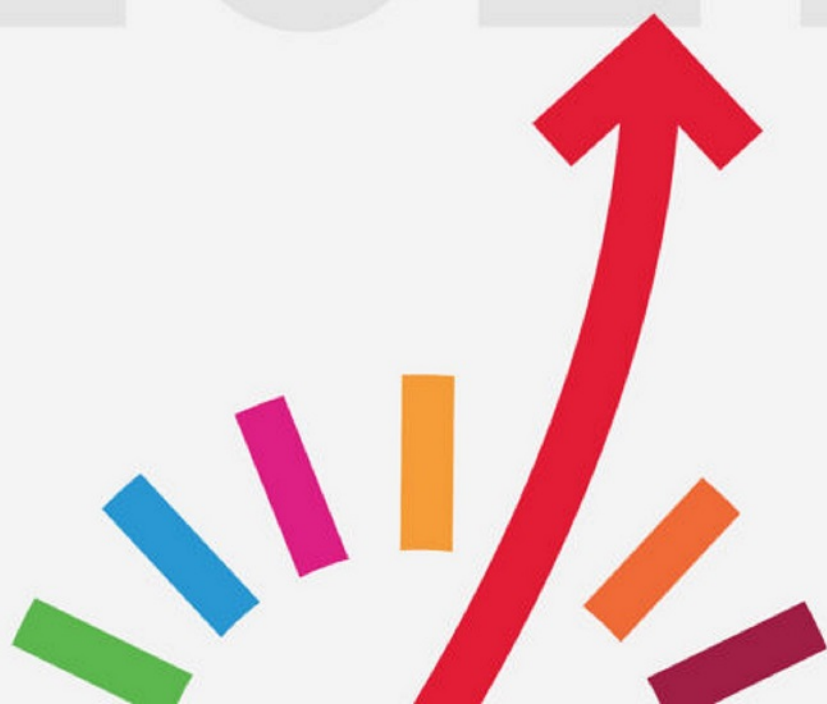




SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE INTERNATIONALIZATION VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Reimagining Approaches in Higher Education
in an Era of Global Uncertainties

2021





Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization: Reimagining Approaches in Higher Education in an Era of Global Uncertainties

York University



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I. Greetings and Welcome from York University and Strategic Partners



23rd September 2021

At York University, our mission is to provide a broad demographic of students with access to a high-quality, research-intensive university committed to the public good. Our community approaches sustainability through a holistic lens of curriculum, research, innovation, and knowledge mobilization, underscored by our desire to build a safer and more sustainable and inclusive future.

At York, sustainability is one of the foundations of our [University Academic Plan 2020–2025: Building a Better Future](#), and it is embedded within all six of our priorities for action as part of our commitment to strengthening our impact on the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Together, the University Academic Plan and our [Sustainability Strategy](#) serve to highlight our collaborative approach with cross-sector partners to addressing complex global issues that have far-reaching effects — from climate change, to poverty, to inequities in education and public health, to decolonization and reconciliation with our Indigenous communities.

Many initiatives being undertaken at York continue to enhance sustainability in both local and international communities. Through our new CIFAL centre, CIFAL York, we are bringing leaders from not-for-profits, industry, and all levels of government together with researchers and educators to address central issues in the areas of sustainable development, disaster and emergency management, diversity and inclusion, economic development, global health, and entrepreneurship. Our partnership with two universities in Kenya has made access to higher education in refugee camps in Dadaab, Kenya possible through the [Borderless Higher Education for Refugees Project](#). And, through the innovative use of our campus operations, grounds, and buildings as “living labs” — including the groundbreaking [Las Nubes Project](#) at our EcoCampus in Costa Rica — we are providing our students with valuable experiential learning opportunities related to ecology, sustainability, indigenous education, arts, health, and conservation.

