As multicultural and international living and working environments are the way of the future, universities must keep up with these global times.
Internationalisation requires curiosity, engagement and activism

*Harvey Charles*

*Harvey Charles is vice-provost for International Education at Northern Arizona University and has served as a senior international officer at a number of institutions around the United States. He is currently president elect of the Association of International Education Administrators.*

My interest in internationalisation began at a young age. As a pre-teen, I was fascinated by stories of kids, as stowaways, exploring the world on ocean-going vessels. I joined the International Youth Service and had pen friends in far-flung countries. And then I discovered the BBC World Service! No game, friend or meal could budge me from my daily appointment with the news bulletins that would report on the significant events occurring around the world, including the Vietnam War, peace-making efforts in the Middle East, the oil crisis, negotiations for majority rule in Rhodesia and Watergate. My fascination with these reports reflected a curiosity about the world, the origins of which I can’t explain, but a curiosity that seemed insatiable and continues to this day.

Although I did not pursue a straight path to the field of international education, I can’t help but attribute this career choice, in part, to the intense curiosity mentioned above. My first years in the field were in international student and scholar services, and the provision of services were central to my work as an international educator and even to how I understood such obligations. It gradually dawned on me, however, that this conception marginalised my role as an educator. I concluded that my work as an educator must be focused on advocating and facilitating student transformation, and that one of the most consequential kinds of student transformation was tied to an intentional global learning agenda expressed throughout the undergraduate curriculum and co-curriculum. In other words, I came to believe that education, be it in or outside the classroom, in the lab, or through internship experiences, must be shaped and defined in terms of global learning, and that this education must lead all students to negotiate issues of identity, responsibility and even citizenship in global terms. This is an agenda for which international educators must be in the vanguard, and this has become a central passion of my professional life.

Any substantive involvement with global learning quickly leads to the realisation that all of the major challenges currently facing the human species are global in nature and require global solutions. Climate change, cross-border conflicts, global pandemics, environmental degradation are just some of the challenges we face. The resolution of these challenges requires not only wise and deliberate human intervention, but also requires that we work collaboratively across national, racial and ethnic boundaries. In short, our very future on the planet depends upon the kind of leadership that we as international educators provide to the world. We can do so by being credible and conspicuous advocates for global collaboration, by inspiring curiosity about the world among our students and, most consequentially, advancing global learning throughout the academy.
Being international

Aparajitta Dutta

Aparajita Dutta is a policy officer Internationalisation at the Royal Academy of Art/University of the Arts, The Hague. Her responsibilities include: policy on internationalisation, institutional cooperation, international exchange coordinator, international alumni. She is chair of the X-Files Working Group within Cumulus Association and organiser of the Netherlands Art Universities International Relations group. Her specialisations are international cultural issues, international marketing, research, India and alumni relations. She also gives lectures on Dutch culture seen from a foreign perspective.

When are we international? This is a question I ask myself, and maybe after seventeen years of working for the internationalisation of higher education I might have found the answer. My experience of being international started when I left multi-cultural India and went to Japan and then to the Netherlands. In Holland my adventure in the field of international higher education has shown me many aspects of internationalisation.

Studying with 22 international students at the University of Amsterdam was an eye-opener for me. A very different system of education and a very mixed group that all reacted very differently to the Dutch system. It was my first truly intercultural experience in education – understanding, adjusting to and going along with the Dutch flow. Surprisingly, we had very little contact with Dutch students.

Internationalisation in the late 1990s in the Netherlands became focused on the recruitment of fee-paying students from all over the world. I myself experienced internationalisation as a coordinated commercial activity at the University of Leiden. Special English-taught programmes were created for this special group of students. Competition between the universities was high and there was a race to see who could attract the highest numbers of foreign students. The sharing of recruitment and marketing knowledge was not really done. Internationalisation was something all universities did as an extra activity. I am not quite sure if the quality of the students coming to study was the main focus. It was not mainstream!

But things have changed. Intercultural and marketing issues have become intertwined. Being international means being interculturally competent. There is a growing sense of give and take. Universities do not want large groups of Chinese or Germans simply to make up the numbers, but seek diversity. The quality of the international classrooms is becoming increasingly important. Today internationalisation in the Netherlands is all about attracting top talent and the intercultural competence of students and teaching and non-teaching staff. My present experience at the Royal Academy of Art/University of the Arts in The Hague is showing me that art is international! But are our art students international? In this world of creative and performing arts education, intercultural competence is also gaining importance. We all speak English but do we all speak the same English?

The question I ask our students who go abroad is, “How did your stay abroad help in your intercultural competence development and how do you think international students at our academy are helping the process of being international?” The answer is mostly “we have learned to think in a different way” and “we can now adjust much better to a new situation”. That, as far as I am concerned, is ‘being international’.
What does internationalisation mean to me?

Minna Söderqvist

Dr Sc (IB) Minna Söderqvist has studied foreigners at work, the internationalisation of service companies and the internationalisation processes at higher education institutions. She has done consulting work related to internationalisation for both the Finnish and Swedish ministries of education. She is currently responsible for several degree programmes and fourteen full-time teachers in Kyamk, Finland.

Internationalisation has been present in my whole life. When I was a child, we travelled a lot in Europe in our own car and went on shorter trips to Tallinn and Stockholm when it was not that common to travel a lot. I also remember often being at the airport to welcome my father back home from business trips. Later, before Erasmus, I did my mobility year in Paris, both studying and working: I got my first car a bit cheaper without the horrible Finnish car duties! Internationalisation has also been present in my hobbies – I was the internationalisation manager of the most international camp ever held in Finland up until that time. This camp changed the orientation of our whole group for about 20 years – first I InterRailed with our fifteen-year-olds to France and later they travelled all over the world: Malaysia, China, Indonesia, Peru, Ecuador. I became acquainted with all forms of international scouting! My best friends from that scouting and studying period from all over the world became the godmothers and godfathers of my children.

Currently at home, I have two half-African children in addition to my own children. Internationalisation at home is – literally – present via them – and via the work I do. I am responsible for several degree programmes in a small university of applied sciences called KYAMK. Ninety per cent of the participants of one of the programmes, our BBA in international business, come from outside Finland, most from different countries in Africa and East Asia, as well as Russia. Students learn how to become efficient in multicultural teams already during their studies! And, as a team leader of a group of international teachers, I discover all the things they need special help with.

My own studies relate to international business, but I have a major in French as well. My own dissertation stands firmly on two legs – international business and international education. Since that, internationalisation has come to mean a complete process to be managed, from a national phase to an international phase. It was exciting to live through the Europeanisation - Finland became part of the European Union at the time when I was doing my studies. I understood that discourse analysis could help us to understand what is going on when policies and practices were created and executed at the same time. For me, internationalisation today still means a process from the national to the international via managerial tools.
Internationalisation fuels empathy

_Eun-mi Postma_

_Eun-mi Postma is currently director of the East West Education Center [www.east-westedu.com](http://www.east-westedu.com). The East West Education Center aims to provide the best education advice service for Dutch and Korean students, academic staff and higher education institutions. From 2008–2013, Postma was director of Nuffic Neso Korea in Seoul. Eun-mi has worked with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and was a freelance correspondent. She holds two master’s degrees in Law and a post-graduate degree in Journalism. She has also studied Korean Language and Culture._

When I left my birth country South Korea in 1979 to be adopted by my Dutch parents at the age of seven, who would have ever thought that I would return to Korea at age 35 to run an office to promote Dutch higher education in Korea? It was an incredible chance to return to my roots as the Nuffic Neso Korea director and view Korea in a different way. Not as an adoptee to scrutinise Korean adoption policy. Not as a journalist, publishing critical articles on economic, social and human rights issues. I had already done that in 2003/2004. This time I reached out to get to know the universities of Korea, the professors and especially the students. A new world opened up to me and it was absolutely a joy to link the Dutch and Korean academic world and to see large numbers of Koreans leaving for Holland. I think that’s my true destiny: to contribute to an international and multicultural learning environment that nurtures young people and inspires them to become independent global citizens with intercultural competences and sensitivities.

I grew up in a family with adopted brothers and sisters from India, Indonesia and Colombia, and only our parents were blond with blue eyes. We were called a ‘rainbow family’ in our neighbourhood. In the seventies we were quite a remarkable family in a white neighbourhood. But these days, we live in international and multicultural cities. Amsterdam is home to people of over 200 nationalities. With the increasing mobility of students and academics around the globe, locals are also being exposed to foreign cultures. For instance, a Korean PhD linguistics student at Radboud University was looking for Dutch women for her research. Specifically, women of a certain age who had once visited Korea. That’s how she found herself on the couch of my Dutch friend who had visited me in Korea. After their interview, they talked about her troubled long-distance relationship and the culture of marriage in Korea. This is the aspect I really like: it is stories and personal meetings that fuel and deepen your empathy and your understanding for ‘the other’. Of course, the internationalisation of higher education is important for our knowledge-driven economy, but any academic or business joint venture will fail if you cannot put yourself in the shoes of ‘the other’ and overcome the cultural differences.

Since 2012, the numbers of students enrolling in Korean universities has been declining. South Korea also has one of the lowest birth rates in the world. That means that Korea – like the Netherlands – will increasingly battle for talent and do everything to attract more international students. So don’t be surprised if Korea starts opening offices, similar to the Nuffic Neso offices, in Europe at some point in the future. I will welcome them with open arms.
Cosmopolitan encounters for dialogue and innovation

Michaël Joris

Michaël Joris is head of the International Office of the 7,000-student University College, Katholieke Hogeschool Limburg, Belgium. He was one of the founding board members of Flamenco, now the Flanders Knowledge Area. He is a Bologna expert and sits on the Internationalisation Steering Group of the University Association of KU Leuven. He is a researcher and develops tool-sets to support the internationalisation of higher education.

In my last year of high school I was in the film club, the astronomy club, the band and I wrote for the school paper. We also arranged to have three AFS exchange students at our school: two Americans and a Brazilian. One of the Americans, a guy from Illinois, lived with my family; after 40 years we are still part of each other’s lives. Levels of English proficiency skyrocketed in our school that year. That is where my international commitment started. My experience tells me there are two main features in internationalisation, both on an organisational and a personal level: innovation and dialogue.

In our vision and mission I defined four development areas (two internal, two external):
- becoming an international institution, i.e. finding answers for a globalising world;
- organising mobility and Internationalisation at Home to create a cosmopolitan context for our ‘Citizen of the World’ profile;
- being a trusted partner in the fields of R&D; and community engagement.

An all-staff (mandatory attendance) motivational seminar was requested. Go figure. Everyone was to be present, from the Board Members to the cleaners, in the same room. We organised an experience event focusing on people, not programmes. We had a fair, interactive interviews, testimonials and inspiring interviews on a website, good examples from all faculties, our international R&D projects, and four motivational keynotes of national renown. And good food. Six hundred people came together to celebrate as a community, to be united in our local efforts to become citizens of the world in an international institution. The themes were encounters with people and looking beyond the first layers of the obvious, encounters with culture by studying the small culture of everyday life, and transcending this to embrace the cultures of the world. Defining identity as your part of a mirror palace of identities; and to show commitment to the have-nots of this world through social entrepreneurship. It was an overwhelming success and it has become a specific source of innovation, the mind-set for an institution.

In pursuing these targets I was privileged to meet with so many extraordinary people who brighten my days, my profession, my life, and the lives of those who are dear to me. I think that close encounters of the international kind are truly what lie at the heart of development. It is about meeting with the world, with cultures, with intellect, intelligence, ideas and identities; and encountering the person you are and the person you can be, a cosmopolitan citizen of the world.
Being international means having a wider perspective

Carlos E. Teissier, DBA

Carlos E. Teissier, DBA, holds an Engineering degree and a master’s degree in Global Management. He earned his Doctorate in Business Administration with a specialisation in Intercultural Negotiations. He also earned the specialisation in the Management and Leadership in Education graduate programme from Harvard University. He is a visiting professor at several universities in four countries. He has given conferences in more than twelve countries and has written important articles for newspapers and magazines in various parts of the world. He is also a consultant for important global corporations in the area of cross-cultural management.

Even more than trying to describe internationalisation, I have been thinking about what being international means.

Being international means having a wider perspective, and with that more options to interpret and enjoy life. Being international requires a commitment, having an open mind, accepting differences and embracing things and people that are not like us. Being international means accepting that there are many truths around the world, just as there are many different climates, geographies, landscapes and creeds. But being really international requires that we not only open up to these differences, but can live in them.

Being international doesn’t start with travelling, but being international is the difference between an international traveller and a citizen of the world.

That good old story about the global citizen is today more real than ever; it is the way we live. Even when we don’t realise it, we are immersed in this global world with new trends, new possibilities, new interactions, new views and new ideas. We are exposed to things we never imagined twenty years ago. Some people have decided to hate this interconnected new world and they simply tolerate it. Being international gives you the chance to jump into that new world and know everything about everywhere.

As Saint Augustine said: ‘Live as though you were going to die tomorrow, learn as though you were going to live forever’.
An international life

Bernd Wächter

Bernd Wächter, Director of the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA)

My beginnings were not cosmopolitan at all. I was born in a little village in Germany, and I went to secondary school in a nearby town few will know. I saw the first black person at the age of ten, an African civil servant on temporary training at my father’s workplace. The man was a Muslim. My parents invited him home and offered the best food they had: pork, and lots of it. We did not understand why the man hardly touched the delicacies.

At the age of sixteen, I spent a term at an English boarding school. The place was populated by pupils from all over the world. I discovered a whole new universe. Not better than my old one, not worse, but distinctly different. I later was a university student in the same country. As an occupation, life chose for me the then-new field of international university relations management. I travelled the world, and my closest collaborators were not next door but in distant lands. Not by chance, my wife is not German, but Icelandic (Icelanders are almost as exotic as Martians). Not by chance, I live and work in Brussels, and not ‘at home’. But then, terms like ‘at home’ and ‘abroad’, or ‘foreign’, have become ambiguous to me.

I am not young anymore. For my generation, a biography like mine is an exception. I was lucky. I enjoyed something exotic and rare – sheer luxury. For later generations, a biography like mine became a much more usual option. And given the ever-growing demands of a globalised world, it might well become the standard sooner rather than later. It might become a necessity. The internationalisation of education, and of higher education, in particular, has greatly contributed to this development from luxury via normalcy to necessity. The efforts of decades of work to demarginalise and to mainstream internationalisation are paying off.

I thoroughly like my international life, an admittedly subjective measure. So what is there to say for internationalising people’s lives? For me, the biggest benefit is the multiple perspective that an international biography necessarily produces. I have learnt that there is not one single way to do things (successfully). There is not one single methodology. There are many ways to perceive the world, all (or most) of them legitimate.

I wish not to be misunderstood. Yes, an international life is a source of joy and fulfilment. But it is not an easy life at all. It requires a constant effort to view things from many perspectives. It requires a daily battle with foreign tongues and foreign mores. I would have had an easier life had I stayed in my village. But I would have had a duller life.
Pursuing peace

Darla Deardorff

“"We must learn to live together as brothers, or perish together as fools." This quote by Martin Luther
King Jr. sums up what internationalisation means to me. Ultimately, this quote points to my driving
motivation for even being in this field, a motivation that stems from my own personal beliefs around
being a peacemaker. From an early age, I was taught about the importance of being a peacemaker in
this world. Then, as a high school student, I had the opportunity to participate in my first exchange – to
Germany. During that exchange, I remember hearing an adult remark: “If only the world could come
together like this.” Later, as an undergraduate student,
I had an internship at the United Nations in Geneva,
Switzerland. My rationale for such an internship was
thinking that the international level would be one of the
best ways to work toward peace. However, after that
experience, I came away with the belief that working
towards peace needed to happen at the grassroots level.
Thus, the internship experience pushed me into the field of
international education, where I worked for several years
before pursuing my graduate degrees. Even my doctoral
dissertation on intercultural competence was ultimately
about what is necessary for humans to get along together,
again stemming from my deeply held beliefs. And,
ironically, this has all ‘come full circle’ for me now through
the opportunity to work on the international level as well
as grassroots level, through teaching and mentoring. What
stands out to me in this journey is the importance of underlying beliefs and motivations. To me, this is
much more than a profession or career – internationalisation for me is about aligning one’s life work with
core values and beliefs. So, internationalisation to me is about the idealistic pursuit of helping to make
this world a better place, a world in which we can all live together peacefully. Learning to live together is a
lifelong process, one that we must pursue relentlessly and intentionally – through internationalisation – a
process that doesn’t see a utopia, but rather a process that calls on us to understand the essence of our
humanity – which is as Desmond Tutu said: “My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human
together.” Our future, therefore, is inextricably connected with each of us in a holistic, collective existence.
Marian Jansen

Marian Janssen serves as Head of the International Office at Radboud University, Nijmegen. She also is a writer. Her most recent work is Not at all what one is used to: The Life and Times of Isabella Gardner

Questions of Travel

There are too many waterfalls here; the crowded streams hurry too rapidly down to the sea, and the pressure of so many clouds on the mountaintops makes them spill over the sides in soft slow-motion, turning to waterfalls under our very eyes.

--For if those streaks, those mile-long, shiny, tearstains, aren't waterfalls yet, in a quick age or so, as ages go here, they probably will be.

But if the streams and clouds keep travelling, travelling, the mountains look like the hulls of capsized ships, slime-hung and barnacled.

Think of the long trip home.
Should we have stayed at home and thought of here?
Where should we be today?
Is it right to be watching strangers in a play in this strangest of theatres?
What childishness is it that while there's a breath of life in our bodies, we are determined to rush to see the sun the other way around?
The tiniest green hummingbird in the world?
To stare at some inexplicable old stonework, inexplicable and impenetrable, at any view, instantly seen and always, always delightful?
Oh, must we dream our dreams and have them, too?
And have we room for one more folded sunset, still quite warm?

But surely it would have been a pity not to have seen the trees along this road, really exaggerated in their beauty, not to have seen them gesturing like noble pantomimists, robed in pink.

--Not to have had to stop for gas and heard the sad, two-noted, wooden tune of disparate wooden clogs carelessly clacking over a grease-stained filling-station floor.

(In another country the clogs would all be tested. Each pair there would have identical pitch.)

--A pity not to have heard the other, less primitive music of the fat brown bird who sings above the broken gasoline pump in a bamboo church of Jesuit baroque: three towers, five silver crosses.

--Yes, a pity not to have pondered, blurr'dly and inconclusively, on what connection can exist for centuries between the crudest wooden footwear and, careful and finicky, the whittled fantasies of wooden footwear and, careful and finicky, the whittled fantasies of wooden cages.

--Never to have studied history in the weak calligraphy of songbirds’ cages.

--And never to have had to listen to rain so much like politicians’ speeches: two hours of unrelenting oratory and then a sudden golden silence in which the traveller takes a notebook, writes:

"Is it lack of imagination that makes us come to imagined places, not just stay at home? Or could Pascal have been not entirely right about just sitting quietly in one’s room?"

Continent, city, country, society: the choice is never wide and never free. And here, or there . . . No. Should we have stayed at home, wherever that may be?"

Elizabeth Bishop
Myths and metaphors

Betty Leask

Betty Leask is Professor and Executive Director Learning and Teaching at La Trobe University, Australia. She has researched and published extensively on internationalisation in higher education - in particular on internationalisation of the curriculum, teaching and learning. Betty was the first in her family to gain a university degree and to travel ‘overseas’.

My reflections on internationalisation are encapsulated in the following.

“After all, I believe that legends and myths are largely made of ‘truth’” (J.R.R. Tolkien)

Small people are like frogs in a deep well, reveling in the lowly enjoyments of their mudpool, but incapable of understanding life in the wide ocean (Zhuangzi 4th Century BC).

Kaleidoscope n. an optical instrument in which pieces of coloured glass, etc, in a rotating tube are shown by reflection in continually changing symmetrical forms.

Let me explain.

Higher education internationalisation is an area of endeavor rich with legends and myths. Myths that are born out of bold adventure stories celebrating achievements and transformations; stories emboldened in the telling. These stories inspire and excite university managers, inform policy and action, and unite students, staff and employers. But are they ‘made of truth’? Or even largely true? When? Why? Under what conditions? These are important questions. We need to be able to answer them. Research into internationalisation and student learning is incredibly important, never more so than in a world that is changing rapidly, shrinking for some and expanding for others.

In the fourth century BC, the Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi told the story of the frog trapped in the well, who revelled in the wonders of his confined and restricted world and was unable to comprehend the world beyond. Zhuangzi espoused the value of freedom from the boundaries and restrictions imposed on all by narrow-minded human societies. His thoughts encapsulate for me exactly what the internationalisation of higher education strives to achieve - the opportunities it provides for many and should provide for all. Internationalisation can help us, individually and collectively, to escape from our restricted and constricted mental and physical worlds and open up new opportunities and ways of being in the world.

Finally, the kaleidoscope is a powerful metaphor for internationalisation - composed of many different and often disconnected pieces, each one in itself attractive, even seductive, but nowhere near as powerful on its own as in combination. Many combinations are possible. Seemingly small changes can lead to dramatically different results. Always fascinating, eternally alluring.

That's how I think about internationalisation.
Leaving home
Internationalisering begint bij jezelf

Sabine Amft

Sabine Amft is a policy officer with Nuffic, where she has worked since 2005. While studying History and Dutch Language and Literature at the Westfälische Wilhelmsuniversität in Münster (Germany) she received an Erasmus scholarship to study at Leiden University and the University of Amsterdam. After graduating in Germany, Sabine decided to move to the Netherlands for good. Sabine feels writing this contribution in Dutch is important.

In de plaats waar ik ben opgegroeid, woonde een vrouw die nooit haar geboortestad had verlaten en dus nooit naar een andere plaats was geweest. Als kind vond ik dit zo bijzonder dat ik het eigenlijk niet begreep. Je moest er bijna moeite voor doen om binnen de grenzen van de stad te blijven…Nu ik dit schrijf, vraag ik me af waarom zij haar stad niet verliet. Was zij ergens bang voor, was ze niet nieuwsgierig? Of was ze gewoon blij met wat ze had? Ik kan het niet meer aan haar vragen.

Wat is de reden waarom sommige mensen nooit weg gaan? Angst voor het onbekende, gebrek aan nieuwsgierigheid, gemakzucht? Misschien is het makkelijker om te bedenken waarom zo veel anderen wel besluiten om de wereld te ontkennen al dan niet voor een langere tijd. Zijn deze mensen juist erg geïnteresseerd in andere culturen, andere landen, andere mensen? Wellicht hebben ze ook alleen de behoefte om het verleden achter zich te laten en ergens opnieuw te beginnen.

Ikzelf ben echt geen wereldreiziger. Daar ben ik dan misschien iets te bang voor…en ik hoef ook niet zo nodig de andere kant van de wereld te zien. Ik ben wel geïnteresseerd in nieuwe contacten. Nieuwe mensen leren kennen geeft mij energie. Daarom ben ik na de middelbare school mijn geluk elders gaan zoeken. Ergens anders dan in de omgeving waar ik was opgegroeid, waar ik mijn omgeving zo goed kende en waar ik wellicht toch op was uitgekeken. Ik wilde nieuwe mensen, nieuwe verhalen en een nieuwe omgeving. En daarmee kon ik ook mijn ‘angst’ voor het onbekende en het onzekere overwinnen. Want mijn nieuwsgierigheid was gewoon groter!

Wil je jonge mensen aansporen om tijdens hun studie of zelfs schooltijd zelf te ervaren hoe het is om in een ander land, op een ander continent te wonen, zorg dat zij de nieuwsgierigheid van de vroege levensjaren niet kwijtraken. Breng kinderen zo vroeg mogelijk in contact met andere landen, andere culturen om te laten zien wat er nog meer is dan je eigen veilige ‘nestje’. Neem mogelijke angsten en zorgen weg en steun ze, idealiter ook en met name financieel om de grote stap naar het buitenland ook echt te DOEN!
Home is where the heart is, and sometimes the heart is out travelling

Saskia Mulder

Saskia Mulder studied Communication Science at the University of Amsterdam. She studied in Chicago during her master’s programme. After she graduated, she spent a month in Italy to learn Italian. Her next travel plans will be executed after she wins the lottery, which she plans to do next month.

‘Internationalisation’. Try saying it fast ten times. Ok, I agree, it is not that hard. But what I am trying to say is that I realise that I sometimes think about the word as a scientific, far-away concept. While, in fact, it is about the core of it all: friendship, heart and home.

People

When I think of who my closest friends are, I realise that I have seen some of them in real life only three ‘times’ (please let me cheat a little and count several months of studying in the same place as one time, to get my point across). It boggles my mind how people so far away can be so close to you. Yet, I have entire conversations with them through whatsapp when I’m commuting my way home. They have just woken up when my day is already behind me for the most part. And it is not just small talk or ‘koetjes en kalfjes’ (as we would say in Dutch). Even complete existential discussions are conducted through that wonderful little chat application. It is as if we are sitting across from each other in that little café on that square in a town in Italy where we used to hang out. Or as if we are having our meal at that sushi place close to our university building in Chicago. After meeting in different places around the world, our friendships took us to the greatest places and to each other’s homes.

