



Global *Dialogue* 2014

A Global Dialogue on the
Future of Higher Education
Internationalisation

15th - 18th January 2014



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A Global Dialogue on the Future of Higher Education Internationalisation

A global debate has been raging since early 2011 on the future of Higher Education Internationalisation. At different forums, from the USA to Australia to Europe as well as in parts of the emerging economies, it is realised that the changes brought about by the fluctuating geo-political reorganisation of the world is affecting the way Internationalisation is practised. The past practices are being questioned and a proactive engagement with the new challenges on a global scale is required in order to protect, and promote those elements of Internationalisation that are worth preserving and strengthening.

A feature of the past 25 years of Higher Education Internationalisation was that it was mainly conceptualised and driven by the education systems of North-America, Europe, the UK and Australia. Other Higher Education systems, mostly from the emerging and third world, were largely excluded from the serious debates.

Notwithstanding the criticism from the emerging and third world that they were over time systematically excluded from debates that steered the direction of Higher Education Internationalisation to favour the developed world, the value of developing Higher Education Internationalisation as one of the corner stones of modern Higher Education is credited to the Higher Education systems of the developed world.

During the 2012 Colloquium hosted by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in South Africa, the discussion around the topic Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions 2025, suggested that a Global Dialogue needs to be organised for all the role players in the realm of Higher Education Internationalisation. The International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) agreed to arrange the Global Dialogue, which will discuss the future agenda of Internationalisation of Higher Education. This event was announced at the ANIE (The African Network for International of Education) Conference that took place in September 2012 in Pretoria, South Africa.

In announcing the Global Dialogue, which will take place from **15 to 17 January 2014**, the question was asked if the Internationalisation of Higher Education can be the focus in the emerging and developing world. A further question that should also be answered at the Global Dialogue would be:

Is the current global debate, which originates in the developed world, about the re-thinking of Internationalisation of Higher Education relevant given the uneven levels of development of Higher Education systems globally?

Linked to this would also be the question:

What, if anything, should the developing world be doing differently in their practice of Higher Education Internationalisation to be relevant globally?

The question about the future agenda of Higher Education Internationalisation should at the same time discuss the fundamental questions around what role the Internationalisation of Higher Education should play in order to create a more just society in a world that is so unevenly developed. Discussions about

Internationalisation of Higher Education in the future cannot ignore an in-depth discussion about the power relationships that currently drive the world of Higher Education Internationalisation. A further question to be answered at the Global Dialogue would be concerning the most appropriate social contract between university and society whilst practising Internationalisation of Higher Education.

IEASA accepts its responsibility to engage in this debate by establishing partnerships with similar organisations functioning in the developing world. A common understanding of the needs and future agenda -a road map - needs to be debated and discussed.

The future of Internationalisation should not be seen in 'strict Higher Education speak'; rather we need to focus first on those issues that can be defined as the micro matters, i.e. how we do teaching and research as well as the international relations activities.

The critical ingredient of the dialogue should be first to set the ground rules for future Higher Education Internationalisation. It should be an inclusive process where all participate as equals and not as mere invitees.

A Global Dialogue should be arranged where those that were excluded from the debate in the past, mostly by default and not by design, play a real role as equals in the setting of the future agenda. The dialogue should enhance the debate relating to distributive justice*. Without this, a double impoverishment occurs: Those in advantaged Higher Education systems with refined Internationalisation practices will merely reflect the negative aspect of global capitalism and affirm the widening economic gap instead of providing a constructive remedy. Where knowledge systems remain closed to outsiders, everybody is impoverished and ignorance sets in despite the guise of the information age.

The dialogue will have to recognise that the participants will be from a variety of backgrounds with different expectations. This will require a recognition that a common form to remain aware of is the fact that our own awareness of the "frame" is obscured because most of the solutions are framed by the way the questions will be asked, itself determined by the ideological components we don't see. The most insidious part is that we will be wilful participants in the very behaviours that undermine us and that will ensure our obsolescence.

It is recognised that the factors influencing the future agenda, especially the fluidity in the global geo-political environment, will make it complex and challenging. It is not envisaged that a final agenda will be finalised. The outcome however, should produce a draft agenda that is evolving, dynamic and that would assist all in guiding the participation of the Global Higher Education Community in their Higher Education Internationalisation endeavours.

However, in having an inclusive dialogue with the philosophy of participative democracy, Internationalisation of Higher Education might begin to be all inclusive and truly international.

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Organisationally, it is envisaged that each of the global, regional and national organisations representing a particular constituency will be able to nominate at most two persons to participate. National and International Institutions as well as individuals with specific interest and expertise in this subject will also be invited. Participants will be able to propose at most two critical items for discussion. Such items should be accompanied by an introductory statement of not more than 500 words. Participating organisations should preferably also provide an article for broader consumption after the Global Dialogue, clearly stating their vision for the future and their organisations role in Higher Education Internationalisation. These should be between 3000 and 5000 words. All the documents would be distributed to all participants. The organisers will also invite five specialists with differing areas of specialisation to guide and stimulate the debate further. All deliberations will be transcribed and the dialogue will be made available to all participating organisations with a view to stimulate future debate about the agenda of Internationalisation with similar points of departure.

* A paper explaining the concept of distributive justice and its relevance to this debate will be prepared and distributed before the global dialogue.

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