Higher education has long been a force for cross-national and cross-cultural exchange, but as a result of factors including geopolitical tensions, economic strains, climate change concerns, and systematic racism, access to mobility programs and international networks has not always been equitable. The Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization Virtual Conference is one of the many ways that York is responding to the wider call for higher education institutions to take up the UN SDGs— serving as an accessible platform for scholars, international mobility professionals and practitioners, policymakers, sustainability experts, and interested stakeholders to address vital questions around the themes of sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation in international higher education.

We know that our success in affecting the kind of systemic changes necessary to build inclusive, equitable, and ethical global engagement relies on our ability to enhance multi-sector collaborations and internationalization strategies. And so I am profoundly grateful for your interest and enthusiasm in supporting our efforts, and look

forward to continuing to work together with all of this year's participants to address the complex issues identified in the SDGs, and to right the future.



Sincerely,
Rhonda Lenton
 President & Vice-Chancellor
 York University

Greetings from conference partners

As strategic partners of the Sustainable on the Go, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the International Association of Universities, and Okayama University Japan kindly invite you to read and further share this publication and to become an individual or institutional signatory to the Toronto Declaration on the Future of Responsible and Inclusive Internationalization of Higher Education.

Thanks to the development and distribution of vaccines (although highly unequal in the world) and the implementation of health measures, there is hope that the most acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic will soon be over, and the world will move to a post-pandemic era. How will higher education look like in this new era? Will universities be able to move towards a new balance of in-person and virtual teaching/learning and benefit from an enhanced level of digitization? Will higher education institutions appropriately educate young people, the future leaders of the world, in inclusive behaviors through education and research, enabling them to be responsible and active members in their local and global communities? Will higher education be able to provide learning and research opportunities towards a better understanding of this, yet unknown, post-pandemic world that will include virtual and in-person mobility yet doing so with a focus on sustainability? Will higher education be able to provide meaningful opportunities yet address the challenges associated with climate change and other related sustainability challenges impacting the world today?

While sustainability has become a major societal concern at all levels, it is not yet quite clear how to balance environmental, economic, and societal concerns. Higher education and research are fundamental to help the world understand how one can strive to being a global citizen, thriving economically, creating a considerable social handprint, and still keeping a small ecological footprint. Universities do support such new and much needed dialogue in all their operations: teaching and learning, research, campus life and community service.

In bringing different voices to the table, the Sustainable on the Go provided significant contributions to the debate and identified ways forward.

We invite you to read these conference proceedings and welcome you to join the Sustainable on the Go conversation.

Roda Muse, Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Hilligje van't Land, Secretary-General of the International Association of Universities

Hirofumi Makino, President of Okayama University Japan



II. Introduction and Background of the Sustainable On The Go Initiative



Photo by: Monstera

Where do calls for more sustainability and inclusivity and an increase of student and scholar mobility in higher education meet? In conversations and in literature, buzz-phrases such as “responsible”, “ethical”, “sustainable”, and “inclusive” internationalization at the university/college level exist, but how do these words translate into the global, national and institutional mobility programs and fit into a culture of collaboration and exchange?

Higher education institutions have long been a catalyst of international knowledge exchange with people and ideas crossing borders for hundreds of years. However, international mobility is increasingly challenged with global geopolitical tensions, economic strains, climate change concerns, a global pandemic, and systemic racism. This has prompted scholars and practitioners to question whether this is the decline of the internationalization of higher education as we know it or a beginning of a new era complete with new models of practice.

This virtual conference is an open forum that welcomes “multiple voices” to help build an understanding of the evolving status of mobility in Canada’s higher education and beyond, to critically reflect on where we are now, and to collectively build a future vision of international mobility within internationalization strategies and practices. With student mobility at focus while also looking into related mobility issues such as research collaborations and university partnerships, the discussion will focus on the challenges, benefits, impacts, and shifting nature of international mobility at educational institutions.

Discussions will include how the perception of education abroad is evolving in an era of climate change, global pandemics, and global geopolitical and economic strains; how to cultivate reciprocal, sustainable, and mutually beneficial mobility programs; and share innovative frameworks, policies and practices. This is an opportunity to share experiences with the

wider national and international communities; learn from others’ experiences and initiate long term discussions and partnerships.