Home

We have a saying in Dutch: ‘dan ben je nog verder van huis’. The literal translation would be ‘then you’ll be even further away from home’ and it means to say that you are far removed from your goal, or that you are even worse off than you were before. Now may I just say, ‘excuse me?’ My fellow Dutchies have lost me there. How could you possibly be worse off than you were before, when you are far away from home, i.e. travelling? For me, it is the other way around. There is nothing like travelling and ‘getting lost’ to help you find your goals and make you feel at home. As the – much better, if I may say so – English saying goes: home is where the heart is. And, well, sometimes the heart is just out travelling. And hopefully along the way it will meet people who will stay close to it forever.
Internationalisation – a state of mind

Saskia Loer Hansen

I have had a variety of roles covering international relations, industry liaison, research development and support, planning, policy and strategy in Denmark, Scotland and Australia, and for eight years had a part-time role as secretary to the European Consortium of Innovative Universities. I am currently director of international relations at RMIT University in Australia.

Having studied and worked in Denmark, Botswana, Scotland and now Australia, internationalisation is a reality for me every day of the week. I grew up in a small village in Denmark, the daughter of Dutch-Danish parents, and had exposure to different languages and cultures from an early age. Spending time in Africa for a couple of years in my teens made me deeply appreciate being able to access tertiary education, knowing so well that many of the people I had come to know in southern Africa would not have access to university education.

While studying in Denmark, I had the benefit of being an Erasmus student and learning first hand what a study experience in another country has to offer. There was also ‘internationalisation at home’ through thematic regional studies as part of my Social Anthropology and European Studies degrees and collaboration with students from other parts of the world.

My subsequent jobs in different universities have involved working with colleagues from across the world in designing and promoting internationalisation opportunities for students and staff through mobility, education and research collaboration. Often the focus has been on making mobility simple and easy, reflecting a genuine desire to make international collaboration work in practice. Developing joint master’s programmes is complex and tough, but forces you to work through different institutional and national approval mechanisms while not losing sight of the outcome: new and exciting opportunities for education across borders.

After working in Denmark and the UK, I moved to Australia and have gained different insights into internationalisation by working for an institution that has campuses and transnational education partners across the broader Asia Pacific region. We encourage mobility across our global footprint and utilise opportunities for student cohorts to work together across borders.

My personal experience of ‘internationalisation’ is about:

- encouraging and enabling students to approach issues and challenges from different perspectives, not least by being able to draw on different national, regional and cultural contexts;
- enabling and driving new collaboration opportunities across higher education institution systems including physical mobility; and providing opportunities for curricula to be designed to promote a more nuanced take on the world;
- preparing our students to be ready for a global work place;
- walking the talk and being prepared to move out of our comfort zones ourselves and take on work in different countries or indeed continents.
A sandwich with Dutch Gouda cheese

Robin van IJperen

Robin van IJperen (1971), Dutch, married, two kids. His passion for ‘international’ started during his studies in Grenoble (1993). After several international posts at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the European Commission, he currently works as project leader of ‘international higher education’ at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in The Hague.

At the age of 21 I went to France to study. Only then did I find out that a sandwich with Dutch Gouda cheese and milk is not necessarily the best lunch there is. And, yes, it is nice that in general Dutch people talk easily, but I now also understand that Dutch people are sometimes seen as too ‘pushy’. For example, when they start asking you all kinds of very private personal questions after you have only just met.

On the other hand, when living abroad you are also more aware of the things you like about your own culture. For me that is the rather open-minded and liberal climate in the Netherlands and our specific humour (which probably nobody understands outside the Netherlands). I think the ultimate challenge is to take the best of all cultures, instead of defending your own culture at all costs. That is true for life in general, but also definitely within the international context of higher education. Of course there are differences in policies, opinions, values and attitudes. And, yes, there is competition between countries, but we can learn an awful lot from each other, just as long as we all keep the same goal in mind. In my view our shared desire should be to deliver higher education of excellent quality to the maximum number of students, who ideally could move freely all over the world.
Diversity 2.0……

Rolf Hoffmann

Rolf Hoffmann is executive director of the German-American Fulbright Commission in Berlin and has served as a higher education and marketing expert for many national and international agencies in Europe and has held various senior positions in academic and international exchange institutions. He did his MSc and PhD research as a graduate student at Duke University, taught as assistant professor in Karlsruhe and holds a doctorate in behavioural ecology from the University of Tübingen.

Aylin would not leave Cologne, the town where she was born nineteen years earlier as the youngest of five sisters and brothers. Her parents, immigrants from rural eastern Turkey, had raised their kids traditionally in a city suburb, a bustling German-Turkish community catering to the very diverse and multilingual residents. Aylin, pride of her family as the first to ever be able to afford college, would stay in her home town and close to her family and friends and finish school as quickly as possible – like most of the first-generation college kids of immigrants to Germany whose share has since risen to 13% of the German population today. In some large German cities these days, up to 2/3 of young Germans under the age of 25 have immigrant roots, and many will become major players in the society in a few years’ time.

During her first days in college Aylin met some other student girls – most had an immigrant background – who had participated the year before in a summer school in America. Summer school? Going abroad? At no cost? Was that not a distraction keeping her away from her study plans back home? And America? When she was being raised, she had not heard too many good things about this country, so why America? Her friends argued with her, her family approved, and so Aylin, after winning the competition, was drawn into an adventure that she had never planned.

Challenges abounded when they arrived at a small rural state university in the south-eastern US, and they were mastered, with the help of the hosts. The overwhelming hospitality Aylin experienced from university staff on campus, American students in every-day life, and American families at private BBQ cook-outs hosted for foreign students went far beyond any expectations. More importantly, the reality about American values as lived by people, be they political, family oriented or religious, proved many old prejudices wrong.

Not only did Aylin’s view of another culture change, the experience also changed her perception of herself and her home country. Aylin came to America as a Turkish girl living in Germany; in the US she realised that she was German after all, but one with strong Turkish roots.

Aylin is pursuing a law degree in Cologne, plans to spend a study year abroad and will then – I’m sure – become a young leader who will help to transform her – our – society.

This is in essence what internationalisation means to me, and why the Fulbright Commission in Germany has established its ‘Discover USA’ programme for German students with immigrant backgrounds.
Open the mind and you have a continual traveller!

Merle McOmbring-Hodges

Merle McOmbring-Hodges has approximately 30 years’ experience in teacher development at UWC, UCT, Bellville College of Education, Peninsula Technikon and CPUT. Her current position is Director of International Affairs at UWC.

My personal journey
Born in a dusty town called Kraaifontein, I was schooled at a farm school that gave me my most basic education – learning to love life and people. My father was a teacher, stern, and my mother a cleaner, fun. My cousin, who spent ten years on Robben Island, provided my political education and taught me how to be truly non-racial. My international perspective started by being forced to listen to classical music. Mozart composed *Eine Kleine Nachtmuzik* along with a whole load of other things. So, broadening my horizons I was introduced to European orchestral music and we played and listened to Mozart’s EKNM again and again, much to my family’s annoyance.

I had to read Emlyn Williams’ ‘How Green was My Valley’, ‘The Ragged Trouser Philanthropists’, Marx, Lenin, Engels, I.B. Tabata and other great African revolutionaries. I was routinely sat down to listen to the emotional rhetoric of Marin Luther King’s ‘I have a Dream’ until the words ‘I dream that my four little children will be judged by the quality of their character and not the colour of their skins’ was imbedded into my young brain. Then already, the plight of the international poor had become obvious. My belief in a definition for internationalisation that must include people, poverty and politics grew with me from childhood. South Africa’s poverty under Apartheid was devastating. It is no different now under our liberators who decided to build a black middle class at the cost of the poor majority. The only freedom the poor earned is the right to vote, nothing more! I learnt that mobility of the mind is a very tangible aspect of internationalisation.

My childhood experiences through text, music, voice, discussion and reflection opened my horizons to a world out there that I wished to explore. The nature of my reading opened my mind to the plight of the international poor and listening to passionate and charismatic voices helped me to become passionate and to utilise my voice to inspire. The value of mobility should start at home, at school and in-country, through mentorship. If you have not experienced mobility of the mind, then physical mobility would not be as beneficial as it should or could. As per my example, mobility of the mind is not related to wealth or poverty; it just needs a person who makes time to educate you like my cousin did me.

My teachers were also revolutionary. Through chalk-and-talk education – or ‘gutter education’ as it was called. I was moved to read prose in my second language. I listened to songs of the Beatles such as ‘Lucy in the sky with diamonds’ (LSD) and attended Shakespeare plays while holding my teacher’s baby because his wife needed to rest. Revolutionary teaching by caring teachers can be delivered in any format and it will open/stimulate/excite the brain! These experiences took me on an international journey, which I copied as a teacher lecturer and international practitioner. Open the mind and you have a continual traveller!

My leadership abilities were nurtured at school. As head girl, I was selected by the Rotary Club to attend a leadership programme in my last year at school. I was introduced to the world of interconnectivity and the vibrancy of science. This led me to become a scientist. Soon I discovered that scientific texts (books) are written in the North and absorbed by us in Africa. I pledged to change that!
My academic years.

I vowed that I would visit far-off shores to see how life is lived. At 37, I stepped off African soil for a master’s programme in the UK representing many friends and family. The most important lesson I learnt during my stay was that ‘the world is made of people who sleep, wake up, eat, learn, seek shelter, are happy, sad, rich or poor’. Knowledge is a means of survival. In the North knowledge sustains a highly technological lifestyle, which is no more important than the knowledge created by the majority in the world to survive the most basic circumstances.

Prof. Rosalind Driver at Leeds, a woman who did not treat me as an African but as a scholar, received this pledge from me on my return home:

‘I pledge to you that I will return to Africa to invest in people and to live for our children.’

A British Council-funded project allowed me to do just that and teach the SA youth that science is logical, interesting and fun to learn. I also supported a team of disadvantaged women in science to establish a research group to promote critical and moral thinking in science. We stepped onto the international arena as published researchers, writing text books and publishing in international research journals. What a feat for a girl who lost her dad at the age of twelve and whose mother was a cleaner - the passion to learn!

Internationalisation as a career

DFID, AUSAID and USAID provided access to the funded world of internationalisation. Millions were pumped into SA to assist the disadvantaged develop the capacity of their higher education institutions and to promote international link-ups. This was a whole new world. We upgraded our IT systems, built firewalls, wrote engineering textbooks, went abroad to earn master’s degrees and PhDs, researched language content integration, established centres of excellence. Women developed skills in executive management. We entered the world of CD-ROMs and multi-media and, best of all, travelled the world in pursuit of knowledge. It was a time of renewal and a time of consolidation made possible by international funding. I supported many academics in entering the international arena by utilising their own intelligence, which had been stunted through disadvantage.

Today I proudly look back on an internationalisation career that assisted people to grow. My institution has MOUs in approximately 50 countries, teaches international students from almost 100 countries and has launched the first Nano satellite – a first in Africa!

My most prized internationalisation memories are within communities. Service learning won CPUT the Talloirres prize initiated by the HAN University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. This PPP project helps impoverished communities to make their lives better. Students gain as much as the community members, because they learn how to make a tangible difference through caring.

At the bottom of the economic pyramid children also play. In collaboration with SUPSI in Switzerland, we mentor a street soccer group to keep the children safe from drugs or other forms of abuse. We teach their parents social entrepreneurship strategies, such as recycling clothes and solving their own sanitation problems through innovative technology – learnt in India and Switzerland – to promote a better living environment in Africa. Internationalisation that can do that should surely be promoted.

Let us live for our children the world over!
The butterfly effect of mobility

Queenie Lam

Queenie Lam is a project officer at the Academic Cooperation Association in Brussels. She has experienced degree mobility in Kassel, credit mobility in Georgetown, blended mobility in New Haven, conference mobility in St. Gallen, and inter-port mobility across the sea from Osaka to Hong Kong. Currently, she is experiencing employment mobility to and from Brussels.

At the age of nine, I had my first mobility experience moving from a little Chinese village to the then-British city of Hong Kong with my family. This just-across-the-border ‘international’ mobility, though short in geographic distance, changed the course of my life. It allowed me to access Hong Kong’s nine-year compulsory education system, the international curricula of a secondary school run by French missionaries, and later, the mix of Western and Chinese traditions inherited by a college that was founded by some Chinese Confucian scholars with the help of the Yale-China Association in 1949.

Until the second-to-last year of my time at university, I had experienced plenty of ‘internationalisation at home’ but had never stepped outside of China’s borders. Thanks to the encouragement of a professor, who convinced half of my class that translation students should go travelling rather than study books, I made a last-minute attempt at physical mobility. As a small first step, I persuaded a panel of thirteen interviewers to let me make a presentation about Filipino maids in Hong Kong for a two-week exchange at Yale. This small success in short-term mobility emboldened me to invest a full year in Georgetown. There I discovered the world, myself and my origins: Hong Kong and China. Being the only exchange student from Hong Kong, I was constantly confronted with questions about my ‘country’, its ‘two systems’ and my Chinese point of view. Gradually, I realised that to communicate with the West, I first had to know the East. So, by the end of the year, I had – ironically – learned more about China in the US than during the time when I was at home.

After that one year of studying plus travelling in the US, the world became smaller and mobility seemed easier for me. I had no hesitation about ‘going international’ again. Coincidentally, through some incoming European buddies, I discovered a new continent for ‘free movers’: Europe. I found out that there were excellent student-run international symposia, atypical summer schools, and unique study programmes taught in English because, one by one, I tried them all!

Today, we are obsessed with the assessment of the impact of mobility. If I were asked to name the most influential move that I ever made, I would probably go for the very moment when I handed in my 500-word application for my first self-initiated attempt to move.
The smile I'll never forget

Hanneke Teekens

Hanneke Teekens studied education and history, she taught modern history and worked in teacher education at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Hogeschool van Amsterdam, and at the University of Amsterdam. Hanneke then turned her interest to the internationalisation of higher education and worked at Twente University and in many international programmes in countries all over the world. From 2003—2013 she was member of the Board of Directors at Nuffic. In 2013 she became a senior fellow of Nafsa.

In August 1966 I left my home town to spend the year in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as an AFS Exchange Student. About 1,000 other AFS students from all over Europe had come to Rotterdam to embark on the ten-day boat trip to NYC. We had a great time and it was difficult to say goodbye when we were split up to go to our various destinations. Overnight was spent on a Greyhound bus. The first stopover was with a family in St. Louis, staying in what seemed to me like a royal palace. I was completely overwhelmed. I was told that during the night ‘the maid’ would see to me if I needed anything. She was a big black woman, looking like a nurse in a light blue uniform, with a wonderful warm smile and an accent I could not understand. But she understood me: my confusion and unease, my fatigue after the long trip and my loneliness in that enormous room with a huge king size bed (with canopy). I cannot remember much of that first evening. But the next morning I left after a good night’s sleep, a big hug and a broad smile that gave me the confidence that I would be fine.

Over the next year I went to Tulsa Central High School, a large downtown school with a mixed student population. However in none of my classes there were black students. In none of the social activities I took part in either. Much against the school's counsel, I changed one of my honour’s classes into home economics. Non-academic, only girls and almost all students were none-white. I learned a lot, by listening. It started my fascination for personal stories.

At the time I probably did not properly understand that the most important lesson of that AFS year was trying to find out what is behind the picture. What is the story? My view of the US, the dream country I wanted to go to, was based on images. I realised that unless I found out who created the images I was not going to learn much.

This year I returned to St. Louis for the Nafsa conference. Several sessions discussed the importance of introductory programmes and the need to provide international students upon arrival with the right information. I thought of my own arrival and the smile I’ll never forget.
My own story of internationalisation

Seline Visser-Tap

Seline Visser-Tap is a communications advisor, with a special interest in public relations. She graduated in European Studies from The Hague University of Applied Sciences in 2003.

When I was a student at The Hague University of Applied Sciences I went to Salerno, Italy, for an exchange period of six months. I can honestly say that this period changed my life forever. Being on your own, in a different country, with a different culture where hardly anybody speaks English was sometimes really tough.

It has been said that the further you travel the more difficult it is. Italy is still in Europe, but the southern culture there is so different from Dutch culture that it sometimes felt as if I was at the other end of the world.

The reason for spending time abroad varies from person to person. I sometimes have the feeling that we, the people involved in the internationalisation of higher education, tend to focus mainly on the quality of the international study programme or the degree received. But I think an international experience offers you more than just a degree. It gives your life skills. It teaches you to stand on your own two feet in an unknown environment. You learn different languages, meet people from different cultures, and most of all, have an experience that you will never forget. It shapes you to become an international citizen, open to learning from different cultures and religions and able to look at things from a worldwide perspective.

We need (young) people with this worldwide perspective and experience as well as a good education. Only if we keep an open mind, can we learn, live together and make this world a better place, regardless of where you were born or the possibilities you have.
A reminder to myself of what matters most in internationalisation

Robert Stableski

Robert Stableski has been at NAFSA for fourteen years directing professional development programmes and as a senior adviser for strategy and planning. Prior to NAFSA, he managed high school exchange programmes for AFS and World Learning, and had a second career as an organisational development, leadership and management consultant to domestic and international organisations.

Some 45 years ago, I left what I thought was the Centre of the World – Minnesota, in the American Midwest – to study in Berlin for a year. Most of the succeeding 30 years were spent living or working internationally.

The ‘educational’ outcome for me – well, not really an outcome, more of a continuously evolving perspective – is understanding people and other cultures more deeply, but more importantly, understanding myself and my culture. It is about how people, social systems, cultural norms, civic systems, and global economics interact, and how I interact with them. My favourite ‘learning opportunity’ is still a lively discussion over a bottle of wine with colleagues or friends about how various countries, including my own, behave in addressing – sometimes in good ways, sometimes not – the global challenges we share.

Then, nearly fifteen years ago, I found myself at NAFSA, working for the internationalisation of higher education. Another learning experience, as I needed to decipher the culture of US higher education. It is complex: there are competing interests around internationalisation and the field has grown tremendously in recent years.

There is good in trying to internationalise curricula, outreach, and faculty perspectives. But perhaps we have drifted into seeing internationalisation too much as a process, something that we are trying to accomplish often through a cognitive lens. To be sure, broadening knowledge of the world, especially in a large nearly continental country like the US, is sorely needed. Not everyone in the US will study abroad; not everyone in China will either.

But I am convinced that extended, in-depth experience abroad should remain the core of international education. We need a much larger cohort of educated people who have personal, emotional ties to the global reality, who have been exposed to how others see our common global problems, or even everyday life. We need people – students, teachers, faculty, business leaders, politicians – who have developed the kind of openness and ease in dealing with the uncertainty inherent to an international experience, so they can exercise those same attitudes at home.

After my 45 years in the field, I remain convinced higher education must provide and support those international living and learning experiences for an ever-expanding number of learners, young and old, coming to our countries and going abroad. While the ‘internationalisation of higher education’ has become an umbrella term covering a multitude of efforts – all good and worthy, to be sure – the frame of the umbrella that holds it up is the international experiences people have. Let’s not lose focus on the critical importance of providing those in-depth experiences that, as we are fond of saying, change people’s lives.
‘The tyranny of distance’ in an interconnected world

Wendy Green

Dr Wendy Green is a lecturer in higher education at the University of Queensland, Australia. Her teaching and research concerns the internationalisation/globalisation of higher education; culture, learning and teaching; and academic development. In 2013, she was the Tony Adams Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy. She has been a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Academic Practice, Research & Inquiry (CAPRI), Leeds Metropolitan University, UK, since 2010.

Orly airport, Paris, 1977. I’ve arrived. In France, and ready for my life to really begin. At this moment, I can’t think of anything I’ve ever wanted to do, except travel. Where to doesn’t matter. The point is simply to go – to shake off a pervasive sense of isolation, so aptly captured in the title of Geoffrey Blainey’s Australian classic, ‘The Tyranny of Distance’. That this book was a bestseller suggests I wasn’t alone in feeling this tyranny. This was our social imaginary, our national myth. Aboriginal Australians refer to the work of the social imaginary – the stories we live in, and by – as ‘dreaming’. We might say that distance and isolation have been central tropes in white Australia’s ‘dreaming’ since colonisation. By the time I was nineteen, I’d waited long enough to live in and by a different dream. I dropped out of university and headed off.

Arriving at Orly airport, I’m confronted with a horrible, and I have to confess, unexpected truth. I’m literally lost for words. My language is no use to me. I have no way of expressing anything of myself. I can barely buy food or ask directions. Non-verbal cues are utterly opaque to me. Nothing in my ever-so-British education had prepared me for this. In truth, my first few months in Europe ruptured my old ‘self’. This was my Copernican revolution; the experience decentred me, and my Anglo-centric Australian world for good.

Last week, I was suddenly reminded of my first sojourn. Students in my undergraduate class mentioned ‘The Tyranny of Distance’. From the way they spoke, it was clear that Blainey’s imagery resonated with them, as powerfully as it once did with me. In spite of the ease with which this generation can move, at least virtually, across the globe, these students were speaking with a sense of disconnection from it. Perhaps I shouldn’t have been surprised by this. Much of the public discourse in this country perpetuates the myth that we are oppressed by our distance from the centre of things (in the northern hemisphere).

A tiny minority of Australian students will travel abroad, and perhaps in the process, experience their own Copernican revolution. Perhaps not. We have no way of knowing, while we leave their learning to chance ‘over there’. And what of the majority, those who cannot go, or do not think of going? In a country tyrannised by an isolationist imaginary, ‘internationalisation at home’ carries a particular urgency, I think. But let’s not kid ourselves. We all share a world sorely in need of new ways of thinking, acting and being. The Nigerian poet and novelist Ben Okri argues that the global financial crisis is but a symptom of a more fundamental crisis facing us all. “What is missing most in the landscape of our times is the sustaining power of myths we can live by”. It is, he says, a “time for new dreams”.

This is how I think about my work – ‘internationalisation at home’ is about fostering dreams that will reshape our world.
The student experience
Internationalisation ≠ party!

Vanessa Lambrecht

Vanessa Lambrecht graduated in Arabic and Women’s Studies from the University of Amsterdam and did her internship in Palestine. She worked at Nuffic from 2000 until 2008, and was head of the National Agency for Life Long Learning. She is an independent interim manager in the non-profit, educational and governmental sectors.

The one thing that stands out for me about my time as head of the Erasmus National Agency is the way people see Erasmus students. There was a lot of discussion about this oldest of mobility programmes that stimulated thousands of students to go abroad over the years. It is a good solid and stable programme that offers continuity both to students and staff, but also to higher education institutions, which almost always have Erasmus at the core of their internationalisation activities. The money offered to students is not very much, but it works as an incentive to a lot of young people to go abroad and experience a life-changing time away from home. But when talking about student mobility, the general perception is that Erasmus students are party people who are lazy and do virtually nothing that even resembles studying. The money is wasted on them (spent on beer mainly), and the courses abroad are absolutely inferior to the courses at their home institutions.

This, of course, is rubbish. I have never believed the notion of the partying Erasmus student. The students I met over the years almost always baffled me with their serious work ethic, both academically and socially. Take for instance the student who went to Denmark during her dance studies. Dancing was what she had done all her life, starting at a very young age. It was what people expected her to do, but it was also something she expected of herself. But professional dancing is hard, even cruel sometimes. And the artistic life that comes with it is tough on a young self-conscious girl. In Denmark she went through an existential crisis and decided to choose a new direction and opt for a completely new study, all by herself and, more importantly, for herself.

For me, internationalisation means that young people go abroad at some point during their formative years, acquiring knowledge, expanding their social network and gaining experience in life itself. They organise their courses at an unknown university with a different study culture, they rent a room in a city that is not their own, and they create new social networks. In a way they start all over again. And yes, they do party. But that wouldn’t be any different at home. It is just a part of life, and I bet all those Erasmus critics partied just as much during their student days.
Dare to learn and enjoy

Joep Houterman

Joep Houterman (1962) worked in agricultural education in the Netherlands, in development cooperation and as an international consultant and manager at a consulting group before joining Nuffic. At Nuffic he served as director, among other positions, and was responsible for managing subsidy programmes. As of September 2013, he is a member of the Executive Board of the Aeres Group of agricultural education institutions in the Netherlands.

It was 1984 and I was in my fourth year of studies at Wageningen University, the Netherlands. I specialised in tropical animal production. Before entering the final phase of my studies, I was obliged to go to a tropical country for a practical training period of at least six months. It seemed very normal that this should be obligatory. How else could you be taken seriously as a professional in a tropics-related field of study? Fellow students on animal production in moderate climates were not obliged to go abroad, but most of them went anyway. Spending part of your study abroad was a normal thing to do.

I went to Rwanda to spend my six months on a project of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. I also worked with Dutch and Rwandan experts of the Dutch development organisation SNV. Before departure I had exchanged a few letters with my hosts. None of them I had ever met in person. Phoning was horribly expensive for a poor student and the digital highway was nowhere to be seen yet. With very little international experience in my youth, I felt I was plunging into the deep end.

I still have a clear memory of the last minutes on the SABENA plane just before touchdown at the small airport of Kigali. I was a bit nervous, but I took a decision to open up: whatever my experiences would be during the next six months, I would enjoy them and learn from them. Learning I did. I learned an incredible lot from my mentors, other professionals in animal production and development cooperation and, of course, from the farmers on the beautiful Rwandan hills. I enjoyed my stay to the full.

My Rwanda experience proved fruitful for the rest of my studies. The knowledge and skills gained were very valuable for my professional career. Since then, my career has always had an international dimension, most recently, during the time I was on the Nuffic Board of Directors.

My experience taught me two things: first, education institutions are responsible for setting the right conditions for internationalisation. This means creating an environment in which an international experience is a ‘normal’ part of the study programme. Second, the individual student has to make the international experience a success. The key is to take a personal decision: dare to learn and enjoy during your experience abroad.
Come to the edge

Laura Rumbley

Laura E. Rumbley, Boston College Center for International Higher Education

On a morning in early August 1979, at the tender age of eight, I stepped sleepy-eyed with my family off a long overnight flight from Philadelphia onto the blazing hot tarmac of an airport in southern Spain. For me, quite literally, nothing would ever be the same. Without exaggeration, I’m convinced that all major decisions in my life – personal and professional – can be traced back in some meaningful way to that fateful moment. A threshold was crossed—into impossibly bright sun, improbably hot, dry air – and everything that followed in my life can be seen as a variation on one central theme: internationalisation.

More than 30 years later, my work in international higher education – as a university administrator, a lecturer, an aspiring scholar and analyst – has added rich layers of knowledge and experience to what was initially just a hunch by a child: learning through international experiences (and lenses) is at once (and at different moments) difficult and discombobulating, daring and dazzling. It has the disconcerting potential to change those who engage in the process in fundamental ways, forever. And it always begins with a first step.

For me then, one of the most important insights that has coloured my understanding and experience of internationalisation is the enormous (and I think often underappreciated) importance of the ‘spark’ that gets things going, and the confluence of factors that sustain the ‘lift’ that initial spark provides. Getting the relevant stakeholders – be they higher education institutions and national actors focused on international agendas, or individual students, academics, and administrative staff – to take that ‘first step’ across the threshold is crucial. What follows is obviously also critical, but getting the ball rolling is where some of the most profound ‘magic’ of internationalisation lies for me.

Today, we speak passionately and convincingly of ‘purposeful internationalisation’, a thoughtful, strategic approach for which I am a passionate advocate. Still, I remain convinced that some small portion of ‘faith’ has to be in the mix, as well. The risks of stepping into the unknown are discomfiting, to be sure. But, if we’re motivated by faith in the strong possibility that there is a remarkable lot to be learned both from the experience of taking that risk and from what may flow from it, we may be fairly encouraged to forge on. And the journey is worth it.

The words of a poem attributed to Christopher Logue, a 20th-century English poet, have long exemplified my feelings on this matter of taking that supremely special first (international) leap of faith:

_Come to the Edge_

_Come to the edge.
We might fall._

_Come to the edge._

_It’s too high!_

_COME TO THE EDGE!_

_And they came,_
_and we pushed,_
_and they flew._

_the risks of stepping into the unknown are discomfiting_
GLOBAL EDUCATION

a narrative
Planet of adventure

Han van der Horst

Han van der Horst (1949) is a historian and a prolific author. In the world of the internationalisation of higher education, ‘The Low Sky understanding the Dutch’ is his best-known book. From 1978 to 2012, Van der Horst was a staff member of Nuffic. He served as an editor and a communication advisor.

Today working in internationalisation of higher education is an office job.

When I saw that famous old movie Casablanca I decided that after my studies I would also sit in places like Rick’s Café joining Ingrid Bergman and Humphrey Bogart. It took me a long time to find such a place: the Maxim. It was on Don Khoi (Rue Catinat) in Saigon. No doubt by now it has been swept away by the modernisation of Vietnam. Back in 1989 the place was full of suspect gentlemen, spending huge wads of dong and offering drinks to their fair companions. The waiters took our orders in French and on stage a female orchestra was playing airs from Dr Zhivago. This was the only reason why I opted for a job in the internationalisation of higher education. I wanted to be a drifter on a planet of adventure.

Professionalism took care of that. We groomed ourselves into public servants, obeying rules and regulations, setting up systems and networks. Now and then you meet students with glittering eyes. They don’t tell you that they opted for an MBA on some well-organised campus. They have seen movies too.

They know that they live on a planet of adventure. On their skins they want to feel the heat of the tropics or the cold of the poles. They want to travel into uncharted territories.

They are the salt of the earth. We sit in our offices to help them on their way for they won’t be able to discover this planet of adventure without our assistance and our professional approach. It is the price we must pay to open the gates to the planet of adventure they are so eager to discover.
International education – A life long experience

Nanda de Bruin

Nanda de Bruin (1946) has worked in the UK, Switzerland and South Africa. Nanda started working for Leiden University’s international office in 1985 and was responsible for exchange programmes, study abroad, programme development, international marketing, PR and recruitment. She was a representative for Leiden University abroad and a board member of ISEP, EAIE, ISN (Leiden) and active as a Nafsa member. Nanda retired in mid-2011 as director of the international office at Leiden University.

Many years ago, I walked into my office one morning. Nobody was there. Something was unsettling me, but what? I had been on vacation earlier that year. A full week on a sailboat, which gave a feeling of freedom, something I missed working in that office.

A few months after, I started a new life in the UK, working in a hospital as a domestic assistant (cleaning lady). Miss Adams’ weekly lessons and visits to the local pub helped me to quickly overcome my poor English. I went abroad again, to a classy hotel in Lausanne. Once more I moved on, to Johannesburg, working in an office that produced learning materials for schools in rural areas. Quite a different learning experience.

In those days we had never heard of ‘culture shock’, but I certainly was hit by it coming home. My old friends were not interested in my stories. However, when working in Leiden’s international office, I loved to hear from students who had returned after a semester abroad.

One of our international students moved to Canada after graduation. We kept in touch through Internet. This summer my husband and I started our vacation in Calgary. The student waited for us at the airport and showed us around. A few years back, I could never have dreamed that one of my students from Hungary would host my husband and me for a couple of days to stay with his young family. This year they will be our dinner guests. It is amazing to hear what the former students are doing, and what their experiences are. And often they say how they treasure their study abroad experience.

Of course there are two sides to the coin: long hours, tiring trips, missing family and events at home, sleepless nights (no, not in Seattle), pressure, deadlines, delayed flights. But there are no highs without the lows.

My family supported my career, they were interested in my trips and played host to many of the visitors we had at home. I consider myself lucky in having such a family, in addition to a large international family consisting of colleagues, former and current, students and their families.

There are many more stories I could tell, which makes me realise that my work in internationalisation has enriched me in a way I could never have imagined. I feel privileged and pleased that my job, as well as the people involved, gave me such satisfaction and happiness, as well as memories that will last a lifetime.
The world at my feet

Janina van Hees

Janina van Hees-Victor (38) is a senior project manager at the Dutch Council for Secondary Education (Voorraad). She previously worked for Nuffic in the internationalisation department as part of the ‘mobstacles team’. Janina is married and has two children.

At age sixteen, I left the small German town where I grew up and went to spend a year at an American high school in Michigan, US. I think this decision changed my life forever. Not because of what I saw or who I met there. It changed my life because it helped me to develop the mental tools to live in a different country.

When you’re sixteen, you are not so prone to judging what you see happening around you in a strange new country. You try to absorb it as quickly as possible and fit in. At the end of my stay I went to cancel my library subscription, saying ‘I’m moving back’, and the librarian asked ‘Why back? Are you from another part of Michigan?’ Critical reflection on what I had experienced in America came only later. The ability to accept and adapt to a foreign culture has stayed with me ever since.

Later I enrolled in the European Studies study programme at the university of Osnabrück, near the Dutch border. In our third year, we could pick a foreign country in which to spend our (obligatory) Erasmus year. I picked the Netherlands, because that was an exotic choice for a German at the time (this was 1996). The language sounded cute and the people seemed friendly. Yes, the start was difficult. The university programme turned out to be in Dutch only, instead of the announced English/Dutch combination, and yes, I felt lonely and experienced culture shock. But I had done it before, I knew what to expect, and I had a couple of strategies to cope with it. Within three months, I had settled in.

When I graduated, I literally had the feeling that the world lay at my feet. Where should I go? France? Spain? Just find a job to start with, and the language and integration into society would follow within the year. Been there, done that, ha!

Those of you who work in the field of internationalisation, thank you. Your work helps to give young people experiences and opportunities that are priceless. You are giving them the chance to be world citizens. Please keep it up!

P.S. I ended up in the Netherlands again and have never left.
De Schilderswijk

Internationalisering is voor legen
En dan: wat is er nationaal nog in dit land?
Een plaatselijke, protestantste krant
En haringten, bollen, stoepjes vegen.

Geef mij de grote, multiculturele steden,
De in wijken saâmgepakte vreemdenschaar,
De bonte verzameling ontheemden daar,
Die hier doen wat, zij thuis ook deden.

Alles is hier, waar je niet veel verwacht.
De vreemdelingen houden zich verborgen
Totdat je ingaat in hun Haagse rijk.

Zo krijg je competenties in je macht,
Die internationaal zijn, door te zorgen
Voor domweg praten, in de Schilderswijk.
Nil sine magno vita labore dedit mortalibus*

Jos Walenkamp

Lector of International Cooperation
The Hague University of Applied Sciences

As a lector – some say ‘professor’ – of International Cooperation at The Hague University of Applied Sciences, I have a research group. In that research group I had a student-assistant, who after having obtained his bachelor's degree, went on to do a master's at Leiden University, in one year, cum laude.

During that year he kept working for our research group and we published a study titled ‘Binding International Talent to the Netherlands – What Makes Foreign Students and Knowledge Workers Want to Stay in the Netherlands?’

This former student has now been offered a job at The Hague University of Applied Sciences and he keeps on working in our research group and he is starting his doctorate. His name is Andreas Funk and he is German.

The question here is not so much, “What makes this foreign knowledge worker want stay here?”, but rather, “Why are we so anxious to keep him here?”. The answer is very simple: he works hard. He is reliable, diligent – and he works hard. He is smart, but not smarter than many of his Dutch colleagues. But he works hard.

Another German student complains about the slow pace of her study programme and the lack of challenges. As an institution of higher education we have another worry: how do we get a reasonable number of students to graduate in a reasonable number of years? Hence, we cannot go too fast or challenge the students too much. Or, alternatively, God forbid, ask them to work hard.

International students set a good example to our students. It would not be bad for us if they followed it.

And finally, for Hanneke, a poem (see left), in Dutch, based on one by Dutch poet Jacques Bloem.

*Horace; Satires - Life grants nothing to us mortals without hard work
Internationalisation is all around

Birgitte Vos

Birgitte Vos is a documentalist by profession. In 1992 she started her career in the Nuffic library, specialising in development cooperation and internationalisation. As of 1997, she has been involved in managing several fellowship programmes. Since 2010, she has been a policy officer, involved in improving current management processes and acquiring new fellowship programmes for Nuffic.

More than 30 years ago I got on a plane for the first time in my life. I was 23 years old, knew nothing about the world and just wanted to spend my practical study period abroad. The choice for the University of Toronto, Canada, was easily made: relatives lived near Toronto and I was very welcome to stay there for seven months.

I received an allowance from Nuffic to cover the international travel costs.

It was a very rewarding time for me: not only did I learn to adapt to a new living environment and another culture, I also learned to participate in a working environment and to put into practice the theory I had been taught. At that time I never thought a career at Nuffic would be my future. Let alone that I would become a fellowship officer, assisting foreign students in their attempts to obtain a fellowship to study in the Netherlands. I personally experienced internationalisation by going abroad but also by working at Nuffic. For me, being somewhere else felt good. It felt like home.

Currently, I put all my professional and personal experience into practice as a policy officer for the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes. In 2013 I had been working for Nuffic for 20 years.

Of course internationalisation has changed because of changes in the world around us, in the way we communicate, and in the way education has developed. I strongly believe internationalisation is in everyone and will be in our lives forever. It is there when you go on holiday, when you travel for work, when you meet foreigners. Even in the globalised world of today, internationalisation is all around. And it is good to realise that it will be there forever.
I didn’t understand international

Kevin Kinser

Kevin Kinser is chair of the Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies at the University at Albany, State University of New York, and a senior fellow for internationalisation at NAFSA: Association of International Educators. Kinser studies the public policies and organisational structures of private for-profit institutions and international cross-border higher education.

As an undergraduate in Ohio in the 1980s, I heard about study abroad. I saw glossy flyers hanging on hallway bulletin boards with groups of smiling students in front of the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, and other presumably famous locations I couldn’t identify. I didn’t understand how a student could leave the country for an entire semester. It sounded like a long vacation, an extended Spring Break I couldn’t afford and one that my parents back in Kentucky would never support. Looked like fun, but it wasn’t for me.

After college, one of my friends joined the Peace Corps and went to teach in a small village in Namibia. Another college friend met an Iranian woman in graduate school and decided to get married in France where she had family. A third friend proposed the plan: we would go to their European wedding and then continue on to Africa to visit our Peace Corps friend. My first international trip.

While in Africa my teacher friend had us tell his teenage students what we did in the United States. By then I had a master’s degree in higher education and was working in student affairs at a small college in Wisconsin. I unsuccessfully tried to explain to them what I was doing and how it was relevant to them. I didn’t understand that there were no universities in Namibia when I was there in 1992, and certainly nothing like an undergraduate liberal arts college. Never thought about it. Indeed I had never thought about international higher education at all.

A few years later, now in my doctoral programme, a student from another university talked about his programme in comparative higher education. It was (pardon the pun) foreign to me. I didn’t understand the international focus of his dissertation and couldn’t see how it applied to what I was interested in at the time.

But my interests soon changed, and I began studying online higher education. This in turn led me to research private for-profit higher education. That led me to Albany, New York, and the work of my colleague Dan Levy. He pointed out the connection between the US for-profit sector and the growth of private higher education globally. This was a great idea that could send my research in an exciting new direction. Except for one thing: I didn’t understand international.

But I knew I needed to learn.
Is a valuable experience also economically interesting?

Wim Witvliet

Wim Witvliet, (1956), studied accountancy at the Preahep institute in The Hague. He was an administrator with BDO accountants, head of finance at the headquarters of The Hague Tourist Office and worked for a number of private companies before joining Nuffic in 1998, where he works as controller of various departments.

As controller of Nuffic’s information services directorate, I am faced with the subject of the internationalisation of higher education. That is almost inevitable because Nuffic revolves around this subject. In my field you automatically look at the financial balance between the investment necessary to get the inflow and outflow of international students up and running and the return yielded as a country and for the student.

In addition to its many other positive effects, internationalisation is apparently financially attractive as many organisations and government institutions invest a lot of energy and money in encouraging students to come to study in the Netherlands. The Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) conducted research and concluded that the effects of internationalisation are mainly positive for the Netherlands and that they increase our prosperity. Many other aspects, such as ‘binding’, are now incorporated into internationalisation. The goal is to persuade students who study in a specific field to stay in the Netherlands after they graduate. This will ensure that sectors with a large demand for engineers (science students), for example, will have a greater supply of graduates. At the same time, these ex-students will become additional taxpayers in the Netherlands.

What Dutch students find important when they choose to study abroad has also been investigated. The main reasons for going abroad are personal development, getting to know another culture, country, city and/or region, professional development and improving social and cultural skills. Foreign students more often come to the Netherlands because of the added value of Dutch diplomas and the higher quality of training; though of course the reasons given above apply to them, too. Only a marginal portion of students regret their stay abroad. A large majority indicate that they would not have wanted to miss the experience and that it has greatly contributed to their personal development. They absolutely recommend it to others.

In short, we can definitely conclude that a valuable experience is also economically interesting.
Professional development
Internationalisation of higher education: a privilege and a vocation

Eva Egron-Polak

Eva Egron-Polak is secretary-general and executive director of the International Association of Universities, a position she took up in 2002. She joined the IAU after a long career at the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada where she was vice-president for International and Canadian Programmes. Along with serving on a variety of advisory boards, she is a member of the Magna Charta Observatory Council, the Council of Mykolas Romeris University in Lithuania and co-editor of the RAABE Handbook on Leadership and Governance in Higher Education. She graduated from Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

Being involved in international education seems, in retrospect, the most natural progression of my personal and professional life since my parents became political exiles from Czechoslovakia in 1968 and brought my family first to Austria, and a few weeks later to Canada. We stood out in many ways but mostly because we could not speak the language. In the small village school I attended, I dressed and acted differently from the others, my packed lunch was strange. Such conspicuousness had a profound impact on me. I realised at a young age that overcoming the distances created by being different requires changes not only in the people around me, but in me as well. To my peers, having a foreigner among them was not always a positive thing and my curiosity about their life was not always welcome.

Learning about and appreciating these differences that I encountered daily was made possible through education which also taught me that, fundamentally, there are many ways in which we are all alike. Education was then, and remains now, the key to bridging gaps and overcoming prejudice based usually on ignorance.

I have been incredibly fortunate in my professional and personal life to have been able to devote myself to promoting ways and creating opportunities to bring people – students, researchers and higher education leaders – together to learn and pursue knowledge collaboratively. It has been a continuous lesson, teaching me that being truly open, respectful and curious about others in the world is most satisfying; it is a perpetual voyage of discovery (at times also physically gruelling, frustrating and disappointing) and self-questioning.

Though I had initially prepared and hoped for a diplomatic career, studying languages, political science, going abroad for work and study, my first professional position (in 1981) was in a higher education setting. I have never left it since. My first boss, a retired university president, asked me to undertake research to help answer the questions: “What is the role of universities in international development? How can they contribute to this process?” Two years, and a partial answer reported in a long document, had me hooked and convinced: international cooperation for capacity building in higher education, international education, internationalisation of research (or whatever specific focus we choose to promote collaboration among students, scholars and university leaders) have a lasting and profound impact on the individuals who get involved and on each institution that takes part and becomes engaged. It is both essential and transformative.

For me, and for the majority in the higher education community, this conviction has only grown over the past 35 or so years. Though we are still asking questions, and must never stop doing so, if I were to pose a research question to a young research assistant today, it might be the following: “What role can higher education play in the pursuit of knowledge for social cohesion, ethnic, cultural and religious understanding; how can it promote a sense of global social responsibility?” Again, I am certain that the answer would point to international education and the internationalisation of higher education and research as the key.
Internationalisation: my personal and professional livelihood

Raisa Belyavina

Raisa Belyavina is a senior research officer at the Institute of International Education (IIE) in New York, where she manages Project Atlas, an initiative to collect and disseminate timely data on global student mobility. Ms Belyavina is also a doctoral student in International Education at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Growing up, my father teased me about my dearth of knowledge of geography. In middle school, a teacher assigned our class to memorise every state capital of the US and the location of each state on a map. My father gave me a bonus assignment of memorising European countries, then African ones, and so on. He believed that thinking beyond our borders – literal and proverbial borders – is the only way we could become responsible citizens of our own nation and contribute to the world beyond our boundaries.

The trajectory of my life enabled me to study and teach in four countries and do field research and write about many others. As I endeavour to understand higher education in different countries, a defining question is always how a nation engages with others. The internationalisation of education is nothing new: curious minds have always wondered what it would be like to study and teach and live in another land. What is new is the broad range of international engagement that is possible today at all levels: individual, institutional and national. The scope and breadth of international partnerships today is larger than ever before – and more equitable too. Many higher education institutions have made international engagement part of their institutional mission. Student mobility is at an all-time high. And more than ever before, individuals have various options for studying abroad and more opportunities to be global citizens and learn from their contemporaries in far-flung lands, be it through physical exchanges or via virtual means such as interactive online courses.

Internationalisation is today’s connecting thread across people and across nations. When an American pedagogue puts Belarus on the map for students in South Korea by sharing research comparing education in these three countries, a seed of knowledge and interest is sown that may percolate in profound ways years later. When the president of a leading organisation committed to supporting international educational exchange meets an Iranian en route to Erbil and they look at family photos together, internationalisation is taking shape in its subtlest and most potent way: one person at a time, and with boundless impact.

Over the years, as an international student and as an international education professional, I have seen internationalisation at its best when it brings people together in an increasingly complex world to get at the core of what we have in common rather than what sets us apart.
Digging my way to China

Jane Knight

Dr Jane Knight, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, focuses her research and professional interests on the international dimension of higher education at the institutional, national, regional and international levels. Her work in over 65 countries with universities, governments, UN agencies, and foundations helps to bring a comparative, development and international perspective to her research, teaching and policy work.

The story goes that I was digging my way to China. At the young age of six, my parents asked why I was so busy making a deep hole in the back garden. Having heard that China was on the other side of the world and home to panda bears and a different kind of alphabet, I was convinced that I could get there by digging a tunnel. Little did I know that it would be impossible to reach China through a tunnel but within four decades I would make over 30 trips to China and be witness to some of the most profound changes and challenges facing the country and my own understanding of the world.

As a new university graduate, I was asked to join an official Canadian delegation of educators and doctors as a youth representative and fulfil a cherished dream of going to China. After months of reading, briefings and language training, the delegation was ready to set off but certainly not prepared for the experiences awaiting us. It is a cliché, but for many of us, it was a life-changing event. Little did we know that we would be the first Westerners that rural villagers had ever met, that the Gang of Four would be arrested the night we arrived in Shanghai followed by massive street demonstrations, that we would see the billboards announcing Hua Guofeng as the new leader just a month after Mao’s death, and that we would be deeply touched by the children and medical workers we met in many schools and hospitals. On my return from China I realised that my preparations had not served me well. In fact, one could say that I was over-prepared with knowledge about China but underprepared for the impact on my values, my emotions, my questioning. This prompted a fascination and attachment to China that inadvertently found me in China during the Democracy Wall events, the occupation of Tiananmen Square, and the passing of Deng Xiaoping.

If China opened my eyes to the world and the importance of cross-cultural understanding, my subsequent work at UNESCO in Paris followed by work with an indigenous NGO in rural India convinced me that no international rules or regulations would touch the hearts and minds of people in terms of understanding the world and its cultures; this has to be done through education and a process of self-awareness. So after living abroad for many years, I returned to Canada to work in a university international office, begin my PhD journey on the internationalisation of higher education, and continue my commitment to furthering international understanding through international, comparative, and cross-cultural education. The rest is history as they say.
Borderless conversation

Jane Edwards

Jane Edwards has served as dean of international and professional experience at Yale since 2006, and has worked in international education as a teacher and administrator for more than three decades. She holds a BA from Cambridge University, a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, and an honorary doctorate from Middlebury College.

When I completed my PhD in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania I needed a job, and the only job I could convince anyone I was qualified for was as a foreign student advisor. My credential for that work was that I had been a foreign student myself.

This, in the late 1970s, was my introduction to international education. I have worked at six American institutions, one of them twice, and stayed afloat on the waves of internationalisation that have ebbed and flowed across the US. I’ve taught and advised students, designed and managed programmes, presented at conferences, run workshops, solicited donations and written grant proposals, evaluated and assessed and published and edited. And of course I have travelled, with beloved colleagues and people I could barely tolerate, to exotic and familiar, welcoming and alarming destinations. In short, I’ve lived the life of an international educator. My career has spanned the periods of expansion in the 1980s, professionalisation in the 1990s, and trans-border initiatives in the new millennium. To my own surprise, I remain optimistic that the recognition that our universities are now inextricably connected, and that we must work to create a dynamic of reciprocity and collaboration, can be the hallmark of this new era.

The inestimable benefit of working in international higher education is the ongoing and borderless conversation. These conversations have taken place all over the world – in conference halls, around homestay family dinner tables, in airport bars, on mountain roads and under palm trees, in the offices of the greatest universities in the world and in village community centres. As I think about all the intellectual and logistical problems I have sorted through with colleagues from all over the world, across every kind of cultural divide, I see a model for the personal dynamic that must accompany larger institutional goals if internationalisation is to have real impact. Human interaction must remain a part of the new dynamic.

The work that we do locally has global significance as a counter-weight to the steamroller of pressure to conform to rankings, to the marketplace, to commodification. We foster the understanding of the interplay between local culture and the impact of globalisation. And international educators know that with this understanding young people will be able to contribute cheerfully to the well-being not only of their own society, but also of the global community.
The next generation: A lifetime in international education

Jennifer Humphries

Jennifer Humphries has worked for 30 years in international education at the CBIE. Chief interest areas are the international student experience in Canada and Canadian student experience abroad, and immigration policy as it impacts international education. She serves on several international committees. Jennifer has an MA (English) and BA (English and French) from the University of Ottawa.

My career at the Canadian Bureau for International Education began in the early 1980s. CBIE had just concluded a task force that considered the issue of ghettoisation of international students and urged institutions to diversify their international student population. One of my first ‘achievements’ was selecting a name for the task force report: The Right Mix. I was borrowing from the title of a film being screened in cinemas at the time, The Right Stuff, about the early astronauts. The choice was rather ironic, though I may not have realised it then! Indeed, there is no right mix of students or of any group of people. In my own multicultural country as in our field of international education, a blend of cultures, colours and perspectives is the ideal. It’s a beautiful thing, for all kinds of reasons.

Today we talk a lot about outcomes. In the recent past we have been too theoretical, too preoccupied with definitions and frameworks. We need to aim at helping students prepare for a global knowledge economy and an interconnected world. This means three things: students getting the skills and knowledge they need to work and contribute to society; learning to understand others and to empathise; and becoming committed to support the good of others.

Advocacy is a big part of my work, and here numbers tend to dominate. What is the economic impact? How many students? How are other countries doing and how do we compare? This information plays a critical role in convincing leaders to invest. But far more important than numbers is getting people together and giving them the experiences that can make them better human beings and prepare them to contribute to making a better world.

My professional life experience has been enriched by a few great people who have mentored me and whose philosophy, attitudes and actions have shaped my own. If there is one characteristic that they all share, it is looking ahead, not back. Lewis Perinbam – who spearheaded the Canadian aid programmes that directly engage Canadians in development cooperation – said that our role was to develop the next generation of young internationalists. Not the next generation of leaders, business executives, artists or scientists, but internationalists. My job is to open doors to the experiences that inspire internationalism of the kind that sees others as just as important to the world as oneself.

This compilation of thoughts from individuals who have made international education their life’s work is bound to be inspiring and touching. I hope it will also set the stage for the next generation of actors in our field.
It’s totally *natural*!

*Louise Watts*

Louise Watts is head of international projects at Campus France, the French national agency for the promotion of higher education, international student services and international mobility. She is responsible for implementing European and international projects in areas such as the promotion of European higher education, international student mobility and higher education cooperation.

Internationalisation for me means enabling students from overseas to take up unique academic opportunities, enjoy new experiences, have fun, make new friends and learn about other cultures whilst at the same time stepping outside of their comfort zone and learning about themselves and their home country. It’s also about sharing those experiences with others.

It means putting France and Europe on the map, highlighting all that these destinations have got to offer students and staff throughout the world and encouraging them to embark on new adventures that will change their lives.

For me internationalisation means being close to my colleagues in our partner organisations, working together, contributing to common aims, overcoming obstacles, sharing thoughts and experiences with them and being on the same wavelength, despite our differences, and understanding and appreciating those differences.

It means being a global citizen, being English in a French organisation, working in different languages and for all that to feel totally *natural*!
My journey in international education

Janet Lieva

Janet Lieva is an economist with extensive experience in international higher education. She is head of the HEFCE Observatory. Janet joined the Higher Education Funding Council for England in May 2013. Previously, Janet was with the British Council and has been based in Hong Kong for the past two years. Her research has shaped and informed education policy debates in the UK and East Asia.

My journey in international education commenced when I left my native Bulgaria to embark on a PhD programme in Economics in England. That was some fifteen years ago. During my studies the most enriching experiences were meeting fellow students from across the world, all enticed by the opportunities a doctoral degree would offer. Some students were on government scholarships destined to achieve leadership positions back at home. Others were funded by their families in the firm belief that education is the best investment for their hard-earned money. How little did I know about the imprint these experiences were to have on my life...

Having successfully passed my viva voci, what followed had very little to do with monetary policies and central banks, which I spent years researching for my dissertation. Serendipitously, I was making a living by reading and researching international education.

International student mobility was growing faster than international trade. And research collaborations knew no national boundaries. The more international the research team, the greater the impact and wider the relevance of the research. University research was no longer confined to a select few – it had become a fundamental driver of economic growth internationally. There is still a lot to be done to create a global enabling environment in which international research partnerships can flourish. Another area which offers significant room for improvement is countries’ immigration policies. The tightening of immigration policies has a long-term impact on the international mobility of students.

Universities are increasingly reaching out to wider student populations beyond national boundaries. Students travel across borders, and so does research as well as degrees. In addition to greater student enrolments, universities’ off-shore presence means access to other countries’ researchers and opportunities for deeper teaching and research collaboration.

Having just moved back to England after two years in Hong Kong, it still amazes me how similar the ambitions of different education systems across Europe and Asia are, and yet how differently these ambitions manifest themselves. I found myself becoming less judgemental in my policy analysis on different countries’ education strategies. Yet, the impact of any country’s education reform now spreads beyond national borders and affects students and researchers from other countries. Policy-makers and educators need to think very carefully about the unintended consequences their policies may have.
When does internationalisation start?

Remon Daniel Boef

Remon Daniel Boef is director of Nuffic Neso Brazil. Remon studied Latin American Studies and International Management, both at Leiden University. Remon’s master’s specialisation was Brazil. His thesis, co-oriented by the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, was on the bilateral relationship between Brazil and China. Remon started travelling frequently to Brazil from 2001 onwards. He currently lives in Brasilia.

It is funny, but while working in the internationalisation of higher education you soon discover that the concept is hard to define. At the same time, however, this is understandable: capturing a multifaceted field which encompasses various dimensions of human experience in a single description satisfactory to all parties involved is a tough job. Many scholars who have put work into a definition have certainly been confronted with the question I ask in the title. I have no intention of following up on the challenge of defining, but I would like to share some of my thoughts related to the question without being conclusive.

An internationalised and multicultural environment is somewhat self-evident for someone born and raised in the Netherlands. In my case, I also had a multicultural upbringing. As far as being open and having multiple nationalities living together is concerned, I believe Dutch society facilitates an international orientation.

Latin American Studies at Leiden University is a programme inclined toward internationalisation, but it is surely no exception in having foreign students in the classroom. In the Netherlands, that could also be the case with, for example, Architecture or Engineering at any institution. Sharing the classroom with Colombians and Brazilians who lived in the Netherlands, together with fellow Dutch students from various backgrounds, enriched the course and helped to give a face to the study subjects. As I specialised in Brazil, I travelled there to do a project, an internship and, later on, an exchange at a Brazilian partner university within the scope of my master’s thesis.

Looking back at my tracks and thinking of the definitions surrounding the internationalisation of higher education, I try to answer the question. The concept of Internationalisation at Home widens our view beyond travel. It gives a name to the dimension and the importance of the internationalisation process that may take place at the home institution. Thoughtfully intended by the institution to be such or not, the interaction with the foreign students in my classroom was clearly Internationalisation at Home. My internationalisation did not start with my first trip to Brazil.

Following through, could I argue that my home country and background led me to internationalisation? If I think they did, there must have been an early incentive to choose Brazil as a study object. Do you remember the incentive for your internationalisation experience, the reason you chose a certain course or destination? Perhaps that could be pinpointed as the very start of your internationalisation.
Internationalisation is open to many interpretations

Zoe Ghielmettie

Zoë Ghielmetti is executive director of international relations at the University of Bern. She joined the university as ‘Erasmus coordinator’. In 1997 she became head of the International Relations Office. She is a co-founder and active member of the International Relations Offices of Swiss Universities as well as of the Swiss Group of International Marketing Directors.

Internationalisation is open to many interpretations. It was through an EAIE training course given by Hanneke in Maastricht back in the ‘90s that I was introduced to a strategic approach to internationalisation. We looked at definitions, strategies and effects. I remember travelling to Maastricht. On my way I set foot in five countries. I needed five different currencies to buy food and drink. It was a different Europe then. Many of the people attending the strategic workshop got involved in the EAIE over the course of the following years.

What the course taught me was all very new to me, as I was new to the job. I was introduced to doing a SWOT analysis and various other tools. However, I never succeeded to convince our Commission for International Relations to do a SWOT in our own institution. But more than ten years afterwards, the Strategic Board of the University did conduct one. And now our 2021 strategy includes ‘internationalisation’ as a cross-section area.

Internationalisation at the central level is about convincing people, facing resistance, being persistent, not giving up, and taking opportunities when they arise. Your own success rate depends a lot on other circumstances, on other people.

What remains for me personally?
• it’s about people from other countries
• it’s being aware of what we share and where we differ
• it’s discussing and working on projects
• it’s sometimes not understanding each other, or the situation
• it’s having fun and enjoying moments

My role is that of an all-round facilitator so that other people can live this international experience, which often makes an important difference in their life. It is one of the results of my job, and it is the reason I still like it.
Reflections on internationalisation

Niklas Tranaeus

Niklas Tranaeus has fifteen years’ experience of working in international education. His focus has been on the marketing and promotion of Swedish higher education. He initiated the Swedish Institute’s close cooperation with Sweden’s universities in international marketing. He is on the board of ‘Study Destination Sweden’, a network set up by Swedish universities. He works at the Swedish Institute as the manager responsible for marketing Sweden as a study destination. The Swedish Institute is a public agency which aims to make Sweden better known around the world.

I grew up abroad and I can still remember how I used to long to go back to my home country for the summer vacation. Moving back to Sweden in early adolescence though, I found my home country a little bit peripheral and even dull. As I grew older – and became a father – I came to appreciate living in Sweden much more.

A number of years ago, Wangari Muti Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, held the keynote speech at the annual Nafsa conference on international education. Ms Maathai described how international education had changed her life and went on to praise the 7,000 strong audience, saying essentially that we were all involved in a noble cause which benefitted all of humanity. The feeling of pride in the room was palpable.

I recall wondering whether people in that room whose involvement in international education was perhaps more motivated by profit than by promoting increased understanding across cultural boundaries also felt that they too, in some way, were part of a larger cause.

But if internationalisation is laudable, how does one define what it really means? And how does one really distinguish it from globalisation, itself an almost impossible concept to pin down?

To me the whole point of internationalisation is discovering that we are not as different from one another as we might think we are; or at least, that the differences between us do not necessarily follow national boundaries. In today’s world, where very many people can easily communicate with each other all over the world, I think more people are making this discovery, and a lot faster than ever before.

For most students who go off to study in another country, I think internationalisation simply means opportunity; opportunity to discover new things, to meet new people and to have new experiences.

I am very happy to live where I do now. Not that I could not imagine living somewhere else. The point is it is not exactly where I live that matters so much, just as long as I am connected to people in other places, in my work but also in my private life. I have often felt that I have much more in common with many of my colleagues in other countries than I have with many of my own compatriots. I like to think of myself as a global citizen.
Working in an international environment
‘Opening minds to the world’ and opening doors too

Peggy Blumenthal

Peggy Blumenthal is currently senior counsellor to the president at the Institute of International Education. At the IIE since 1984, Ms Blumenthal served as its chief operating officer from 2005 to 2011. Previously campus based as assistant director of Stanford University’s Overseas Studies Department and as graduate fellowships coordinator at the University of Hawaii-Manoa’s Center for Asian/Pacific Studies, she spent the 1970s at NYC’s Asia Society and on the National Committee on US-China Relations.

During my professional lifetime, US higher education’s commitment to international education has dramatically changed. Entering university in 1963, I was advised not to pursue a three-month study opportunity in Taiwan, since I could earn no academic credit for the time abroad. Fortunately, I ignored the warning and spent an eye-opening spring semester in Taipei, studying Chinese, teaching English, and seeing how Taiwanese viewed KMT/Mainland leaders.

From that experience grew a lifetime’s interest and satisfying career in US-China relations and international education. Over the years, Taiwan transitioned to a wealthy and rowdy democracy, sending tens of thousands of students annually to the US. Many returned home to build academic and economic links with their US hosts and later with former ‘enemies’ on China’s mainland. My early chance to see America through outsiders’ eyes taught me more than my later classes in History and Political Science, and opened my mind to the world.

Later, administering Stanford’s Overseas Studies programmes in the late 1970s, I was plunged into the debate on the value of ‘island programmes’, through which Stanford sent hundreds of students annually for a quarter or summer abroad. While three months at Stanford’s villa in Florence, or at Cliveden outside London, instructed by local and Stanford faculty, was less intense than a semester at Oxford or the Sorbonne, virtually all participating students ranked their short time abroad as ‘the best part of my Stanford education’.

Years later, as IIE’s Open Doors tracked the continuing growth in short-term study abroad vs. semester and year-long sojourns, the debate continues. How short is ‘too short’ a legitimate academic experience? In my opinion, supported increasingly by survey research, length of stay is less significant than what happens during the stay. American students housed with families for a summer can gain more language fluency and deeper cultural insight than others spending a semester in ‘international dormitories’, or travelling on shipboard to multiple countries. An eight-week internship at a grassroots NGO can offer learning opportunities unmatched by large lecture classes with limited faculty contact.

Today, US universities and colleges strive to make ‘international’ part of every student’s education through study abroad, internationalised curricula, diversifying the faculty, and hosting international students. Fewer than 15% of US undergrads study abroad before graduating; others will gain their international perspectives largely from foreign classmates, roommates, lab partners and teachers. The intercultural insights and skills thus acquired help prepare them for global careers. Employers expect and reward such skills, and American students will find that they open doors, as well as minds.
Internationalisation reaching new levels

Josephine Scholten

Josephine Scholten has been executive director of the VSNU, the association of Dutch universities, since 2010. She sees improvement of the international position of the Dutch universities as one of her main goals. Josephine has been elected chair of the secretary-general’s meeting of the European University Association for the year 2014.

For Dutch students, study programmes are increasingly providing international experiences as part of their curriculum, be it actual exchanges (in most cases supported by Nuffic) or international experiences in the classroom.

The number of foreign students choosing a Dutch university is growing steeply, a development that can be attributed to two main causes: the increasing number of English-taught courses (for now mainly master’s programmes) and the excellent quality and reputation of our universities. These students will be our future ambassadors as they will form an enormous network for Dutch international relations and trade.

Now all of this benefits the quality of education itself. Having to deal with a specific subject from different (cultural) angles helps burgeoning academics with a wide range of skills and their global orientation. They will form the future labour force for jobs that, in many cases, do not exist at present.

Furthermore, the research base of all university work benefits enormously from participation in international collaboration, both in terms of the excellent quality of research, as seen from its results, and in terms of the prospect of attracting additional funding (e.g. the massive income from European funding for excellent research, which is almost double our own national contribution to the EU for these purposes). The prominent position of Dutch universities in the most renowned rankings is certainly proof, even if their methodologies are always a subject of debate.

Internationalisation has also received important support from unexpected quarters: in 2012 the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) calculated a net gain for the Dutch economy from international students staying in the Netherlands after completion of their studies. Even under the most careful assumptions, the results were still positive. This has led to a new and powerful economic argument in favour of internationalisation. As a result, universities are now participating structurally in ministerial trade missions: to represent the strong knowledge base of the Netherlands, to intensify their international networks and to recruit talent (students and researchers).

All these positive notes should by no means lead to complacency. We can expect international competition for talent to increase strongly. And new developments, such as massive open online courses, can change the higher education landscape drastically. Ignoring borders, the Internet can provide easy access, which may result in huge student streams rerouting towards more reputable (highly ranked) universities.

The VSNU takes an active part in the broad development of institutional strategies. This calls for a thorough reflection on our competitive advantages and disadvantages vis-à-vis other strong knowledge-based economies (such as Germany and the UK). And to begin with, the VSNU wants to build more on collaborative efforts on a national level, with – of course – the support of Nuffic.
Saluting sister associations: networks across the world

Dorothy Davis

Dorothy Davis joined IDP Education Australia as a senior manager in 1985, and over a period of 20 years was involved in the development of Australia’s international education programme, from the establishment of information services overseas, to research in international education. She worked with the International Association of Universities in 2004, and was the CEO of the Australian Institute of Policy and Science from 2005 to 2008. Dorothy Davis is joint editor of ‘Making a Difference: Australian International Education’, IEAA, 2011.

At the second EAIE Conference in 1990 held in the glamorous Krasnapolsky Hotel in Amsterdam, I recall being invited, as an IDP Education Australia representative, to a sister association gathering which brought together non-government national and international agencies involved in international higher education. Twenty-five years ago, the number attending such gatherings was quite small, predominantly from North American and European associations, with a sprinkling from other countries with growing international student enrolments such as Australia and Japan. The early connections made through these sister associations have lasted over many decades and across continents and have resulted in shared programmes, research, training and publications, and personal friendships.

The ‘sister’ notion enabled associations to learn from each other, exchange information and develop new roles and services. Joint activities include data collection, research, professional development, conferences, quality assurance and benchmarking, dissemination of best practices in teaching, learning and student support, and language testing. Strategies for the advocacy of international education were shared, and I remember contributing to joint projects on cross-cultural awareness, internationalisation of the curriculum, and student mobility trends. In 1996, eight sister associations were the founding members of the Association for Studies in International Education and the JSIE.

In recent times, national, regional and international education associations have proliferated as international education becomes a crucial part of a country’s higher education strategy. New types of partnerships have evolved, involving consortia of universities, government, or the private sector, some development-oriented, others focused on student mobility or transnational programmes. Changes in technology over the past 25 years have meant that annual face-to-face meetings can be supplemented by online communication and collaborative information sharing through websites, document editing/publishing and cloud-based technology, thus enhancing joint projects and programmes.

There have been several initiatives to establish a global alliance of international education associations, among them the Network of International Education Agencies, whose aims include identifying emerging issues with a regional or global impact on international education; assisting new international education associations; and fostering professional recognition of international education practitioners and leaders worldwide. Such alliances tend to operate informally through roundtable discussions at international gatherings rather than through formal structures. Their goal should be to be inclusive, ensuring wide regional representation and opportunities for newly formed associations to contribute.

I reflect now on the initiatives of the early sister associations, and particularly (and appropriately!) on the many remarkable women involved, on the international networks established, and the professional and personal bonds which have lasted for a quarter of a century or more.
The importance of trust

Linda Johnson

Linda Johnson is executive secretary of The Institute of Social Studies (ISS) and secretary to the Board of Governors of the Prince Claus Chair in the Netherlands. She has been involved in the internationalisation of higher education since 1988. She is a past president of the EAIE and speaks and writes regularly on matters pertaining to international education.

The internationalisation of higher education became my passion and my career by accident. After spending several years teaching in various corners of the globe, I found myself in 1987 on a postgraduate management course in the Netherlands. An official at the Ministry of Education had noticed that there were few women in leadership positions in Dutch higher education institutions and decided that some of the female teaching staff should be offered training to help them break through the glass ceiling and take on management roles. I was invited to undergo such training and accepted the offer. On my return to my institution, it was incumbent on my boss to give me something useful to do with the new high-flying skills I might have acquired. It did not take him long to have a large pile of documents transferred from his room to mine. I perused them for an hour or two and agreed to take on the task proposed. The documents were the early Brussels musings about mobility plus some letters (in a variety of languages) from institutions around Europe seeking contact. They referred to loot reputed to be stashed in well-filled EU coffers, which could only be accessed by so-called JEPs. The task was to make arrangements to join in this new European game and find out if it might benefit some of our students. The rest is history!

Those early activities gave rise to many strong ties and close friendships. I am truly privileged to have been in at the start of a massive educational innovation. As pioneers, we had to build trust quickly so as to cooperate well enough to build something new. Much goes wrong at the start of any new venture. In those pre-email, pre-mobile, pre-fax days, the ability to pick up the phone and say to a colleague hundreds of miles away ‘I need your help’ in the knowledge that he or she would work with you to solve problems fast was tremendously important.

Much has changed over the twenty-five years of my involvement in the field, but the important things have stayed the same. Chief among these is a belief in global citizenship. What we need most to give meaning and substance to this term is the ability to respect and empathise with others across cultural boundaries. Trust-building, imagination and curiosity remain key competences for educators. Without these competences, we cannot hope to guide our students and ourselves on the complex path towards global citizenship.
Perpetual change

Gudrun Paulsdottir

Gudrun Paulsdottir is the International Strategist at Mälardalen University in Sweden where she has held, among others, the following positions: head of Admissions, Degrees and International Office, director of the International Office and director of Student Affairs. Her area of expertise is the internationalisation of higher education, university management, international project management and intercultural communication. She serves as an international expert in matters related to higher education and internationalisation for the European Commission and the Nordic Council, among others. Gudrun is currently the Immediate Past President of the European Association for International Education (EAIE).

In my very much younger years I used to say that I wanted to work in a field where I could use my language skills. That was the reason I applied for the job at the university where they wanted someone to deal with their international relations. That was in the early 90s and the job market was a lot different from today’s. At that time I had already both lived and studied in three different countries, and without any of the services there are available today when studying in a foreign country. I got the job and both the job and myself have been in a development phase ever since. For me the charm and attractiveness of the job lies in its constant development.

The first thing I had to do was to create a number of agreements with universities in Spain since the university had promised its students that they could study there the coming semester. I managed this task and gained my first insights into the diversity and challenges of the job. Back then we were all enthusiasts wanting to make it work. After a few years it became very clear that a very large majority of us working in the field had our own international experiences that contributed to our engagement in the field. This has changed a lot with the growing importance of internationalisation and the involvement of all layers of the university. While this sometimes means that it takes longer to get a decision transformed into action, it is a very welcome development.

My now more than twenty years in the field have shown me that internationalisation and international higher education are two of the most important contributors to respect and understanding in the world. The role of international higher education as a tool for soft diplomacy cannot be overrated, even though it is still not recognised as such.

I feel very privileged to work in this sector and the fact that I constantly have to challenge and confront my views, ideas, perceptions and beliefs represents significant added value. As far as I know, there are not many jobs in the world that offer these kinds of continuous opportunities to develop personally and professionally while also making a small contribution to societal development. I never imagined that the job I took back then would bring me so much.
A multi-polar perspective

Grace Kim

Grace Kim is Executive Director at the Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE). Prior to her current position, she created and led the PGMT Strategy team as senior director at various international corporations. She also served as an adjunct faculty member at private universities in the United States and published award winning poems in the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States. She was both founder and coach of the first Korea Women’s National Lacrosse Team at the World Cup in Prague.

Education performs crucial functions in the advancement of unity in the Asia-Pacific region. The irony is that, although the region remains the most populous and most important education market in the world, intra-Asian cooperation in education is lagging as Asian educational customers have traditionally veered toward western institutions for historical and cultural reasons and generally ignored the educational opportunities offered by their neighbours. Also, educators in Asia-Pacific must traverse great distances to promote intra-regional communication and the development of expertise, while there is an abundance of information regarding opportunities in the United States and Europe. Therefore, educators and students in Asia-Pacific have less understanding of their neighbours, thus undermining regional unity. This unidirectional educational flow, fortunately, is being stemmed as there is a growing demand for advancing intra-regional international education and understanding within the Asia-Pacific region.

It is necessary to discuss how the diverse student body in the Asia-Pacific region would receive the development of academically valid intra-regional curricula that have potential to be effective not only in their own country but throughout the region. There are multiple student cultures within an academic institution and each student culture has the potential to have its own understanding of academic integrity and share understanding of the differences and similarities in history, culture, and tradition through interactive education lesson plans. This discourse on intra-regional curricula can be extended to bridge cultural diversity in other parts of the Asia-Pacific region. When parallel histories of art education are understood from each country, it may be possible to see the light of harmony in the near future, just as regional border and maritime disputes are flaring up while economic cooperation in the form of FTAs is burgeoning. Currently, besides the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), there are also the Asian Free Trade Area (AFTA), Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) and South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). Other FTA frameworks that include both Asia Pacific and non-regional partners include the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPSEP or P4); proposed arrangements include the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP), Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER and PACER Plus), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the China–Japan–South Korea Free Trade Agreement. This cooperation is rapidly extending to the cultural realm, including education. Malaysia took the lead in intra-Asian educational cooperation by looking to the successful economies of Asia for inspiration. As Tun Dr. Mahathir observed about the 15,000 Malaysians educated in Japan: “I would like to claim that the Look East Policy was good for Malaysia. Those trained under the programme seem to have imbibed some Japanese characters and values. Actually the Look East Policy was not so much about getting Japanese investments or technologies as it was about learning Japanese work ethics and the discipline of the work place. I believe strongly that the success or otherwise of a person, a race or a nation is dependent on their values, their work ethics and their discipline when doing whatever they have to do.” (Mahathir: blogspot)

Thus, to me, international education is precisely that, a multi-polar perspective that derives its sources of inspiration from wherever it is best found, so that peace through understanding is fostered.
Learning by doing: it’s the culture, stupid!

Charles Hoedt

Charles Hoedt is the director of Nuffic Neso Russia in Moscow. In his work he promotes student mobility and supports institutional cooperation between the Netherlands and Russia. He studied East European Affairs at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and Journalism at the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences.

Cultural understanding is the key to success in internationalisation. With all the information available online, one would think that internationalisation has never been easier. It’s not hard to find experts who say, “You don’t really have to travel anymore to link knowledge and people: online communication crushes all borders. It’s all you need.” Never could they be more wrong.

Recently I attended a conference in Moscow where Western and Russian academic heavyweights – provosts, deans, scientists – brainstormed about extraordinary innovative project ideas. Initially, they had elaborated further on their ideas via online forums. Yet communication slowed significantly after returning home. Six months later there were no tangible results.

Something else happened at this conference. While many Western participants enthusiastically promised financial support to the projects, their Russian partners sat silent. A prominent professor visiting Moscow for the first time asked me why this was. I explained that while this professor and his colleagues back home have some control over their departmental budget and strategy, in Russia higher powers are often involved. At a minimum, their Russian counterparts would need to first ask permission from their institutions.

I will offer another example. I always advise Dutch partners not to make appointments too early – before ten am – with an institute of higher education in Russia. We Dutch – early birds – are surprised and often don’t take this advice seriously. A Dutch director made an appointment with his Russian counterpart and agreed to meet ‘at eight’. The Russian partner did not show up on time, so the director called him at nine in the morning. Of course, the Russian partner apologised for being late – he was on his way – and asked if they could meet later. Later the Russian partner told me: “We agreed to meet at eight, but I thought he meant eight in the evening! I couldn’t believe he meant the morning. Who wants to meet that early? When he called I was barely out of bed.”

How things really work in Russia – or anywhere – are not usually found in market reports. You have to experience it. You have to learn by doing. We have strategies that seemingly can work anywhere, yet sometimes we underestimate culture and cultural differences. To be successful in the international realm, one must overcome these differences and try to understand your partner’s cultural perspective.
The road to becoming an internationalist

John Hudzik

In addition to faculty and administrative roles at the MSU, Professor Hudzik has been president of NAFSA and also the AIEA and is currently NAFSA senior scholar for internationalisation. He publishes frequently on higher education internationalisation and comprehensive internationalisation. He is also an invited speaker and consultant on these topics around the world.

I was raised in Holland, Michigan, in the American heartland on the shores of Lake Michigan. Although settled by Dutch people, Holland was a fairly parochial setting. Canada was three hours away, but a ‘safer’ intermediate ‘international’ journey was to the state of Ohio next door. ‘Foreign’ enough for a seven-year-old on his first out-of-state trip.

My perspective changed in the fifth grade. A textbook for my world geography class was written as if by a kid my age accompanying his father throughout Europe and the Middle East. I was smitten by his adventures. I wasn’t aware until twenty years later how this book changed me from being inward to outward in my thinking and interests.

As a university undergraduate, I took a Russian history course with a charismatic professor – smitten again. Six courses later, I began to understand something about Russia. But my entire learning came through books, the imagination, and others. Study and travel abroad was for families with disposable income. We didn’t have that, so I just dreamed what these places must really be like.

After completing my PhD in Political Science, including comparative and Soviet and Eastern European political systems, I took a faculty appointment. A faculty colleague who had spent years in Europe doing research asked if I would like to accompany him on a three-week sweep of the continent – as his wife couldn’t go. I jumped at the opportunity. I don’t know what I expected, but what hit me was how book and classroom learning paled in comparison to being there. Thrice smitten!!

I returned a changed person, convinced of the value of ‘study abroad’, even short-term experiences as life changing. Over the next ten years, while doing the scholarship and publication to become a tenured full professor, I developed three successful study abroad programmes in the UK, Australia, and Asia – learning along with my students. A new university president made study abroad expansion a priority and asked me to chair a university taskforce. He liked our goal of quadrupling participation to 40%. He and the provost then appointed me dean of international programmes at Michigan State University. Gulp!!

As dean, later acting provost, and then vice president for global engagement, my education and perspective about things international entered warp speed. Michigan State University’s comprehensive programmes in study abroad, international curricula, cross-border research and development, and area and language studies impacted my learning from all sides. Work took me to over 70 countries on five continents. How fortunate I was not only in travels, but in the many and diverse friends I now have throughout the world.

Real international experience for me came later in life than it did for many colleagues. But converts tend to become strong advocates for their new found passions. I am a virulent internationalist, fully committed to the internationalisation and globalisation of higher education. It is now my principal on-going area of scholarship, publication and public speaking.
My love affair

Mervin Bakker

Mervin Bakker is currently director of Nuffic Neso Indonesia and has been employed in various internationalisation roles since 1998. He has worked for the University of Amsterdam and commercial organisations in Thailand and the Netherlands. Mervin holds degrees from Utrecht University and the University of London. He has been an active member of the EAIE and a speaker at conferences, workshops and seminars.

It must have been in my final year at university when I realised that I was in love with something called internationalisation. How had that happened? What made internationalisation so attractive?

The first thing that comes to mind was my activities for the introduction of Erasmus students at my university. We helped the students to find their way around the university and had many good laughs while teaching them how to cycle. Steering was not a problem, but using the pedal break was. For me it was a true eye-opener to see how international students looked at my university, my city and my country and to realise that they found some of our habits rather strange, habits that for me of course were absolutely normal.

The second milestone came when I went abroad myself, first to the US on a field trip and later on to Thailand to do research. Now it was me finding things strange, like people wearing cowboy hats to the office in Texas or having food on the street in Bangkok, where some people even ate insects. However, if everybody around you does it, you quickly adapt.

I learned a lot academically during my periods abroad. It helped a lot in understanding what the content of all the books and articles I had read actually meant in the real world and in a different context. Equally important for me were the cultural component and the sharing of thoughts, ideas and ambitions with students from all over the world. This added enormous value later on in my professional and personal life, because in order to understand someone from a different background you need to be able to put yourself in the shoes of that other person.

Later, through my work in the Netherlands and abroad, I discovered that internationalisation is even more powerful than I could ever imagine. There is much more involved than students going from one country to another. Students, researchers, university staff and alumni are linked in global communities. These communities add immeasurable value to the individuals involved, their universities, their employers, to national economies and to relations between countries.

Today, fifteen years after graduation, my love affair with internationalisation has turned into a steady relationship. A relationship that is still so full of great surprises and new developments that I am eagerly looking forward to the next fifteen years.
The good news is that it starts with an international education

Nannette Ripmeester

Nannette Ripmeester is founder and director of Expertise in Labour Mobility. Nannette started her international career working for the European Commission in Brussels. In 1992 she founded Expertise in Labour Mobility, providing customised solutions for international labour mobility. Nannette combines her role for ELM with her work as director of client services Europe for i-graduate. These roles, together with 20 years’ experience advising employers, universities and governments on graduate mobility, make her Europe’s leading expert on mobility for study and work.

The internationalisation of higher education has transformed in the past 25 years from a ticket to be internationally mobile to the minimum pre-requisite to get hired abroad. My work has always centred around international labour mobility. When I worked in Brussels in the early 90s, our team at the European Commission set up the EURES system with the aim of meeting labour market demands in certain regions more effectively and supporting European citizens in their desire for mobility. That desire turned out to be rather minimal: nowadays slightly over 2% of the European labour force works in another EU member state. However, the good news is that those who have studied abroad are more likely to work abroad in a later stage of their lives. Education seems the key to unlocking European potential.

While at the Commission, I had the opportunity to work with some major companies which were headquartered in Brussels. They were keen to hire internationally, but the practicalities of making it happen seemed difficult to arrange; my next career move was born. I founded Expertise in Labour Mobility (ELM) to work strategically with employers in setting up their expat policies and ensuring smooth communication between employer and expats. Our corporate clients often asked us to bring entire expat families up to speed on cultural differences to ensure smooth expat landings. The kids I worked with in the early days are now asking for career advice and where to study … internationally, of course.

When I started ELM, I wanted to share our knowledge of how to gain access to the European labour market and our career guides series ‘Looking for work in …’ was born. Universities noticed these guides and asked if I could transform the information from the career guides into a training course. Over 3,500 students have since taken part in a ‘Looking for work around the Globe’ workshop.

Over the years, I’ve seen the wish-lists of international employers change, and a graduate with international study experience has moved up the recruitment hiring criteria from ‘exotic’ to ‘essential’. Hence, it all starts with students and an international education. Without them the mobility of an entire European continent remains ‘just a nice idea’.

education seems to be the key to unlocking European potential
The wide world

Janneke de Geus

Janneke de Geus studied Romance Languages and Cultures at the University of Groningen and Social Anthropology in Mexico. She specialised in 20th-century Mexican culture. After an internship at ECLAC/UN/Mexico, she worked at the Netherlands Embassy in Mexico. In 2009 she started her current job as director of Nuffic Neso Mexico.

When I look back it seems that internationalisation has always played an important role in my life. The first inkling goes way back, when I was a little girl sitting in the seat on the back of my mothers’ bike. We were cycling through the polder enjoying the scenery and then I suddenly asked, “Mommy, is this the wide world?”

Although I do not remember this moment, it seems that these words were the beginning of my search for ‘the wide world’ and of my wish to know other places and to learn from other cultures and ideas. When I was twelve years old, my aunt showed me pictures of her trip to Latin America and these images intensified my wish to learn about other cultures. That was one of the reasons I decided to study Romance Languages and Cultures, a programme that covers the broader linguistic, literary, historic, social and political phenomena of the Romance family of languages. Students seek to understand the differences and mutual dynamics of this group of countries. After my studies, I started working abroad and to this day, although from different perspectives, my work has always been related to internationalisation.

What I have seen is that every form of internationalisation is based on a wish to broaden horizons and to learn from other places. To be able to work in a globalising world, every person has to be prepared. This preparation cannot be done from one day to the next. It is an ongoing learning process in which all elements and ideas of different cultures should be analysed and taken into consideration. The same applies to companies or institutions that want to operate internationally. Existing processes or ideas should probably be changed and other ways of working implemented to meet the requirements. While maybe some of these changes seem ridiculous in the beginning, on taking a closer look, it turns out that one has to adapt to fulfil the requirements.

In my opinion that is exactly what internationalisation means: having the wish to broaden your horizon, adapt to and learn from others and find a way to make your ‘product’ valuable in the world.

Will the ongoing process of internationalisation ever stop? I don’t think so. Because in every step, one will find something to learn … and maybe even more when you look at your own culture from a distance!
Life-long internationalising

Alex Olde Kalter

Alex Olde Kalter studied Slavonic and Applied Linguistics (computer processing of natural language / constructing valid and reliable language tests) at Utrecht University. After his first job as an applied linguist in a semi-automatic translation project at ATOS ORIGIN, he was director of the European Office for ETS. From 2001 till 2010 he was director of the EAIE.

It was through my academic specialisation in language testing that I came to work for the European TOEFL office of the Princeton-based Educational Testing Service (ETS). Presentations on its linguistic features brought me to conferences all over Europe – my favourite conference was the annual conference of the European Association for International Education (EAIE). Being chair of the EAIE’s professional section for language teachers and testers, the world of internationalisation opened up for me: chairs of professional sections for international relations management, student advisers, credential evaluators and what have you! I fell in love with this broad world of colleagues who focused on making European higher education more internationally oriented and who were open to and working in that world of cultural differences.

It was exciting to see our field change from ‘just’ student exchanges to internationalisation at a much broader level, with international offices of a more professionalised character within institutions of higher education. All this unfolded within a framework of an already widely ‘internationalised’ / globalised corporate world (similar to the merger of my first company’s Dutch software house BSO ORIGIN with the French ATOS to form ATOS ORIGIN). International experience has simply become a sine qua non when starting in an internationalised labour market.

Thus international experience need not stop with studying abroad during one’s university years: it is an exciting life journey to gradually ‘flexibilise’ one’s language skills – also beyond the lingua franca – as a tool for creating more fruitful contacts and for negotiating more successfully. It is exciting to discover, by trial and error, the right balance between cross-cultural awareness and a person’s character and attitude. It is only by way of insight into the perspective of the other that we can achieve a win-win situation. This is a lifelong experience.
A bridge too far

Jak den Exter

Jak den Exter (1952) did a master’s in Anthropology at Utrecht University and Turkish Studies at Leiden University. He has worked as a social worker for Turkish people in the Netherlands, a civil servant at the Netherlands Home Office, and as an independent consultant and researcher. Since 2006, he has been the first director of the Netherlands Institute for Higher Education in Ankara (NIHA) (www.nihankara.org). He has published books and articles on Turkish Islam, migration and ethnicity.

For us at NIHA, our approach to internationalisation as a concept is pretty much the same as it is for many others. It’s about life experience, spanning boundaries and is viewed as vital for the international labour market, the global village and so forth.

At the same time, there can be some striking differences. Working on bilateral internationalisation in another country, as NIHA does, creates a necessity to converge, at least to a certain extent, the different views and (working) cultures of professionals from different backgrounds. It’s about bringing together professionals from the Netherlands, who will start advertising events to be held in the summer already in the preceding December, with professionals from Turkey, who are more used to spontaneous decision-making just before an event is due to begin. Having to compromise on advertising activities to please participants from both countries in February or March may lead to a failure…on both sides.

Apart from the concept of time, the concept of place and distance regularly plays an important role in the planning of internationalisation events between Turkey and the Netherlands. A visiting Dutch professor once inquired: “I met a very nice rector of a university a bit north of Ankara. Can we go there this afternoon.” The business card of the rector revealed that the distance was about 250 km through a partly mountainous area, so even a visit over the course of a full day would be difficult to organise. ‘A bit above’ or ‘just west from’ really mean very different things in Turkey and the Netherlands. The same goes for trying to visit two or three of Istanbul’s more than 25 universities in one day, as is often planned by Dutch visitors. Istanbul is not only a city with about fifteen million inhabitants, but also one with enormous traffic jams, with some of its university campuses being located far from the city proper. Lack of a proper notion of the distances and possible obstacles involved can quickly result in a disappointing experience.

Internationalisation is, in other words, also very much about the basics.
Internationalisation: ....from *penningmeester* to treasurer

*Herman Vriesendorp*

*Herman Vriesendorp* (1947) studied Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam and Rebalancing in Groningen. Presently he is the owner of Balans in Lijf en Bedrijf (Balance in Body and Business) and is internal auditor of refugees charity UAF. In the past he worked for the Ministries of Finance and of Education and was deputy director-general of Nuffic.

It was not a very obvious choice for me to seek a job in the field of internationalisation of education: I grew up in a very Dutch environment. My education was exclusively in the Netherlands and my first jobs – in public finance – were totally nationally oriented.

And then, in the eighties, I found a job at Nuffic, solely because of my financial and management background. My field of activities was primarily operational management. While many colleagues travelled around the world, my official trips did not take me much further than the Ministry of Education, then in Zoetermeer, a few miles from The Hague, for the purpose of obtaining money to finance Nuffic's activities.

Twenty years ago this changed, slowly. The foundation of ACA in 1993 was an important moment. Although Pieter van Dijk, one of the founders, was the Nuffic representative, I was present at several ACA meetings. Nine years ago I took over his activities at ACA and became treasurer, a job I fulfilled with great pleasure and with enthusiasm. Working with so many other passionate people, my role was to help to strengthen the organisation which plays such an important role in the internationalisation of higher education.

When I was asked to submit a contribution, I wondered where my passion came from. Did it come from the many years working for Nuffic or was it even older?

- Did it stem from my sixteenth year when I started to take part in international summer camps in a very old boarding school in the Lake District in England (where the international character of these meetings was solely due to my presence since all the other participants were English)?
- Was it because of my enthusiasm for an offer I got, during a journey in Yemen in the mid-seventies, to give courses in public finance to civil servants (which, unfortunately, I was not able to accept it because of some practical issues)?
- Or was it because of my international activities for Amnesty, where I came across the same sort of enthusiasm and passion for human rights as I had seen at ACA for the internationalisation of education?

I think the answer is all three of the above. I am convinced international relations in work and in education are very important and, whereas I never studied abroad, I am happy that my youngest son started the study programme International Organisations and International Relations just this month.
we have a group of alumni who have moved here, for study, career or ... love

Neso brain train... one million likes

Shirley van Maren

Shirley has worked as a communications consultant in the public sector for the past fourteen years. In 2008 she started working as a team coordinator for the Education Promotion Department at Nuffic. Shirley’s team is responsible for facilitating the Netherlands Education Support Offices (Nesos) and for coordinating the Holland Alumni network.

Seeing the actual result of internationalisation is one of the most satisfying elements of my job at Nuffic. When does that result become most visible? In my point of view, the trail that the brain train leaves on social media is a beautiful example. It is striking that quite a few of our colleagues at our Netherlands Education Support Offices studied in Holland before starting work at one of our offices. You could not ask for better ambassadors, could you? And, inevitably, after a few years of working at a Neso, they move on. Either to a next career move within their own country or internationally.

We have often heard that a few years of work experience at a Neso is a good stepping-stone. Naturally, the Netherlands is often one of those next or final steps! We have a group of ‘Neso alumni’ from Mexico, Korea and Russia who have moved here for study, career or ... love. And their ambassadorship continues. Through Facebook they keep their friends, colleagues and family updated about their time in the Netherlands.

Every day my news page is filled with enthusiastic posts about the weather, the food, their study results, their social life (Vierdaagse Nijmegen) and their bikes. It seems to me that they keep on fulfilling their role as Holland ambassadors out of a genuine love for the country. And that is what makes internationalisation not only visible, but almost tangible.
Internationalisation of higher education: why has it not become obvious?

Peter Blok

Peter Blok, lecturer at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Hogeschool van Amsterdam, holds a master's degree in Cultural Anthropology. He held various positions in the field of international cooperation at Vastenaktie, Nuffic and the University of Amsterdam. Since 1999, he has worked as HRM advisor at the University of Amsterdam and the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Hogeschool van Amsterdam. He will finish his PhD on the future of HRM in the economy of the 21st century in November 2013.

I have worked in the world of the internationalisation of higher education for more than ten years. Before that I worked in the realm of development cooperation which I left because I got the impression that a temporary instrument had turned into an aim in and of itself, including a professional community that loved to travel, meet in capital cities and sing the same songs in a choir but with too few solo singers. Development cooperation did not lead to economic development, greater independence for countries and peoples or make the world a better place to live, despite the sincere and good intentions of its agents.

Looking back, it looks as if the same has happened in the world in internationalisation. Many of its agents worked in development cooperation before, by the way. One of the ideals in the first years was to turn universities into places of international learning and research, much like in the Middle Ages, when students, like Erasmus and many others, travelled in Europe, roaming from one interesting place to another and absorbing and exchanging knowledge along the way: knowledge management avant la lettre.

What I now see is that student mobility in the Netherlands has stabilised, with most students choosing the university around the corner and Germans writing about ‘Erasmus Orgasmus’. Despite ECTS, the recognition of credits in Europe is still troublesome.

Of course, the professional community is not to blame for this lack of victories, but the question is, are they fully aware of it?

Development cooperation and international higher education are like religions: they promise a better world but at the end of the day they create huge cathedrals but the believers have gone. Do I see a future? Institutions are easier to create than to deconstruct. Unless there is a huge inflow of young professionals into this field, it will slowly fade out. The question is, under what conditions will international higher education become an obviousness? If we compare student mobility with mobility on the European labour market, we see that, thanks to the current crisis, people go where the opportunities are. If this is also true for international higher education, it might mean that as soon as there are real advantages of studying abroad, students will certainly follow them. For graduate studies this is already the case. But then it is a need and not a luxury.
Product-Price-Place-Promotion-People-Process

Han Dommers

Since 2008 Han Dommers has been head of the Education Promotion Department of Nuffic. He is responsible for the Netherlands Education Support Offices and Holland Alumni network. Before joining Nuffic Han has worked in various positions at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the EU. Han Dommers has an MSc in Public Administration, with a specialisation in international relations, from University of Twente.

Although I do not have a background in marketing I noticed in my daily work and to my pleasant surprise that my knowledge and experience in public administration and international relations is also useful in international education marketing. International higher education marketing can be defined as an organised set of activities that contribute to the strengthening of the international market position and reputation of higher education.

Because the international environment is so dynamic, it makes sense to set up a flexible and organic organisation structure for international higher education marketing. Based on my own experiences, such a structure requires a staff that possesses the right flexible attitude, competencies and international skills.

The well-known marketing mix can also be applied to higher education marketing abroad. Aspects as product (study programmes, quality of teachers, university facilities, etc.), price (tuition fees, scholarships, living costs), place (location of the institution) and promotion (public relations, publicity, branding, etc.) are essential in that respect.

When talking to students it becomes clear that it is a mix of factors that influences their study-destination choices. For effective education marketing you need the right mix of tools in order to influence these factors. Important tools are online promotion, student fairs, institutional networking and alumni. Alumni can provide prospective students with valuable information on the quality of education, the challenges and the socio-cultural environment. I have observed that alumni are viewed as reliable sources of information by their compatriots.

A higher education institution, national agency, region or city that aims to promote higher education internationally should use the marketing mix, but only as part of an internationalisation strategy and in a flexible and dynamic manner embedded in the organisation. Therefore I would recommend, based on my experiences at Nuffic, not only using the traditional marketing mix of product, price, place and promotion, but to also include the ‘P’ of people and the ‘P’ of process in the education marketing mix. In this era of information, technology and communication, features such as speed, accuracy, flexibility, professionalism and an international attitude are seen by young people as characteristics of quality and convey an impression of your organisation(s). Therefore I see the aspects of ‘people’ and ‘process’ as essential parts of any promotion strategy for strengthening your position in the international education market.
Crossroads

Stephen Orme

Stephen Orme (Belfast 1978) earned an MA in English Language and Literature (Minor in Psychology) from Leiden University where he later worked as an admissions officer before joining Nuffic. In 2012 he became director of the Holland International Study Centre Study Group. Stephen is active in the EAIE where he received the Rising Star Award in 2009.

My ten years of experience in the field of international education are anything but a lifetime achievement. However, I do feel it is long enough to reflect on changes in the field and – above all – changes in my personal perspective of what we are doing.

The concept of ‘internationalising higher education’ has increasingly become ambiguous to me. On the one hand, it does portray many of the things we do, while on the other, it also seems somewhat overrated, suggesting an active role on our part rather than the reactiveness of facilitating a process that is happening anyway: globalisation. It is an industry or sector still struggling to justify its existence. This is true for international offices within universities as well as government-funded agencies and private-owned companies. Whatever people do within our field of work, nobody can ever adequately explain it at a birthday party. Internationalisation is, however, as relevant as it was ten years ago.

The three examples above summarise my personal flight in the field: starting at a small international office within a traditional university, moving to a large government-funded agency and then heading on to a commercial company providing degree preparatory education. The offices as well as the positions have been entirely different but the network around them remains the same. Moreover, many of the challenges are the same. Legislation has changed in favour of international mobility but there is still too much window-dressing around it.

My latest move from Nuffic to Study Group symbolises the crossroads our sector is currently looking at. Most European countries are cutting public spending in the higher education sector and internationalisation in particular. Yet private companies in the higher education sector are still frowned upon. Whether we do it on a not-for profit or on a commercial basis, we do need to find a viable model for what we do and make it work ourselves. The days of spending of public cash as we did in the nineties and zeros are gone for good. People lobbying to regain lost privileges are wasting their time – and probably scarce public money too.

Last but not least: the people. Ten years in the sector have provided me with a valuable network and some great friends. When I started, the sector was dominated by people who are now retiring one by one. They founded several associations and organisations that have become very large and influential over the years. They were the pioneers and work was a lifestyle to them. To the new generation it is mainly a job. Where am I? Probably somewhere in the middle, looking at the same crossroads as everybody else.
Chris van den Borne has a longstanding history in International Education. Trained as an academic researcher in Biochemistry, he turned his attention to environmental issues and sustainable development in the mid 1980s. He has developed and run international Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes in this field at Saxion University of Applied Sciences. At the beginning of this century, he moved from his academic background to become the Director of the International Office where he is responsible for incoming and outgoing mobility and the policy of internationalisation at the institutional level.

At the close of the last century I was involved in the development of master’s courses in the field of environmental sciences. At first, the programmes were only taught in Dutch, but as environmental issues transcend national boundaries, we were soon faced with the challenge of offering them to an international student body. Although I had previously been involved in offering education to exchange students within the Erasmus framework, I consider this my first real experience with a truly international mix of students. As the course director, it was up to me to deal with all student-related matters: educational, emotional, cultural … you name it. There is one particular eye-opening experience I had with one of my first students which I’d like to share.

The student in question was from China and was called Lee. He had a bachelor’s degree in a related area and presumably a good grasp of English, having been an English teacher in Beijing. He arrived early for the course and soon found part-time work at a local Chinese restaurant to supplement his income. One day, he came up to me and told me he had a serious matter he wished to discuss. He told me he had lost all his money, which he kept on him, at the local town market. I asked him how much he’d lost and he told me about 3,000 dollars, which at that time might have been his living expenses for a whole year. I told him I was very sorry. I asked him if he had taken out any insurance against loss of personal belongings, but he didn’t seem to understand. I asked him if he had reported the loss to the police. He said, “I don’t have any friends at the police”.

This got me thinking about how culturally biased my questions were. In Dutch society, people are insured for almost every eventuality. It was only ten years after this that I first saw advertising for insurance in China. From his perspective, going to the police would only cause him more trouble, expecting questions like, “Where did you get 3,000 dollars in the first place?”

Lee taught me that internationalisation is not only concerned with learning about other cultures, but that it is as much about opening your eyes to your own cultural background. This has enriched my life by showing me that I have to deal with the uncertainty of my own expectations.
Internationalisation of debate and studies

Peter van der Hijden

Peter van der Hijden, of Dutch nationality, is a European official, working for the European Commission at the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. He is responsible for promoting attractive researchers’ careers and modern university systems (Innovation Union and European Research Area). Peter has been head of sector for Higher Education Policies at the European Commission DG Education and Culture. He has worked for many years on the Erasmus programme and the Bologna Process. Before moving to Brussels, Peter worked in the Netherlands at Maastricht University as vice registrar of the University Council and secretary to the Law Research Committee. Peter studied law in Nijmegen and Leiden and graduated in Maastricht.

It is often claimed that public interest for Europe suffers from the fact that there are few successful Europe-wide media. There is no common first language and themes of interest vary per country. I dare to question the latter. If you follow the press and television of several European countries you will notice that the topics discussed are strikingly similar and the tendencies in the debates follow the same pattern. I do not mean topics of obvious global interest like the fights in Syria or the Olympics, which are hard to avoid even in the local press. I mean societal themes like unemployment, pension reform, child care and crime prevention. These themes dominate the media in waves which are very recognisable across geographical and linguistic borders. It took 300 years for the renaissance, that started in Italy, to reach the outer edges of our continent. The pros and cons of being a working mother invade the weekend editions all over Europe in no time. Only to be replaced with pages full of concern about food safety the month after.

This phenomenon is noticeable in other fields as well. Cities all over Europe have installed artificial beaches on their river banks as Paris started to do some years ago. Idols competitions and stud parties (a plague) have spread with unprecedented speed. According to my observation we do have European media. They just have different names like Le Monde, El Pais, Berlingske Tidende or Gazeta Wyborcza. Some of these already share their most prominent articles.

This tendency is not surprising if you consider the broad similarities in our history, culture, social systems, and education. Differences remain. They are valuable and they are persistent, but the underlying base, in my view, is quite homogenous. EU competition policies have helped by bringing down the prices of air transport and telecommunication, thus accelerating the opportunities to interact, learn and copycat.

There is no reason why students and researchers should not see the whole of Europe as their common playing field and plan their studies and careers accordingly. They may opt for a short stay or a full master’s abroad. The brightest can do their PhD at doctoral schools across the continent, currently being modernised in line with the European Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training. EU mobility grants and user-friendly orientation tools like StudyPortals and Euraxess help to navigate. Entrepreneurial graduates can team up to create start-ups through platforms like garagErasmus. If this could be part of our legacy we would have gained a lot!

1 Peter van der Hijden is Policy Officer at the European Commission, DG Research and Innovation, Skills Unit. This contribution is written on his personal behalf. It does not represent an official position of the European Commission.
Learning, language, the curriculum and research
A matter of language(s)

*Ulrich Grothus*

*Ulrich Grothus is the deputy secretary-general of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). He has been with the organisation for 25 years and has headed consecutively all programme directorates as well as the offices in Paris and New York. Ulrich speaks five foreign languages.*

In January 2012, I had the honour to speak at the event celebrating Nuffic’s 60th anniversary. The distinguished audience was overwhelmingly Dutch. I was the only speaker to say a few words in (bad) Dutch before continuing in English. Three years earlier, I had been rapporteur at a conference in Paris. Except for three other speakers, all of the more than hundred participants were French. Yet, the opening plenary suddenly switched to (good) English after one of the speakers, a German, had complained of not understanding.

The use of English in teaching and scholarships is frequently described as a measure of internationalisation. But then, is it not part of our international environment that we are living in different nations and speak different languages? And is the automatic use of English, regardless of purpose and audience, not a sign of global homogenisation rather than intercultural sensibility?

English-taught programmes, particularly at graduate level, certainly remove barriers to international mobility and provide access to high-level academic opportunities to students who would otherwise not be able to benefit from them and would instead turn to English-speaking countries. This writer was very much involved in, and continues to be committed to, the introduction of such programmes in Germany. International demand still exceeds supply by a wide margin.

However, English is just a tool that facilitates access to societies and cultures that normally communicate in their own languages. If we cannot reasonably expect every Indian or Brazilian student to be proficient in German or Dutch before starting a master’s course here, we should encourage them to learn the language while they are in Europe. With more courses being taught in English and more students, including DAAD grantees, not speaking the local language, international students find it more difficult to integrate into informal networks or simply have fun at a party.

This may apply even more so to ‘medium-sized’ languages like French or German. In Europe, the number of native speakers of German is second only to Russian. More than 50 per cent of international students in Germany study here in order to improve their German. They are thus coming to Germany not in spite of, but because of, our speaking German. We should not disappoint them – and learn languages ourselves, big or small, that help us see the world from a different angle and understand more ways of life.
A passage from India

Rajika Bhandari

Rajika Bhandari is deputy vice president for research and evaluation at the Institute of International Education (IIE) where she provides strategic oversight of IIE’s research and evaluation activities and leads the projects Open Doors and Project Atlas. Rajika is a frequent speaker and widely published author on global student mobility and has written four books on the subject. She is also a travel writer and her essays on travel and culture have appeared in India and the US. She holds a doctoral degree in psychology from North Carolina State University and a BA (Honours) in Psychology from the University of Delhi, India.

My journey in international education began when I arrived in the US in 1992 as a graduate student from India, one of 36,000 Indian students that year according to IIE’s Open Doors report. Being in an American classroom was as much an education in psychology (my field of study) as it was a life lesson about cultural differences in how knowledge is imparted and acquired at American universities. I was encouraged to think much more critically than I had ever been before, and was surprised that questioning your professor was actually seen as a good thing and not as an affront as it would be in Indian universities (and I suspect in many other institutions and countries around the world). So while I baulked at the insouciance with which my classmates referred to my adviser by his first name, I also sharpened my critical-thinking skills and felt an equal participant among my classmates, men and women alike.

What also immediately struck me about the American system is what I can best describe as its sheer fluidity and openness. Taking full advantage of its cross-disciplinary approach, I was able to move easily across different departments, selecting courses from psychology, statistics, sociology and developmental economics to fashion a degree that would better prepare me for a career in international work. This sort of flexibility is almost unheard of in many countries; it is certainly rare in India where, even today, rigid curricula are a deterrent to many American students who would like to study there.

After over fifteen years as a professional in the international field, I have the benefit of hindsight and can confidently say that international education gave me the best of both worlds, including an undergraduate degree from India where the focus was on acquiring the fundamentals and grounding students in theory. This approach has its advantages, too, because it was the rigorous foundation that allowed me to apply my knowledge in real-world settings in the US, India and beyond.

In many ways, joining the IIE seven years ago brought my life in the US full circle, from the time when I arrived in the US as a young and bright-eyed international graduate student to today where I am engaged in researching and documenting – through our flagship Open Doors project – the numbers of international students who come to the US each year from over 220 countries, including over 100,000 from India.

I can confidently say that international education gave me the best of both worlds.
Internationalisation on home ground

Kristel Baele

Kristel Baele is vice chair of the Executive Board of the HAN University of Applied Sciences and a member of the Education Council, an independent governmental advisory body which advises the Minister of Education, Parliament and local authorities. Kristel Baele is a member of the Nuffic Advisory Board. Previously she has held executive management positions at Leiden University and Delft University of Technology.

In 1986, I went to work for the International Labour Organisation in Geneva; an inspiring experience which shaped me as a person and a professional. It also turned me into a staunch advocate of international mobility. I was an exception then, but in the meantime, experience abroad seems to have become generally accepted as an educational instrument. Internet has given us rapid and cheap access to the whole world; young people travel a great deal in their leisure time. But does that make them internationally minded? And does it turn them into competent professionals? Don’t we need to educate them in that direction? In which case, shouldn’t the focus be shifted from student mobility to curriculum internationalisation? Outgoing student mobility has remained relatively limited for a number of years, whereas the jobs of highly educated employees are largely international, multicultural and/or intercultural in nature. Even in disciplines where you wouldn’t expect this. Take two typically domestic-oriented sectors, education and healthcare. The classrooms where our students find jobs reflect diverse nationalities and cultural backgrounds. In healthcare, they come into contact with patients from various cultures and with quite different frames of reference with respect to the healthcare service and the role of doctor and patient. And their colleagues may be first, second or third-generation immigrants. This trend can be observed in all segments of society and it demands that we develop intercultural skills.

To summarise, despite the fact that the majority of students enrolled in Dutch higher education come from the Netherlands and will probably continue to live and work here, we need to prepare them for an international future. Not in a distant country, but close to home, around the corner. Internationalisation has become a permanent feature of Dutch professional life and should therefore characterise our identity as institutes of higher education. Good education takes this approach into account, integrating it into all study programmes. In this way, quality targets in higher education become intrinsically bound up with internationalisation targets.

If the internationalisation of curricula is so important, why is it still happening so infrequently? The main obstacles are a lack of knowledge and insight, popular misconceptions and an inadequate implementation of the approach. In other words, there is still a long way to go. And although I remain optimistic, nothing happens of its own accord, so we will continue to need visionary ambassadors and persistent champions to make this happen.
In 1972, I was teaching the anatomy and physiology of farm animals in Kenya to what were going to be veterinary assistants. The topic is similar to my previous job at the University of Amsterdam, where I was tutoring first and second-year Zoology students doing their practicals. Though the topic was familiar, the context in Kenya was different and hence my teaching style also differed. In Kenya, watching and feeling live animals around us was essential, whereas in Amsterdam we dissected dead animals.

Later on, back in my favourite laboratory at the University of Amsterdam, researching pesticide resistance in ticks and subsequently the reproduction of a particular tsetse fly, I encountered various foreign guest workers. It was fascinating to catch ticks in the dunes near Zandvoort with a tick-obsessed researcher who had been working in the US, Australia and Canada. It was frustrating to be familiar with a researcher from Egypt who missed his family and felt it a sin to sexually relieve himself, but thought that women who talked with him were sent for that reason. Scientifically, I felt a big thrill when, during dances held in the evening at a congress in Tanzania, I and two other tsetse fly-oriented researchers from the US and UK arranged an experimental set-up for testing a tsetse fly pheromone that had been synthetically composed in the US. We tested its functioning on various species of the fly reared in Bristol and in Amsterdam and published the positive results jointly as collaborating researchers.

In 1985 I moved on to a job at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in the area of promoting internationalisation. My professional environment changed from interpersonal connections that developed spontaneously while doing research to an organised setting facilitating an international experience for every student. However, the possibilities for exchange in comparable higher education systems are essential. Hence the Bologna Process to which I contributed. I chaired, for instance, the joint meetings of quality assurance agencies and governments to develop shared descriptors for bachelor’s and master’s qualifications. They were later used in the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area. This joint structure is helpful, though interpretations vary. Invariably important, therefore, is the substantial role of the teaching staff and researchers to stimulate new students and researchers to broaden their scope and to experience situations in other countries.

Since retiring in 2013, I follow new policies and discussions in the newspapers. The discussions feed my faith in persons engaged in education. I dream of turning 90 while still being able to listen to the, undoubtedly different, international experiences of my newborn grandson, who will then be 25 years of age.
Internationalisation as cultural therapy

Anne Bannink

Anne Bannink is Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Amsterdam. Her research interests include discourse analysis, ethnography of education and intercultural communication. During the past few decades she has taught students coming to Amsterdam from all over the world. She has worked in internationalisation projects in Vietnam, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy and England.

I became aware of my Dutch cultural identity for the first time when I moved to London to work as an au-pair at the tender age of eighteen. This was in the early seventies. My job was to look after six kids between two and twelve years old. As you can imagine my immersion in British culture was complete, exhilarating and sometimes extremely confusing and frustrating. I also took evening classes to study for the Cambridge Proficiency Certificate. My fellow students represented a kaleidoscope of cultures from all over the world and my learning curve there was – again – steep and exciting. My experiences during this gap year instilled in me a deep cultural curiosity and, looking back, even shaped in a fundamental way one of my main research interests today: the ethnography of education.

No wonder then that I jumped at the chance to go to Vietnam in 1997 to work with colleagues from the University of Amsterdam on the MHO project at Cantho University. Our job was to introduce more communicative teaching methods. I was acutely aware of the fact that Vietnamese culture and informal teaching based on symmetrical teacher-student relations were not an obvious or easy match. Intuitively, I approached the matter with great caution and although my students were extremely eager to learn, in the end I wonder who learned the most: the teacher or the students.

My experiences in Vietnam showed me how important it is to acknowledge the expert role of the students in internationalisation projects: it is for them to decide whether novel ideas and methods will benefit their teaching or not. This means the teacher needs to really listen to the students and encourage them to develop their own voice and, if needed, local pedagogies. It also means that the trainer should be willing – and able – to question his or her own socio-cultural assumptions. The goal should be intercultural reciprocity. If this condition is fulfilled, trainer and students both become aware of the global and specific contextual factors which influence their daily teaching practice. This will allow the classroom to evolve into a genuine ‘third’ place, where the culture of the students and the target culture can be reflected upon without loss of face. Students and trainer will have the opportunity to remain and become members of a truly intercultural community.

It is my deeply felt conviction that this is what internationalisation in education is, or at least should be, about.
Une autre langue, un autre regard sur la vie.

José Ravenstein

Since 1999 I’ve worked with great pleasure at Nuffic especially, in particular for the European Education programmes (Leonardo da Vinci programme, Lifelong Learning Programme and Erasmus+) because I believe in the valuable impact of the international experience on our students and staff at education institutions.

Au cours de mon enfance, j’ai régulièrement passé mes vacances sur l’île de Terschelling. Un jour à la plage, je fus amenée à jouer avec une petite fille étrangère, comme cela arrive si spontanément entre jeunes enfants en vacances. Elle ne parlait pas ma langue, le néerlandais. Je me souviens bien avoir été frappée tout d’abord par le fait que je ne pouvais pas la comprendre (la gamine s’exprimait en allemand) mais aussi par cette pensée qui spontanément s’imposait à moi: une langue est un formidable outil de communication!

Bien des années plus tard et dans un contexte également professionnel, je me réjouis que nous ayons adopté l’anglais comme langue commune pour nos échanges internationaux, un anglais adopté par tous et qui n’a souvent rien à voir avec la langue originale du Royaume-Uni, ce dont les Anglais eux-mêmes sont bien conscients.

Au fil des années, cette fascination pour les langues ne m’a jamais quittée. J’ai étudié le français à l’Université de Leiden. Plongée dans la littérature, dans de longues listes de vocabulaire, dans l’histoire et la culture françaises, je me préparais pour pratiquer cette langue, en France, dans la vraie vie!

Tout a basculé quand j’ai commencé à séjourner régulièrement en France. Sur place, je réalisais qu’une langue n’est pas seulement un outil pour communiquer mais qu’elle est aussi un vecteur de culture; un monde nouveau s’offrait ainsi à moi. Grâce à de nombreuses rencontres personnelles, j’appris à connaître ce pays à travers les yeux de ses habitants et à comprendre l’amour qu’ils portent à leur héritage culturel, le respect qu’ils ont de leurs terroirs et savoir-faire. Je saisissais enfin pourquoi un Français a besoin de plus d’un adjectif pour décrire toute la beauté de son patrimoine culturel. Cette expérience a profondément enrichi ma vie personnelle et m’a surtout permis de dépasser les barrières culturelles dans mon approche vers autrui.

Ainsi, il est selon moi évident que l’expérience à l’international doit aller de pair avec une expérience linguistique renforcée. « Vivre » la langue originale du pays, en goûtant pleinement sa culture, confère à toute expérience internationale sa vraie valeur.
let’s truly internationalise our curricula in a systematic way

An extreme case of internationalisation at home

Jos Beelen

Jos Beelen is a researcher as well as a consultant for the internationalisation of the curriculum at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Hogeschool van Amsterdam. He is a trainer for the EAIE and chairs the Internationalisation at Home Special Interest Group, which aims to be a platform for those who are interested in the internationalisation of curricula in higher education.

A rebours (‘Against Nature’ or ‘Against the Grain’ in English) is the title of a novel by Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907), born in Paris of a Dutch father and a French mother. It was published in 1884 and is considered the highlight of the decadent movement. The main character, the Duc des Esseintes, suffers from a genetically determined neurosis, which induces him to withdraw to a small house near Paris. From then on, he has his international experiences at home. His dining room is designed like a ship’s cabin complete with a porthole and the scent of tar, allowing him to experience travel on a ship. He is convinced that the imagination can easily replace reality and that the artificial represents the triumph of the human mind.

Before he withdrew into solitude, he made a trip to Holland, one of the two countries that he was interested in visiting. This was a disappointment since Holland did not conform to the image that he had conjured up from 17th-century paintings. When finally he decided to make a trip to England, he stopped at a Parisian restaurant where the smells and the talk of Englishmen around him led him to think that he was already experiencing England. The real experience can only bring disappointment, so instead of taking the train to Dieppe, he found himself taking the train back home where he arrived exhausted, as after a long journey.

Des Esseintes represents a long line of romantics who, through artificial Roman ruins, gothic follies and Chinese tea houses, tried to escape to another time or place. We do the same when we have meals in restaurants that are decorated in Mexican or Chinese style to enhance the exoticism of the experience.

While excavating a Greek and Roman site in Turkey, I discovered that the romantic 18th-century notion of the ‘pleasure of ruins’ may exist for the tourist, but not for the archaeologist. I needed to deal with the real Turkey and not with my own version of it. As a lecturer, I saw that only a small minority of students makes a similar transition. Influenced by Hanneke and her ‘gang’, I then came to the conclusion that internationalisation for all could only happen at home. Let’s take our lecturers and students beyond the Mexican and Chinese restaurants and truly internationalise our curricula in a systematic way. Much work in this regard remains to be done, but from time to time we are allowed, like Des Esseintes, to dream of other and, maybe, better places.
World wisdom in a plastic bag

Matthias Otten

Matthias Otten is professor of Political Science and Intercultural Development at Cologne University of Applied Sciences in Germany. His teaching and research interests include intercultural communication theory, the development of intercultural competence, the internationalisation of higher education institutions and migration research.

It was a summer morning in 2003 when I was introduced to Amanuel, a friendly and somewhat shy man, 35 years old and born in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea. Later he graduated in Algeria and in London. Ten years later, I recall this encounter as a true but also a tragic allegory of ‘internationalisation at home’.

Amanuel was looking for a PhD position to continue his research in Linguistics and Cultural Identity Theory. He was indeed a ‘free mover’ in many ways: geographically, academically, and intellectually. My director agreed to offer him a free desk with a computer for the next semester at our institution. Amanuel came by once or twice a week. Instead of a daypack he always carried an overused plastic bag with dozens of crumpled handwritten pages and a complete printout of Max Webers’ ‘The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism’.

From time to time we had a cup of tea and Amanuel began to tell his story – for me still one of the most intriguing cosmopolitan biographies I have ever heard. Amanuel's father was a key figure in the Eritrean war of independence. Consequently, Amanuel was a very political person himself. He was an intellectual academic nomad in the truest sense of the word. Amanuel spoke five languages, graduated in different parts and systems of the world, and he was gifted with a sharp and critical political mindset. Most of our discussions over tea ended in a rigorous and well-informed policy analysis of African democracy, the role of Marxism for an emerging nation or the damage caused by Western development aid. I was the silent listener most of the time.

Despite his intense motivation, Amanuel did not learn any German during the next year and he had a hard time to accept that his ‘manuscripts’ were not enough to convince a German professor or faculty member of his PhD ideas. It was hard to see how a multilingual speaker like Amanuel now refused to adapt to yet another western system. The case of Amanuel is proof of the contingent nature of intercultural insights. It demonstrates that much of the intercultural spirit in academia is not the result of tailored programmes but stems from unexpected coincidences.

Over the two years that I spent time with Amanuel, I learned so much about east African conflicts and identities, about Marx and the roots of ancient Christianity, about tea and the home of coffee (only women drink coffee!) – and about our own academic culture. It was hard to see that the traditional system of a western university was neither able nor willing to include a cosmopolitan ‘free mover’ like Amanuel. Nobody really knew about the worldly wisdom wrapped in a shop-worn plastic bag. I was lucky enough to catch a glimpse of it.
Do unto others as they have done to you?

*Robert Coelen*

Robert is a one-time international student, two-time international educator. Dr Robert Coelen is international vice-president of Stenden University of Applied Sciences in Leeuwarden; executive dean of the Qatar Campus, and professor of the Internationalisation of Higher Education at Stenden.

Many years ago, I set out for Australia to ‘make something of myself’. Part of this was to undergo a university education. A few ‘slight’ problems existed, though they were not apparent to me at the time. I arrived in a new country with a different culture and another language.

I can still remember my friends at university borrowing my first-year class notes, only to return them in a matter of minutes. The notes were half in Dutch and therefore useless. I had diligently listened to the lecturer, but by the time I came to write things down, I had forgotten the words. However, since the concept had in fact landed, I was able to jot down in Dutch what was said. I had to come to terms with a new education system and educational language on my own. If it hadn’t been for some kind individuals, I would not have completed my first degree.

There were fellow students who, like me, came from another country (Australian Government supported) and we commiserated together. They taught me how to eat, sitting cross-legged in front of a collection of pans and dishes on a newspaper with chopsticks. We’ve lost contact, but the experience remains fresh in my mind. It became part of me.

How different is the experience of international students today. They are properly prepared with English language proficiency classes and standards before they start. We have international officers, counsellors and other staff to assist international students. There are special introduction programmes to familiarise our new international students with their new learning and living environment and to teach them about the cultural ‘quirks’ they are likely to encounter. Increasingly, structures and processes are created to make the transition as smooth and uneventful as possible.

In some countries international students are now important ‘financial resources’, while in others they assist the local students to become world citizens (indeed both might apply!). Still other institutions or nations seek to recruit talented students at almost any cost. The big difference between then and now is the generally accepted potential (whatever the motivation) that is seen in international students.

Why did I leave my initial field of research and get involved in internationalisation? I felt that my own experience was so worthwhile that I wanted to work on creating such experiences for every student. So if I got a chance to contribute, I would. Looks like I’m not done yet as we have a long way to go since there are still graduates without international experience.
My international participation

Phung Thi Nguyet Hong

Phung Thi Nguyet Hong (1942) has a BA in Natural Science from the University of Saigon. She earned her PhD in Biological Science Education from Michigan State University (USA) in 1973 and a Certificate in Biosafety (PCR) from Wageningen University (the Netherlands) in 1989. In 1975 Prof. Hong became vice dean and head of the Biology Department of the College of Education of the University of Can Tho. She is a visiting professor at the National Museum of Natural History of France. In 2004 she received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Michigan State University.

Over the years I have been involved in many international activities. I would like to share with you here what this has involved.

First I participated in a scientific cooperation project with the Musée National d’Histoire Naturelle (MNHN, Paris). I realised that international cooperation opens up opportunities to meet scientists from different countries and to introduce and share views and knowledge. But also to experience different ways of doing things, other cultures and to visit beautiful landscapes. But in particular I learned to write as a researcher for an international professional journal.

My second experience was with an MHO project from the Netherlands The aim of this project was to improve human resources in education. In this project I was actually committed to managerial skills and not to research. This provided me with an opportunity to interact closely with and learn from the real world. I remember becoming familiar with several new concepts and the concept of ‘ownership’ was very significant to me.

May 1997 marked my full retirement. The CTU invited me to take charge of the MHO project based in the CTU international office, where I had opportunities to meet visitors from different countries. Some of them had desks in the international office, so we had a pleasant time sharing knowledge and improving our English.

In 2001, our proposal to collaborate with Michigan State University (MSU) in the US was granted by the Shell Foundation in London. This is a community-based project located in the countryside which focuses on education reform with the aim of improving teaching and learning. As a project coordinator, we went out to the community working with people including students, teachers and villagers with various tasks in the schools and in the community. After each training workshop, a follow-up schedule of ‘one-on-one’ techniques provided valuable practical support. In one of its reports, Shell remarked: “this is a world-class project”. The project gradually developed papers on various topics. Our results were presented at international conferences in Thailand, Hong Kong, Brunei and Japan.

More recently I have been involved in charity projects to support poor project students. We recently helped up to 25 kids along the way to realising their dreams of becoming a medical doctor, nurse, engineer, accountant... Initially sponsored by the Chevron corporation in Ho Chi Minh City, the project started in 2006 when the students were still in primary and middle school. My sphere of international participation has grown larger and deeper and my managerial skills have improved a great deal.

After all, international projects opened me up to international wisdom and friendship. I like it, and I not only see and hear it, but I also live with it.
24/7 Intercultural experience

Ulrich Teichler

Ulrich Teichler has been a professor at the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel), University of Kassel (Germany), since 1978, and served as its director for sixteen years. He has spent extended research periods in Japan, the Netherlands and the US, taught assignments in five countries, and has made professional visits to around 80 countries. His research focuses on higher education and the world of work, higher education systems, the academic profession, and academic mobility and the internationalisation of higher education.

Internationalisation of my life was triggered by three occasions: at my humble start of academic career, when I got married, and when I started conducting research into student mobility.

First, when I was in my third semester (actually 50 years ago), Professor Dietrich Goldschmidt offered an active role on a research project – to take interviews, analyse data and write reports. A year later this was extended to a part-time job at the Max Planck Institute for Educational Research in Berlin, where I initially had to advise other projects on their methodology, where many texts were written in English and emphasis was placed on comparative research. From a modest start, the internal dimension of my academic work grew year by year.

Second, when I was in my fifth semester, I fell in love with a Japanese woman and we married two years later. She is a sociologist, conference interpreter, practitioner in intercultural understanding, multi-tasking actor and the voice of constructive critique regarding my work and life. The director of the National Institute for Educational Research in Tokyo, Professor Masunori Hiratsuka, argued that I would not survive this marriage if I did not become an expert on Japan. So I accepted the invitation to Japan and eventually wrote my doctoral dissertation on higher education and status distribution in Japan.

Third, in 1983 – five years after I had become a professor at the University of Kassel and was placed in charge of a centre of research known nowadays as the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel) – my colleague Ladislav Cerych from Paris (I never knew what nationalities he had at any particular time in his life) invited me to join a research project titled ‘Study Abroad Evaluation Project’. He predicted that student mobility would be a key issue in higher education policy in the years to come, and thought that, together, we could succeed in conducting research projects of the requisite quality in this domain. Actually, this turned out to be the most complex project on student mobility ever undertaken. In the process, we became advisors of a European initiative that was eventually called the Erasmus programme, and many project on student mobility followed.

Research on academic mobility and the internationalisation of higher education cannot be ivory-tower research. We had – and liked – to communicate over the years with key promoters, coordinators and practitioners in the field.
Collaboration, support and the soft power of education
Internationalisation: the earlier the better

Thomas Buntru

Thomas Buntru, MEd, is the dean of international programmes at the Universidad de Monterrey (UDEM), where he has worked since 1988. Under his leadership, UDEM has become the Mexican university with the highest student participation rate in study-abroad programmes. His strategic plan for the internationalisation of UDEM received the 2009 Andrew Heiskell Award for Innovation in International Education from the Institute of International Education (IIE). He has been an active member of AMPEI, the Mexican Association for International Education, since 1997 and served as its president from 2009 to 2011.

When I was a sixteen-year-old secondary school student in my native Germany, our school offered an exchange with a secondary school in France. Basically it all happened because of the personal interest, engagement, and the contacts of one of our French teachers. The scheme was very simple, cheap and rudimentary. First a group of French students from our partner school, together with a few of their teachers, visited us for two weeks. The students stayed at our homes, took a few classes with their own teachers, but for most of the time sat in with us in our regular classes. There were a few social events, such as a reception by the mayor, but for most of the time the visiting students just shared our daily lives.

The same was true for us when we returned the visit a few weeks later. One evening we all boarded a night train to Paris. In those days one still had to go through passport and customs controls on the French-German border. We arrived in Paris in the early morning and did some sightseeing, first guided by our accompanying teachers, but then also on our own. Miraculously, everybody showed up on time to catch the train from Paris to our destination. Once there, we were placed with our host families, and it was there that I had a truly life-changing experience, thanks to the welcome by my French host family. After a wonderful dinner, my host father offered a toast with wine from his own vineyards. He said that he was so happy to see that his daughter and I could be good friends, speak each others’ language, and dream of a future without major conflicts. “You know, your father and I may have shot at each other, and to see now our children well received in each other’s family, school, and community is a sign of great hope.” And, yes, at least for me, it taught me to look upon international education exchange as an instrument to build understanding and heal old wounds. Of course, French-German reconciliation would not have happened without the political will behind it, but youth exchanges and city partnerships were its cornerstones without any doubt.

These days when we read about internationalisation as a way to gain a competitive advantage or as a source of revenue, I think we should not forget the higher, nobler purpose of international education exchange as a way to build bridges between peoples and cultures, as a contribution to a brighter future where people of different backgrounds and upbringing may live together in peace and harmony.
Teacher, (don’t) leave them kids alone

Gerard van Dorp


“Development aid is about giving people fishing rods instead of fish”, was what my teacher said when development cooperation was still called development aid. Back then, our respective worldviews were still determined by the idea that Western civilisation had already taken a big step in the right direction. And with a little extra effort, the rest of the world would quickly be able to reach our level of prosperity. Had it not worked, after all, in Europe and Japan, with the United States of America as a shining example following the destruction of the Second World War?

It was a generally accepted principle that a certain percentage of our GDP had to be given away to the less fortunate in the world. And who could be a more worthy recipient than the governments of disadvantaged countries?

We now live in the 21st century, and there are still countries in which people must live on one or two dollars per day – including those that have received major handouts from their donor countries. This raises the question of whether things have been done the wrong way. The answer is not a definite yes or no. Emergency assistance is never wrong, however it seems that the money spent on the myriad projects that were dependent on the expertise of their initiators must now be regarded as lost. Recent publications on the results of this type of development cooperation speak of continued impoverishment of the receiving party. It has now become clear that cultural aspects, social structures and a lack of knowledge are crucial factors in the development of a country’s prosperity.

I believe that the turning point lies with young people. Access to knowledge, and the resources for obtaining it, give people the opportunity to learn how to build their own fishing rods. Knowledge transfer is what gives meaning to development cooperation. Rich countries could afford to be more generous with issuing educational grants, as people can take care of themselves once they have received a good education, just like young people all over the world.
Roses and thorns

*Riny van Krieken*

*Riny van Krieken* teaches Biological Methodology. She is head of the science department at the Graduate School for Teaching and Learning at the University of Amsterdam.

My main international experience is the upgrading of the Faculty of Education in Can Tho, Vietnam. The project ultimately lasted ten years, from 1994 to 2004. We gave courses entitled ‘learning by discovery’ to 300 teachers of Can Tho University. Master’s graduates, PhDs and technical staff were trained in the Netherlands. Communist managers were ‘brainwashed’. Trainers were trained, lecture notes were taken and much more. But what did it teach me? What were the positive and negative experiences?

Since then, I have never complained about work pressure. The Vietnamese teachers worked six days a week using chalk and worn-out blackboards. Three days in Can Tho and three days in a far province, transported in a hot, packed van and housed in a dirty dormitory. The seventh day free? Oh no! Then they worked in a private institute tutoring students for the entrance exams in exchange for hard dollars.

I saw things we have lost in the Netherlands. Students and teachers have wonderful handwriting. There is respect for elders and teachers. Pupils are proud to go to school and university. I saw that money is poison. Once you get there with a project (read: a bag of money) corruption rears its head. The equivalence rules for the project were over the top. The daily allowances for our Vietnamese counterparts were ridiculously high: about € 250, while their monthly salary amounted to US$ 60. They wanted to come to Amsterdam for weeks, saving for mopeds and refrigerators. A manager who knew nothing about IT wanted a laptop on his desk for show, while we could provide ten students at the time with a computer for the same money, but ... a manager is a king pin.

We expected that the people who had followed our course would share knowledge with colleagues. But they did not since ‘knowledge is power’. The teachers did not want to make their lecture notes available to the students, anxious that the students would come to know just as much as they did.

In the beginning our pace was too fast: we wanted to create critical thinkers, a skill destroyed by communism. To ask questions means either you are stupid or the teacher is not being clear. So you don’t ask questions. I based my lessons on the theme of the environment and rode my bike to the campus. But a motorbike was the most prized possession, and that has now been swapped for a car.

The project was a success. Vietnam is an appropriate country for innovation. People there want to move forward. It was the most beautiful experience in my education career of 37 years now. The genuine astonishment of teachers on the course that cried out “education can be fun”. I’ll never forget the power, gratefulness and hospitality of these Vietnamese people.
Internationalisation is not for dummies

Soehirman Patmo

Soehirman Patmo studied at Leiden University. He was a lecturer (1978) at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. In 1981 he joined the ILO/UN and was based in Bangkok and Jakarta, respectively. He has been with Nuffic since 1987. He was a team member of the World Bank-funded Book & Reading Development Project Indonesia (1993), project director of the Asian Development Bank-funded Indonesian Higher Education Technical Assistant Project (1999), event manager for EU-commissioned European Higher Education Fairs in China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam (2004-2008), and a member of the Nuffic team responsible for initiating the Neso Programme. Patmo is currently the director of Nuffic Neso Thailand, a position he has held since 2009.

In the late eighties I participated in meetings which started in small working groups at Nuffic to discuss and explore the international market of higher education in the context of, inter alia, the internationalisation of Dutch higher education. It was sometimes confusing to discuss this topic in an era where the focus and mainstream thinking for many was still on development cooperation. It goes without saying that there were opposing views from the development cooperation perspective and the ‘market oriented’ approach. Though, from the perspective of international cooperation in higher education, both sides should have been on the same page. Unfortunately they represented two different worlds, at least at that time.

Looking back at the past two decades, I note that there has been a tremendous change in thinking within the higher education sector. International cooperation has gradually shifted from assistance and development-focused cooperation to a more equal partnership. In particular, the relationship between higher education institutions in the developed countries, including the Netherlands, and the developing world has changed. This is especially true for the new upcoming market economies.

Around 2000, I was a core member of the Nuffic team assigned by the Netherlands Ministry of Education to design and initiate the Neso (Netherlands Education Support Office) Programme and was involved in establishing the first Neso offices. International student mobility has increased tremendously and new realities are being created, which are having an impact on the meaning and definition of internationalisation. In the world of globalisation, internationalisation is becoming more than institutional cooperation, student and staff exchanges, the internationalisation of curricula and study abroad. It is all of that and more. It has also required a change of mindset on the part of higher education managers, lecturers, students as well as policy and decision-makers at the various government levels, including the Ministry of Education. Knowledge goes beyond borders, hence higher education institutions cannot confine themselves within national boundaries. Doing so will rob them of their relevance in the globalising world.

While the world scene in higher education is changing rapidly, the change in the mindsets of some of those involved is not following suit. As a Nuffic Neso director currently based in Bangkok, I had expected a more consistent internationally-oriented policy at all levels: in government and in universities. However I must conclude we are not there yet.
My journey through internationalisation

Fred Paats

Fred Paats is education manager at the Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation at the ITC, part of the University of Twente. In 1976 he obtained an MSc degree in Rural and Regional Planning from the University of Wageningen. He worked in Liberia and Zambia from 1977 until 1984. At the ITC he was lecturer, consultant and later head of education. Fred has been active in the European Association for International Education, for which he received the President’s Award in 2011.

After graduation I worked for many years in development projects in Africa. I chose this career because I wanted to contribute to a more equal distribution of wealth and knowledge throughout the world. In the seventies of the last century we believed that we could change society if change was properly planned and managed and appropriate knowledge and technology was transferred. It was a nation-to-nation or international effort.

After my Africa days I joined a higher education institution in the Netherlands in the eighties. My institution aimed at educating young and mid-career professionals from the developing world. For me it was a way of continuing what I wanted to do at the beginning of my career: assisting nations and organisations in economic development through sharing knowledge with graduates from developing nations. My education activities focused on problems and solutions from the countries from which my students originated. I hardly used examples from the Netherlands or other European countries. These were then separate worlds in academia.

Two developments took place during the late eighties and early nineties. Students from developing countries were increasingly interested in problems and solutions applied in Europe. And it became clear that the two worlds were becoming more and more intertwined. European education had become more and more internationally oriented. Two worlds were moving toward each other and I had to reorient myself, having been educated in a North-South paradigm. University authorities embraced the international orientation of their institutions and their students, and larger inflows of foreign students were viewed as indispensable to survive in an ever-changing world. Internationalisation strategies became a cornerstone of university policies. I started lecturing to Dutch students and I designed lecture materials and case studies that would serve both groups of students. The interaction between the two worlds and cultures became an integral part of my work.

Private investments in the developing world have increased dramatically. Is there still a role for official development assistance and should we bother to expose our students to internationalisation? Or should we leave it to the individual student?

My answer is still a wholehearted ‘yes’ to internationalisation. Not only because university graduates will be working in an international world, but also because the exchange of experience and knowledge will hopefully contribute to a more equal distribution of wealth and knowledge and to the fostering of mutual understanding. This is a task that should not be left to the individual. It was that desire that motivated me to go to Africa and to work in development cooperation and to contribute to the internationalisation of Dutch higher education in a globalising world.
The picture of me with the Yemeni women in the irrigated fields reflects social and symbolic boundaries. Different cultures from within and outside Yemen meet. I am different from the Yemeni women by virtue of my clothing, beliefs and history. However, the Yemeni women also differ from each other for the same reasons. The women dressed in black are from the north and the more colourfully dressed woman on the right is from the south. The sun shines and I shade my eyes with sunglasses. However, we are all women, with a shared focus on capacity strengthening.
Worlds that come together

Carin Vijfhuizen

Carin Vijfhuizen is a rural development sociologist (PhD). She has worked as lecturer and researcher at universities in Africa (twelve years), the Middle East (two years) and the Netherlands (two years). She has published several books. Since 2007 she has worked at Nuffic managing capacity development programmes in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

My perception of internationalisation in higher education is that organisations cross borders to engage with issues such as accreditation, mobility, international strategies and capacity development. I work at Nuffic in capacity development, which involves designing programmes and projects by creating partnerships between organisations in the Netherlands and organisations in the South. The aim is to strengthen post-secondary education in the South. The partners represent different cultural worlds of rules, norms and values. Hence when they cross borders, they cross social and symbolic boundaries too. Cultures meet during capacity strengthening activities, resulting in the emergence of diversity.

Both Northern and Southern partners are of the opinion that a project period of four years is usually too short to establishing long-lasting partnerships. During my 23 years of experience in capacity development, I have seen that projects that are extended, or which continue under the flag of a follow-up programme, have a larger impact in the country. Take, for example, the extended entrepreneurship project in Tanzania. It did not only strengthen the capacity of staff and establish a business incubator in the university, it also influenced the national policy agenda to mainstream entrepreneurship in all curricula, from primary through to secondary and tertiary education. The capacitated staff played a crucial role in master-minding the mainstreaming at policy level.

Apart from time, I have observed that other crucial success factors are good chemistry between Dutch and Southern partners, engagement of top management and the availability of sufficient staff members. This is especially important when a project focuses on strengthening a department or ministry that is responsible for a large number of colleges (e.g. South Africa). Therefore, careful selection of the lead organisations is necessary, particularly during the identification stage in the South and during the tender evaluation in the North. This selection is crucial for future collaboration, as capacity development aims for long-term sustainable partnerships in which reciprocity becomes more important.
Mobility for a better world

Jindra Divis

Jindra Divis is general director of the European Platform, the Dutch national agency for internationalisation in primary and secondary education. Before that, he was employed as credential evaluator, consultant and later manager at Nuffic. In that capacity he was among other things president of the ENIC-NARIC network for academic recognition (2001-2003).

Coming to the Dutch education system from abroad, my plunge into the specific internationalisation branch of credential evaluation seemed rather logical. There I had to cope with the differences and similarities of educational systems.

There was however a period of more than twenty years in between coming to Holland in 1969 and starting to work in internationalisation in 1991. Until 1991, I worked on my education and fell in love with history. And what is more crossing borders than history? Even now, recent history provides me with one of the most intense moments in my working life.

For many years I was involved in the field of credential evaluation, fostering academic and professional recognition, participating in many international projects, focusing on this theme as well as accreditation and quality assessment. Recognition is an instrument that oils the wheels of international student and staff mobility. But of course, it is merely an instrument. Or is it?

The year was 1996. With three international colleagues I participated in a team of UNESCO and the Council of Europe. A military airplane took us to the airport of Sarajewo. In a secured military vehicle we travelled to the city, through a devastated area, covering miles of ruined houses. In just one of them I saw a clothes line hanging, full of white clothes. Nothing else. What were we doing there, a bunch of academic credential evaluators? Didn’t they need rather different, more useful people in a post-war situation?

But in a few days I realised they were expecting a massive number of citizens coming back home, bringing back many foreign credentials. Credentials that represented skills, much needed to rebuild the country. Credentials that needed to be evaluated, recognized, absorbed by the national education system and labour market. Though feeling very humble under the circumstances, I realised that credential evaluation was not just a mere instrument of internationalisation. It was in fact a necessary condition for successful and useful cross-border mobility of learners and professionals.

Years later, I am still committed to internationalisation, fostering schools in primary and secondary education to embrace internationalisation and fostering students to learn languages, to learn to communicate and cooperate with people from very different cultures. To nurture the idea of world citizenship. To work together to create a better world. A world without secured cars traveling through devastated cities.
From training to partnership

Don Westerheijden

Don Westerheijden is a senior research associate at the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) of the University of Twente, where he coordinates research on quality management and is involved in the coordination of PhD students. Don publishes on quality assurance in higher education in the Netherlands and Europe, on its impact and on transparency tools (U-Map, U-Multirank). He co-designed the CRE/EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme, the first international institutional quality review, and led the independent assessment of the Bologna Process in 2009—2010.

21 May 2013. Blues music from a speaker, sun through the window, a beer on the table. Location: a bar just outside the centre of Prague; no tourist masses here. The sun shines, a well-groomed golden retriever is obviously at home on the floor of the bar. It raises its head, then lazily puts its nose between its paws again. Even Wi-Fi functions well here – life’s good! I have a few hours between the end of a seminar and the bus to the airport. I visited Prague to discuss the results of a comparative study with international partners from both West and East. The phone beeps: email. It is Hanneke’s invitation to contribute to this book.

Thoughts fly back to almost 25 years ago, my first time in Prague. The Wall had just come down, the EU had launched Tempus and a group of higher education researchers from the West (the emerging field had just founded its organisation, CHER) and the East met for the first time to start work on a Tempus proposal. The Eastern partners were old grey male professors and young intelligent female assistants. All equally insecure, the former because, with one exception, they spoke better Russian than English, and the latter because they did not know how to behave in a situation balanced between the old hierarchy and the new freedoms. The Tempus proposal became the first European training course for new researchers and future university managers, with modules in Eastern and Western European countries, taught by teams from West and East together.

In the old town square we were the only foreigners. The houses were all grey; grass grew in the gutters. How could this sad city ever become anything?

Fast forward to 2013. The same square is restored, colourful and full of tourists. The students of the CHER training course have become professors and rectors. Prague is in the EU. Tempus is now operating for Georgia and Azerbaijan; no one is surprised if you are sent to Astana or Baku for a seminar. And everyone speaks English.

Fast forward 25 years again. Where will internationalisation go? Will all Chinese speak English? Or all English Chinese and Swahili? Will we travel to worldwide training courses? Or will we be at home, counting CO₂-vouchers to claim electricity for a video conference about setting up an MOOC on higher education management and research?

I take my final sip of beer and pat the dog. Time to go home!
May 1989. A delegation of the Universities of Amsterdam and Wageningen, headed by Jan Karel Gevers, met with the vice-president of the Council of Ministers of Vietnam, General Vo Nguyen Giap, well known from the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, where the French were defeated. (Photo: Han van der Horst).
Met solidaire groet (‘Greetings of solidarity’)

*Peter de Goeje*

*Peter de Goeje* (1943) holds an MSc in Electronics from Delft University of Technology (obtained in 1969). He was coordinator of scientific cooperation with Vietnam at the University of Amsterdam from 1980 to 2006.

In letters to our Vietnamese comrades we often wrote ‘greetings of solidarity’. It was the early seventies and the war in Vietnam seemed endless. American multinationals were advertising their weapons systems to be used in the battlefield. The slogan of General Telephone & Electronics Corporation was ‘Electronic warfare is our business’, illustrated with drawings of battlefields. Airplanes dropped electronic sensors to record vibrations of the ground caused by people walking. The signals sent out by the sensors were received by the Americans who carried out aerial bombardments, mostly with cluster bombs. Out of anger against this unscrupulous warfare, a small group of scientists and students, myself included, founded the Committee of Science and Technology for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in 1971. We made equipment for the South Vietnamese liberation front (Vietcong), such as surgery lamps for underground hospitals, and instigated cooperation between universities in North Vietnam and the Netherlands.

After the end of the war in 1975 and the reunification of North and South Vietnam in 1976, the Dutch government started to invest money in university assistance in Vietnam. For political reasons this financial support ended in 1984 due to Vietnamese troops staying in Cambodia after having removed the Red Khmer regime of Pol Pot. The Universities of Amsterdam and Wageningen decided not to abandon Vietnam and used their own funds to continue the research and education projects. My position at this time at the University of Amsterdam was to coordinate these projects.

In 1991 the Cold War came to an end and Vietnam was once again accepted by the West, triggering a new flow of money for Vietnam from The Hague. My salary was no longer paid by the university but was drawn from the budget for the Vietnamese projects, which I managed. In earlier years I was convinced that work for Vietnam should be selfless, that I should not earn money for this work. Was this the definite end of solidarity? Or does it show the ambivalence inherent to the practice of solidarity, a ball of noble feelings, vanity and opportunism?

The Committee, together with others, was involved at the beginning of a broad university cooperative programme between the two countries. Hundreds of Vietnamese researchers and technicians received training in the Netherlands mostly, in the natural, medical and agricultural sciences. A large number of Dutch counterparts went for short periods of time to Vietnam to give courses or assist in research. As a result of these projects many laboratories were built and equipped, facilitating Vietnamese entry into the international scientific world. One thing is for sure: the combination of a somewhat anarchistic, but purposeful approach with long-term and personal involvement by the Dutch and the Vietnamese, led to remarkable results.
Číst mezi řádky (Reading between the lines)

Susanne Feiertag

Susanne Feiertag has been working for Nuffic in various positions since 1999. Currently she holds a position as a policy officer in the Expertise department.

Studying Slavonic languages in Amsterdam and in Prague in the late 1980s, towards the end of the Cold War, marked my first internationalisation experience in higher education. I graduated in Czech Language and Literature in 1992, a few years after the Velvet Revolution had taken place. I have frequently had to explain to people why I chose to study an unpronounceable language spoken in a relatively small and closed communist society where people, at the time, were not free to express their opinions.

Attracted to the beautiful sound and rhythm of Slavonic languages and the music of composers like Janáček and Shostakovich, one day I decided I wanted to master a Slavonic language. I chose Czech language and literature as my main subject. That way I got acquainted with the literature and culture belonging to a society that was different from the one in which I had been raised.

During my studies, I visited Czechoslovakia for a couple of months every year. Although I was very proud to be able to pronounce the Czech ř correctly, it did not come easy to me. Crossing the German-Czech border appealed to my patience: you just had to wait for hours in the train to have your visa accepted, with the blazing light of the electric lanterns shining right through the window. Foreign students like me were welcomed like special guests, even introduced to Czech students, but not let into society. And like the Czechs I had to queue, sometimes for hours, until it was my turn at the post office to buy stamps or at the tram station to buy a season ticket.

Fortunately most classes (on Czech drama and theatre) were taught in Czech. Among other things, they brought me to the famous Divadlo na Zábradlí (Theatre on the Balustrade). There I saw, from 1989 on, most of Václav Havel’s absurdist plays, performed in Czech of course. Viewing them presented me with an opportunity to familiarise myself with the codes and mechanisms governing the everyday life I was experiencing: reading between the lines.

Witnessing the transition of the Czech Republic from a communist to a democratic society through the Velvet Revolution and through theatre has had a strong influence on my personal and professional life. Mastering the Czech language opened up a new world and, step by step, enabled me to share the life of the Czech people. Nowadays I am still taking steps.
Internationalisation: ‘work or leisure?’

Christian Bühler

Christian Bühler obtained a master’s degree in International Relations and a minor in Islamic Studies at the University of Amsterdam (class of 2008). Since 2012, he has worked for Nuffic. Previously he worked as a policy advisor at the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment and for the Royal Dutch Embassy in Washington D.C.

“Work or leisure” is what the Iranian border police asked me when I showed him my Dutch passport. “Both sir,” was what I replied. I was about to enrol in an exchange programme between the University of Amsterdam and the School of International Relations in Tehran. Unfortunately most people in the Netherlands don’t think of the Islamic State of Iran as a nice country for either work or leisure. However, the weeks I spent there showed me otherwise. I will not go into details, but trust me, it was a rollercoaster ride of sharing knowledge, ideas and getting to know my fellow Iranian students. And yes, for once in my live I was enjoying nightlife without alcohol.

Take Hamzeh, for instance. He was a student of around the same age but he also happened to be a member of the Bashish, an Islamic right-wing, somewhat militant, pro-government student fraternity. I had a discussion with him after we visited a UNDP office. During our visit we found out that the levels of prostitution, sexually transmitted diseases, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse were much higher in Iran compared to neighbouring countries, which are not Islamic states as such but merely Muslim countries (which is a huge difference). I asked Hamzeh quite a – for Iranian standards – direct question. I wondered if too much Islam in Iran is perhaps the reason for many of these problems, arguing that religious rules can have an oppressive effect on people. They look for an escape from the pressure that a fundamentalist religious society imposes on them and find it in sex, drugs, violence, etc. Hamzeh would always let me finish my arguments and paused a while before he would reply. This time his answer was short and rather blunt; ‘No, not enough Islam. Not enough Islam is the problem in our country’. He later argued that people should always strive to live in accordance with the rules of Islam. A fanatic Christian could have made the same argument, the only difference being that Christianity is more familiar to me. However, I was puzzled by Hamzeh’s answer. Usually I am witty enough to have an answer, but this time I was truly stumped by what he said and the way he said it.

The night before I returned home we had a farewell dinner with all the Dutch and Iranian students. We gave speeches and made promises that we would stay in touch forever. That night Hamzeh thanked me for my respect and said that he was honoured that we agreed to disagree. It is a fact of life that no question has only one answer but a multitude of possible answers. Just like the border police in every country should understand that you can work and have fun at the same time, no matter which border you cross.
Internationalisation and cultural diplomacy

Nonja Peters

Nonja Peters is an historian, cultural anthropologist, museum curator and social researcher on transnational migration and resettlement in Australia, immigrant entrepreneurship and the digital preservation of immigrants’ cultural heritage. She has a special interest in Dutch maritime, military, migration and mercantile connections with Australia and the south-east Asian region since 1606. She is currently involved in academic publications as well as community-based research in all these fields. She was born in the Netherlands and speaks and reads Dutch. She is a proud Dutch Australian. At the last census count in 2011, 320,000 Australians claimed Dutch heritage. Most are post-war migrants or their descendants.

Cultural exchange has been intertwined with the pursuit of foreign relations throughout history. Cultural diplomacy relies heavily on the exchange of ideas, information, values, systems, traditions, beliefs, and other aspects of culture, with the intention of fostering mutual understanding. Acquiring a sense of place, identity and belonging in a foreign culture is one of the great challenges for mobile families in our globalising world.

Nonja’s current research focus is the digital preservation of Dutch Australians’ cultural heritage and this involves working bilaterally.

The processes involved lay the foundations for building a repertoire of cultural memory; providing multiple forms of access to historical documents of different kinds and in different formats and addressing trans-temporal and intercultural links. The social value of this research long-term is immeasurable in terms of individual and community identity and pride, and also in terms of the relationship between the two countries. The research on preserving Dutch Australians’ cultural heritage will facilitate the development of a model and a template for future work with other migrant communities. The project will benefit from Western Australia’s IVEC super computing facility and the Federal Government’s ‘National Broadband Network’, which is to bring a superfast internet capacity to end-users around Australia.

From a university perspective, the common digital interpretive research resource environment that Dutch Australian at a Glance establishes will facilitate closer cultural and social analysis for comparative research and education. This will in turn widen the scope and range of the interpretative opportunities and foster international academic relationships and networks involving partner organisations – universities, libraries, museums, archives and industry – and open up new avenues for research and grant applications. Much of this project’s work would involve scoping out possibilities for making collections available, for data sharing between the two countries and sourcing external grants. The Homeland/Hostland perspective supports the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ ‘mutual heritage perspective’ created for ‘countries whose history intersects with the Netherlands, generating many material and immaterial relics of the past, which are collectively referred to by the term ‘common cultural heritage’.

And as documented on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: “by maintaining, managing, using and highlighting this heritage, we can foster a critical reflection on our past and generate a mutual understanding of past, present and future. This can strengthen relations and promote cooperation between countries, both bilaterally and multilaterally”.

The preservation of Dutch Australians’ cultural heritage for posterity and viewing it as an ‘active long-term and ongoing contribution to the evolving narrative of Australian identity, Australian nationhood and the Australian politic’ is a powerful strategy for a host country to utilise in helping newcomers in the bonding process while providing a rich resource for bilateral relationship and heritage tourism.
Concerns, ideals, interests and the future
How the rankings rankle

Fazal Rizvi

Fazal Rizvi is a Professor of Global Studies in Education at the University of Melbourne in Australia and an Emeritus Professor at the University of Illinois in the United States. He has written extensively on issues of identity, culture and education in transnational contexts.

A few months ago, I overheard a conversation on a Melbourne tram among a group of four international students from Singapore. The conversation was as earnest as it was revealing. The students were discussing a recently released report on the global ranking of universities, which had shown that by and large Australian universities had held their own against the fast-developing competition from Asia. Three of the four students expressed a great deal of satisfaction at this outcome, almost as if they personally deserved credit for it. The fourth student, in contrast, was deeply dejected because his university had fallen out of the top two hundred. Even though he was enjoying his course in Design Studies at his university, he felt that somehow he had made the wrong choice, and that his career prospects had deteriorated markedly. He was sure how his parents would react to this news. Indeed, he was going to find out if he could transfer to another university.

This incidence continues to haunt me. I find it most disturbing that a student can be so deeply affected by schemes of university ranking that have been shown to be so limited, if not flawed. I wonder how many other students attach a similar level of significance to university rankings, how many others are also unaware of the manner in which such schemes are constituted, how a slip of twenty places from one year to the next means nothing, how an overall ranking of a university does not imply a dip in each and every field of study, and how there is no direct correlation between university ranking and employability. When ranking schemes place a university highly, there is often much celebration, but when their ranking dips they do very little to allay the effects this might have on international students caught up in the logic of global consumption of higher education.

As dismissive as many critical scholars are of ranking schemes, what cannot be denied is that they have material effects. Much has been written on how such schemes are flawed, how they have transformed the ways in which universities use them to position themselves within the globalising market in higher education, and how they have been instrumental in redefining the very purposes of the university. However, what we have not sufficiently considered are the socio-emotional aspects of the practices that surround ranking schemes – how they affect the students’ own sense of belonging to a particular university, potentially determining their sense of relative worth as well as their personal, educational and career aspirations.
Prelapsarian thoughts

Rosie Bateson

Rosie Bateson is executive vice-rector of Universitas Siswa Bangsa Internasional (USBI), established in Jakarta in 2013. She serves on the International Planning Committee of the Nobel Science Conclave organised by the IIIT Allahabad, India. Previously, she was pro-vice-chancellor and professor of Higher Education Management at Abertay University in Scotland, vice-president at the Central European University in Budapest, and worked in the Washington DC office of the American University in Bulgaria.

For colleagues who have travelled to Indonesia to connect with its expanding higher education, it might have been surprising to find a system so akin to continental Europe’s, at least as it was before Bologna and its overarching effect on European higher education internationalisation. And more: a focus on social and character development that has become all but imperceptible in our modern quest for innovation, economic growth and global competitiveness.

Arriving in Indonesia in 2011 to establish a new university, I was firmly in the camp of ‘world-class’ university aspirations – talent, resources, research – the usual fanfaronade that prompts much of the internationalisation efforts across the globe. But this country – a young democracy, the world’s fourth-most populous, spread across 17,000 islands – has a different agenda and few examples to emulate, unless I look back to the industrial revolution and nation-state formative periods of centuries past, when ‘the advancement of knowledge’ was inseparable from ‘the ennoblement of character’.

How refreshing! To cast the mission of our new university in these immemorial precepts; to find inspiration in the ancient but quintessential foundation of the university.

Imagine being tasked with conceptualising a new university today. Would you think of ‘research-intensive’, ‘a centre of excellence’, ‘world-class’? Well, yes, I did at first – bring the latest ideas, along with everything that I had learned in the past twenty years, from Europe and the United States. But then: a contentious article: Khanna and Khemka (2012). Enroll the World in For-Profit Universities, Harvard Business Review: Audacious Ideas. Am I here simply to duplicate and refine what has gone before, or is this rare chance to start a new university the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to ‘get it right’ – create a resonant institution that is relevant for this huge country, Indonesia?

And thus, it is here in Jakarta, working side by side with my Indonesian colleagues, an education pioneer and former international corporate CEO from Singapore, a team of experienced academics from the UK, the US, New Zealand, Malaysia, China, India and a group of young Fulbright Teaching Assistants, that our team forged a very special international collaborative university model: back to the old time-honoured social mission of higher learning and into the future of Indonesia’s new global participation.
When and where did it go wrong?

Robert Wagenaar

Robert Wagenaar is director of undergraduate and graduate studies at the University of Groningen. He was directly involved in the development of the ECTS as a credit and – later on – as an accumulation system. In 2000 Julia Gonzalez (University of Deusto) and he launched the Tuning Educational Structures in Europe initiative, focusing on the competences and learning outcomes approach in higher education. Over the past decade Tuning has grown into a global process.

More than twenty years ago, I visited a museum in Italy with a group of academics and policy officers from sixteen different countries and higher education institutions, all involved in the development and testing of the European Credit Transfer System. The museum exhibited a beast which was composed of parts of completely different animals. It looked ugly. With irony, a senior professor made the remark that this was internationalisation in a nutshell: a combination of periods of studies taken from different higher education institutions which should show consistency but which in reality was a patchwork.

It reflected the criticism the ECTS met during the pilot years (1988—1995). This criticism was provoked by a poster produced by the Erasmus Bureau. This organisation assisted the European Commission in organising the Erasmus Programme until the mid-1990s. The poster showed Dutch student Wim driving a red sports car and touring around Europe to collect credit points and diplomas: the Dutch Propedeuse, the German Zwischenprüfung, the French License and the UK Master’s. An interesting poster indeed, because the car referred to the one owned by Frits Dalichow, the main designer of the ECTS at the Bureau, and the poster’s message to an accumulation system, not a transfer system.

For me personally, my involvement in the ECTS Pilot Project (1988—1995), as subject area coordinator for History, proved to be a tremendous source of inspiration in meeting the challenges posed by the internationalisation of higher education. Since the launch of the EU initiatives to promote student mobility, integrated transnational degrees and the recognition of study programmes at the European and, at a later stage, global level, internationalisation has developed into a very serious industry involving close to everyone working in the higher education sector. A success story? On the one hand for sure. The ECTS and student mobility have been fully integrated, the multicultural classroom has become a reality, and a paradigm shift is occurring by emphasising the role of the learner instead of that of the professor. On the other hand, the establishment of a growing group of internationalisation professionals had its price. Content seemed to have given way to practicalities. What has happened to the academic – so visible in the first five years of Erasmus? Staff exchanges are still limited due to lack of incentives and the development of double and joint degrees is mainly a hobby of enthusiasts and do-gooders. Rather disturbing!

What do we observe today: a growing split between the world of the internationalisation of higher education, on the one hand, and the aversion to globalisation and Europeanisation and a return to nationalism and regionalism, on the other? Whose fault is this? Could it be that of the elite, including our political leaders, whom we have educated during the last decades? They seem to gravitate toward the beasts, the populists, who promote hostility regarding the ‘other’, including in the areas of international decision-making and influence. Or is it the academics who were not stimulated to make internationalisation and globalisation a topic of academic reflection in class, possibly because they were not made part of the policy-making process of internationalisation at their institution? When and where did it go wrong?
We changed the world!

*Leonard van der Hout*

Leonard J. van der Hout works as a senior internationalisation adviser at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Hogeschool van Amsterdam. He has already worked in the field of the internationalisation of higher education for more than 25 years. Since 2004, he has worked as a Bologna Expert, promoting and supporting universities in implementing the Bologna process. He often gives presentations on both subjects at conferences and seminars. In workshops he gives hands-on advice. He has an MSc in Sociology from the University of Groningen, the Netherlands.

The question I have posed myself many times is, What has been my contribution to changing the nature of higher education as far as internationalisation is concerned? In the last 25 years there has been a tremendous change in the orientation of universities toward a more international-oriented position. The launch of the Erasmus programme in Europe, in particular, led to increased student mobility and the like. Furthermore, opportunities for as well as the desire among international officers to meet and deliberate has grown immensely. Economic growth starting in the early nineties made this development possible. Hence, a number of factors stimulated the internationalisation of higher education. But, in our enthusiasm, have we forgotten the connection with the others? Have we started to live and work in our own bubble?

These days, however, with the recent economic downturn the question has been raised: “What is the added value of a central internationalisation office?” The answer is: a lot. We have seen a change in thinking about the value of going international and also why it is important. Our role has been to address developments and trends and suggest solutions to achieve the objectives we are striving for. I remember one of my first trips to a foreign university in 1993. The rector told me why he wanted to receive me and start cooperating with us. He said, “Our students were born in this region. They grow up here, go to school here, proceed to university here, get married here, have children, have friends, work here and, after they grew old, they die here. I want to offer my students a broader outlook on life, an experience abroad and the opportunity to meet fellow students from elsewhere right here.” Why? Because it is better for them and better for this place. Hopefully it will bring us more peace and understanding.

This was twenty years ago. In the meantime the Internet has emerged and cheap travelling has become available to all. This has all made the world much smaller. The people working in internationalisation have played a crucial role in integrating this development in higher education. It has been, and often still is, missionary work. Trying to make rectors and other decision-makers understand what the added value can be and staying critical as far as the internationalisation of higher education is concerned: that is our strength, our knowledge and skills. It is becoming more and more mainstream. A lot has changed and we still have a long way to go.

have we started to live and work in our own bubble?
Breakfast with the world

Beatrice Merrick

Beatrice Merrick was European Programmes Officer at the University of Sussex from 1994 to 1998, then Director of Services & Research at the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) from 1998 to 2013. She is now Chief Executive of the British Association for Early Childhood Education

For me, higher education started with the unexpected but thrilling discovery of internationalisation: coming down to breakfast on the first day to find myself sitting with nationals of half a dozen different countries. The rest of my university education didn’t always match up. I remember being a student rep on a faculty committee where a discussion on the newly minted Erasmus programme ran as follows: “We’ve been asked to consider this Erasmus idea. Next item!”

To paraphrase Shakespeare, “Some are born international, some achieve internationalisation, and some have internationalisation thrust upon them”.

In our discussions about internationalisation, do we take enough account of the starting points of the staff and students at our institutions? Some are already widely travelled, have lived, worked and studied in a range of countries or grew up in a household of multiple languages and national identities. Some come with limited experience, but have – or develop – a willingness to engage with the world beyond their borders. Some have no interest, or are hostile to this imposition – finding international students in their classrooms and residences is a shock, and perhaps not one they are ready or willing to deal with. Internationalisation offers exciting possibilities – but not everyone is ready to engage.

We ourselves, the self-styled internationalisation professionals, may be ready and willing, but still unaware of our blind spots. In recent years, internationalisation conferences have seen their delegate lists become more international, and yet huge imbalances in mobility (of students, and of the professionals who work with them) remain, and long-standing structural inequalities are manifest, in particular around the discourses on mobility. The literature on outward mobility, especially from North to South, focuses on skills development and personal growth, yet the literature on international students coming from South to North still often focuses on difficulties and challenges. Are we still ‘othering’ the international students who don’t look or speak like us, with an assumption that their basic experience of mobility is inferior? Do we need to reverse the lenses we apply to each group to find our implicit biases?

As a student, embracing difference at that first breakfast was eased by previous experience of being the outsider. As a professional, working with outwardly mobile students has always eased empathy for me with the perspective of the inwardly mobile. If we can start to treat both sides of that coin more equally, we will be taking steps toward being more open to the world.
GLOBAL EDUCATION

a narrative
Back to the future

Peter de Bruijn

Peter de Bruijn studied and worked at the Kern Institute, Leiden University in the Netherlands, one of Europe’s centres of expertise for South Asia and the Himalayan region. As a management consultant, he held various assignments for Asian companies in the Netherlands and vice versa. Currently Peter is project manager for India at Nuffic.

From the ancient Sanskrit language of India we know the word ‘Apsara’, roughly translated as celestial nymph. Another name for the Apsara is Vidhya Dhara, which can be best translated as the ‘Bearer of Knowledge’. Often the Apsaras are compared to the muses of ancient Greece, the personification of knowledge and the arts.

To this mythical Apsara there are no bounds: she is not tied to a particular ideology and stands apart from many geographical and historical periods. As evidenced by several ancient traditions, one of the many tasks of the Vidhya Dhara or Apsara is ‘sharing knowledge worldwide’ while flying around the world.

Even more interesting is that depictions of the Apsaras are to be found in many places all over the world. Famous Apsaras are the 5th-century secular ‘clouds maidens’ painted on the Sigiriya rock in Sri Lanka, the Apsaras depicted on the Hindu temple in Angkor Wat in Cambodia and the Apsaras depicted on the Buddhist Borobudur in Java built in the 9th century. Lesser known Apsaras are those in the Tria Kieu temple in Vietnam, the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang in China or the Apsara called Bidadari in Muslim Indonesia, with her name derived from the old Sanskrit Vidhya Dhara.

What all these appearances of the Apsaras, wherever in the world, have in common is that they are not hindered by borders in sharing their knowledge worldwide. Therefore, this mythical figure in my opinion is a perfect personification of internationalisation in general, but also with respect to international higher education and the universal transfer of knowledge in an ideal world. Vidhya Dhara never had to deal with, for example, political or religious obstacles, bureaucratic supranational institutions, the fact that there is not enough money to travel or that a visa has not been granted.

If we want to achieve even more in the field of the internationalisation of higher education, it might be good to look back sometimes, back to the future.
Growing divide

Els Heuts

Els Heuts has been active in the higher education sector for over thirty years, serving in various positions as a journalist and magazine editor. Since 2005, she has served as editor-in-chief of Transfer, a professional journal on international cooperation in higher education published by Nuffic.

I was introduced to the world of internationalisation some eight years ago, when I became editor-in-chief of Transfer, a professional journal on international cooperation in higher education. Over the past few years, I’ve gained an in-depth knowledge of the many facets of internationalisation and have kept up with all the latest developments.

For example, I think it’s absolutely crucial that students in today’s globalised world acquire intercultural competencies. It’s good to see that we now offer a growing number of options to students seeking to spend time studying abroad. Over the past few years, however, it’s become increasingly clear to me that mobility alone doesn’t necessarily mean people will develop intercultural competencies. We also need to offer students the necessary preparation and supervision. If not, a stay abroad can actually hamper the development of intercultural skills.

The same applies to Dutch and international students taking part in joint lectures or working groups. Such initiatives can be extremely enriching and educational, providing they are effectively supervised. It takes time and effort to get people to work together in a constructive manner. If you fail to create the right conditions, here too the results may be counterproductive and the two groups may actually start to avoid each other.

The higher education sector is increasingly working to improve the standard of internationalisation and prevent such unwanted effects. Although we still have a long way to go in terms of preparing our students for global citizenship, I’m confident we’ll get there in the end.

I am, however, worried by the growing divide between one group that is well equipped to function in today’s increasingly internationalised world and knows how to reap the resulting benefits, and another group for whom that is not the case. This latter group views the new situation as a threat and is increasingly turning away from the ‘cosmopolitan’ world around them. How can we make sure this group remains connected with the wider world, while taking into account just how much effort it takes to prepare students for careers in an inevitably international context? For me this complex issue is inextricably linked with internationalisation.
International education: Subversiveness and the dialectics of change

Walter Grünzweig

Walter Grünzweig, a native of Austria, is an Americanist at TU Dortmund University, and has been active in international exchange for 35 years. In 2010, he received the German Ars-Legendi-Prize for excellence in university teaching in the ‘international classroom’, integrating German and international students in collaborative university seminars. He is deeply critical of the developments in academia internationally, advocating a movement by instructors and students to ‘take back’ their universities.

Those of us who have witnessed and participated in the changes in international education exchange over the past 30+ years have been able to observe the dialectic law of the transformation of the quantitative into the qualitative at work. Whereas an education abroad, for a full degree or as part of a study-abroad programme, used to be limited to a small minority of students, international academic exchanges are now, at least in principle and with the necessary cash, available to everybody. Given the fact that the number of students globally has increased dramatically, international education has become a mass phenomenon. This, however, has not resulted in a democratisation of the field as the opportunities for the many by no means equal those for the former few.

In fact, the very act of setting international education up as a field – as I was able to observe as a founding member of the EAIE, witnessing the subsequent ‘professionalisation of the field’ in Europe – has resulted in the establishment of huge university, national and international apparatuses with administrators whose interests are oftentimes separate from and frequently antagonistic to those of the exchangees. At times even the software used for the administration is a limiting factor because what cannot be handled electronically is often discouraged as content of international education.

The Bologna specifications in particular, currently also entering transatlantic and other exchanges, have eliminated much that is not streamlined. Courses now need to be known semesters ahead of time (so they can be written into ever more fictitious study agreements which are frequently changed at the end to reflect what has actually happened) and must be earmarked with credits (determined by ever more elusive ‘workloads’). In this way, the bureaucratisation paradoxically replaces the diversification, which was the most important quality of international education, by increasing homogenisation and standardisation.

Worst of all, international exchange on all levels has become a business. This is maybe not surprising given the mutation of universities into autocratic corporate entities, but it is very much at odds with the previous ethos of cooperation (rather than competition) and international understanding (rather than narrow utilitarianism).

However, the deep truth of dialectics is that nothing is ever permanent and that developments are often unexpected and uncontrollable. The experience of learning in another culture – and learning another culture – is fundamentally subversive because it allows human beings, and especially students, to question what they are doing and to reinvent themselves developing their critical faculties. More and more students from Erasmus and other programmes are dissatisfied with the uniform offerings available to them and are requiring intellectual substance rather than well-lubricated, but academically-slippery, structures. In this way, their interests coincide with the masses of non-moving (or not yet moving) students at home who no longer want to be fed the intellectually-unappetising, standardised bachelor fare epitomised in the most recent anti-intellectual fad, MOOCs.
“From the fratricide by Cain of Abel to fraternisation through internationalisation: ‘Alle Menschen werden Brüder’?”

Jan Veldhuis

Dr Jan G.F. Veldhuis (Hengelo, 1938) studied history with economics and constitutional law. In 1967—1968, Jan was a Fulbright scholar at the University of Minnesota. He has had a distinguished career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. From 1986—2003, he was president of Utrecht University. Dr Veldhuis was chair of the supervisory board of NUFFIC. He has an honorary doctorate from the University of Florida and has been distinguished by the governments of France, Spain and the Netherlands, the Netherland-America Foundation and by various foreign universities.

As a secondary school student I increasingly became intrigued by the apparently unstoppable historical process of fighting between groups: families and tribes, then villages, cities and kingdoms, and finally nation states, always accompanied by horrible massacres. And then peace would again prevail. And particularly in the 20th century, we have seen a development towards international cooperation, even federations and unions. Europe is a good model, daunting as well as a promising.

Notwithstanding all the growing pains of striving for unity, in the last sixty years Europe has counted fewer war victims than ever before. Elsewhere in the world similar developments have occurred, but in too many areas there are still conflicts that remind us of Europe in the past. Will the developments in Europe continue, or will there be a devastating clash with other big, mainly emerging power blocks, rightly claiming their place in the sun?

But gradually I considered technological development, based on education and science, as even more fundamental. This had generated the agricultural and industrial revolutions, bringing more prosperity and welfare. No welfare states without a ‘knowledge economy’. My title of my economics thesis was ‘Economics of Education’.

Internationalisation captivated me so much that I applied for a Fulbright scholarship. And with success. I was accepted by the University of Minnesota, where the unforgettable Joseph Mestenhauser was director of the International Centre. I was exposed to fantastic international experiences: not only the dramatic events in 1967-1968 in the US, but I also had intense contacts with scholars from many countries embroiled in conflict at the time, such as Palestine and Afghanistan. After returning home, I was naturally drawn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in particular European cooperation.

But even more challenging was the combination of internationalisation and education and science. My career therefore took me successively to Leiden University, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and eighteen years as president of Utrecht University. In addition, I held the chair of the Dutch Fulbright Commission for sixteen years.

In the 80s and 90s a trend emerged, including at universities, of boycotting countries (and companies) conducting ‘incorrect’ policy: Eastern Europe, South Africa, Indonesia, Latin America. I always opposed this trend. If even education and science, as well as culture and sports, cannot be used to promote international relations, how are the young in the ‘damned’ countries ever to be become ‘enlightened’ enough to contribute positively to the modernisation of their own countries? Internationalisation of higher education and science was and is the instrument ‘par excellence’ to international friendship and understanding (Fulbright). Perhaps then ‘Alle Menschen werden Brüder’ in a very distant future.
The New World in 2038: The future of the internationalisation of higher education

Jo Ritzen

Dr Ritzen is professorial fellow International Economics of Science, Technology and Higher Education at UNU-MERIT and Maastricht Graduate School of Governance. He was Dutch Minister for Education and Science, and advisor of the World Bank. He was president of Maastricht University and is now the driving force behind Empower European Universities, an NGO that aims to further innovate and internationalise European universities. Dvorak’s 9th symphony starts with a very soft, almost inaudible adagio. This is in keeping with my modest claim to have a good idea of the world in 2038!

Technological development as well as the globalisation of markets may follow their own course, but I do think they are likely to continue to dominate life on this planet. I expect that ecological crises are going to make their impact felt by forcing the greening of the economy, with implications for physical mobility. I expect long distance (air) travel to become very expensive as we are running out of oil, despite new techniques like fracking. IT will be all pervasive and will be overwhelmingly present in all aspects of life, including education. Internationalisation of the mind, as a way of understanding cultural differences and communicating across cultural divides, will be in great demand.

It is likely that we will only have sustained economic growth on a level of say 2% a year. Our graduates will need to be much more entrepreneurial or ‘intrapreneurial’ (working as entrepreneurs within existing firms) in the necessary greening of industry. Innovation will be even more international than it is today in terms of production and markets, and will need an important boost.

Higher education will have to reinvent itself. At present, the focus is mainly on hard skills or a subset thereof, namely reproductive knowledge (without the associated problem-solving abilities), and feedback from graduates in whatever form is ignored. Attitude will be important in functioning well in 2038. Valued personal attributes will be endurance, perseverance and teamwork, while other desired skills will be in the areas of cultural sensitivity, social responsibility and civic engagement.

Higher education must free itself from the bounds of national embeddedness and follow the call of the children of globalisation. In this respect, it is important to make sure that in the next 25 years Europe creates a truly open European Higher Education Area in which students and staff can seamlessly join any university, wherever its location in Europe. This is in line with Dvorak’s largo: to see a movement, in a broad perspective, making the higher education landscape of 2038 almost unrecognisable compared to the present day.

The internationalisation of higher education will continue to be associated with student and staff mobility, albeit – I imagine – more and more within the framework of learning to think and act across cultures. Internationalisation will increasingly be linked to entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship in a global context. Mobility will be more in the form of virtual rather than physical mobility. The ensuing increase in cross-cultural understanding will be a great boost to tolerance and peace worldwide. Internationalisation of the mind linked in the end with passion and pleasure: allegro con fuoco.
The benefit of jumping

Jef Stapel

After having worked as a translator and a graphic designer in Madrid, Jef Stapel returned to the Netherlands in 2001. He started working as a teacher in Nuffic's former language lab. He is now a senior communications advisor, responsible for the way Nuffic informs the public through various on and offline publications.

Some time ago, it was Frits the Frog's job to help other frogs at higher education institutions prepare and coordinate projects with funding from the All Animal Commission. Soon, Frits started to notice that frogs participated in relatively many of these inter-animal projects. He thought it couldn't only be due to their famous croaking skills. Apparently the All Animal Commission held in high esteem their specific ability to write good project proposals and reach the project goals within the approved budget … on time!

Obviously, colleagues from universities all over the animal world also valued the froggy management style. Proudly, Frits asked around for an explanation of the popularity of his species. “Having a frog as a project partner is a guarantee for getting things done before the deadline” seemed to be the general consensus. No wonder more and more frogs were asked to join projects in order to modernise education for all animals.

But then Frits met Rick the Rabbit, a project coordinator from a technical university in Hole Hills. “I will never again join a project group with a single frog in it. Ever!” Rick said. He had been on three projects with frogs and was fed up with their lack of solidarity and flexibility. “They will only do what’s in their work package and are incapable of helping a project partner by jumping out,” Rick shouted. By the way Rick pointed his furry ears towards him, Frits could tell the rabbit was holding him personally responsible for the supposed misbehaviour of his species.

So the frogs’ art of finishing the job as planned by sticking to the schedule turned out to have a shadowy side. Of course, it was only a single animal's opinion, but thanks to Rick's words, Frits started to think that making room for risk and experiment wouldn’t be bad for the project results. He even felt a tiny bit ashamed for not using his long flexible legs enough. So Frits decided frogs should learn from rabbits and allow themselves to jump around more!

Eventually Frits received funding from the All Animal Commission for a dozen inter-animal projects. They were all very successful and contributed to the modernisation of all education.

Even the turtles ended up jumping.
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