Overall conference themes:

- Sustainable and responsible mobility – new paradigm or just paradox?
- “All means all” inclusive access to international exchange and collaboration
- Practical approaches to innovation in higher education practices of student and scholar mobility

The Conference aims to:

- Initiate a discussion with global perspectives on international education and sustainability (post COVID-19) by bringing together mobility experts and coordinators responsible for international services and exchange programs, as well as experts in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) with policymakers and other practitioners
- Develop a Toronto York Declaration on responsible mobility in higher education: while recognizing the importance of international student and research mobility, higher education carries a responsibility to understand their impact in contexts of addressing both globalization and sustainability
- Contribute to the future of international education and sustainability in a new era of global uncertainties (post COVID-19)
- Bring forward international mobility discussions beyond student exchange to include innovative and

inclusive global learning models and pedagogies whilst sharing a Canadian perspective(s) on internationalization and mobility

- Develop a strategy for ongoing networking and sharing in research and capacity building within the field

that will extend well beyond the Conference.

Note: The Conference dates chosen are aligned with the celebration of UN International Day of Education on 24th January 2021.



III. Toronto Declaration on the Future of Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization in Higher Education



Photo by Jan Weber

Visit the [YorkU Sustainable On The Go Declaration Homepage](#)
[Download the 2021 Toronto Declaration \(pdf\)](#)

York University, represented by York International and the UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability, with their conference partners, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the International Association of Universities and Okayama University with the UNESCO Chair in Research and Education for Sustainable Development (Japan) hosted the Virtual Conference on Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization on 20th-22nd January 2021.

The participants of the Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization Virtual Conference (SOTG 2021) comprised of students, youth, lecturers, researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and other officials from higher education and, where appropriate, also supported by participants from government and non-government institutions, private sector, international organizations and global networks:

- **Welcome** the opportunity to come together in an open and global forum to share perspectives and experiences, to learn with peers and other stakeholders and to jointly build a better understanding of the evolving status of student and scholar engagement with internationalization initiatives in a context of addressing global challenges for societies and systems and identifying opportunities in a commencing post-COVID-19 world through the lens of sustainable development,
- **Acknowledge** that 2020 has been a year like no other for limiting internationalization programs in higher education due to a global pandemic,
- **Appreciate** the discussions to critically reflect on the current status and constraints of internationalization

with a focus on mobility to collectively explore future visions of international engagement and outreach strategies and practices for higher education in Canada, and globally,

- **Acknowledge** that higher education is at a crucial moment of opportunity to shape new forms of (digital) access for an increasing number of students and scholars of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to participate in exchange and international collaboration,
- **Reaffirm** the commitment to internationalization efforts, taking leadership and acting in a whole-institution approach, enabling students coming from school or other paths of life to become compassionate and responsible leaders and global citizens to achieve the transformation of our world, as stated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- **State** the importance and need to further increase participation in international education and the need for fact-based knowledge exchange and innovation, especially in an era of climate change, misinformation, global geopolitical unrest, economic uncertainty, and systemic racism while facing a global pandemic of yet unknown consequence,
- **Recognize** and continuously reflect on the importance of international education, including student and scholar mobility, and its interconnectedness within the overall responsibility of higher education as trusted knowledge holders to address universal concerns, such as globalization, multilateralism, inclusivity, sustainability, the wellbeing of all life and other aspects of the 2030 Agenda to achieve a quality education as a

key enabler of all of the SDGs,

- **Commit** to enhance international education in higher education settings by developing and promoting accessible sharing of innovative and inclusive global learning models and pedagogies, addressing education for sustainable development and global citizenship education, as called for in SDG 4.7, or by supporting such practice in higher education or related institutions,
- **Affirm** sustainable practices in approaches for international student and scholar mobility as well as the academic content are crucial elements of higher education's contribution to the pursuit of a better future for all,
- **Pledge** to position future internationalization and global engagement strategies to elevate actions towards the SDGs, or support such pledges by the higher education community,
- **Call for the joint development** of innovative frameworks and new models of practice in the education programs in partnership with schools, research and community service of higher education institutions to connect students, scholars, practitioners, and to embed different worldviews in teaching and learning when designing and carrying out research and/or as a way of connecting the local community to the global community within the framework of the SDGs,
- **Support** the six themes of the SOTG 2021 for the upcoming conference publication and as potential thematic priorities when building such new frameworks and models of practice:
 1. International mobility in practice: institutional, national, and regional responses,
 2. Greening student and scholar exchange: Concrete ideas and practices,
 3. Leveraging technology and digital learning:

Can we experience abroad online?,

4. Mobility programs beyond academics: global and community engagement,
 5. Inclusive student exchanges and experiences,
 6. Assessment of intercultural development in mobility programs, and
- **Commit** to support implementing the elements of the Toronto Declaration in a sustainable manner, making overall internationalization handprints larger than their footprints.

Background

The Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization Virtual Conference (SOTG 2021) is an element of the Sustainable On The Go Initiative for York University to continuously address student and scholar mobility in a responsible manner within York University's global engagement. The Conference was organized in partnership with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the International Association of Universities and Okayama University with the UNESCO Chair in Research and Education for Sustainable Development (Japan). In striving for a sustainable future, York University, engaged in global networks for learning, teaching and exchange, focuses on educating future global leaders and active citizens and providing opportunity for faculty and students to contribute to global impact through research, education and service.

York University is a leading international teaching and research university in Canada, and a driving force for positive change. In 2020, York University launched a new [University Academic Plan \(UAP\) 2020-2025](#) referencing the SDGs as a grand challenge and aspiring to develop pathways for all students, staff and the community to engage in an approach throughout the whole institution, using experiential education opportunities and collaboration through enhanced concepts of both internationalization and global citizenship.



IV. Conference Proceedings

Plenary Session 1: Mobility in Higher Education: A New Vision, Pressures and Opportunities for Enhanced Programs



Photo by: KOBU Agency

Mobility in Higher Education:

A New Vision, Pressures and Opportunities for Enhanced Programs

Introduction

The plenary session Mobility in Higher Education: A New Vision, Pressures, and Opportunities for Enhanced Programs offered an opportunity to acknowledge the central and complex role that mobility plays in international education. Vinitha Gengatharan, Chair of the plenary and Executive Director of York International, framed the discussion by addressing the impact that COVID-19 has had on internationalization. She noted that the sudden halt to mobility due to the global pandemic has created opportunities to accelerate internationalization at home, an area that has not had as much traction as other areas of global engagement. Furthermore, this pause has enabled universities to re-consider new frameworks to realize internationalization ambitions, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the core to create a better future for all. Addressing issues of ethics, inclusivity, and sustainability in internationalization would require careful thought to the purposes and modalities of future mobility programs.

Hans de Wit, Professor Emeritus and Distinguished Fellow at Boston College, United States started the discussion by acknowledging the complexities of mobility in higher education. In order to incorporate equity, ethics, and sustainability, practitioners and leaders will need to examine the various modalities of physical mobility programs while addressing the needs of the different stakeholders involved, including students, faculty, researchers and institutions. While acknowledging that international education is nearly impossible without mobility and the ability to connect with other cultures and experiences, he argued

that focusing exclusively on physical mobility is an elitist form of internationalization as physical, ideological, and financial barriers prevent access and sustainability. In the context of COVID-19, he highlighted that virtual communication presents an alternative to mobility that highlights the interconnectedness between different actors rather than physical movement for interaction. Although he noted that the shift to virtual is not a traditional form of teaching for universities, it can serve as a more collaborative avenue to enhance opportunities for intercultural and innovative production of knowledge. Some examples included the opportunity to hold virtual conferences and research, whereby learning and collaborating across borders is made possible without meeting physically. De Witt also considered solutions for more environmentally sustainable physical mobility programs in higher education such as encouraging greener modes of transportation, and extended periods of stay rather than short visits. In conclusion, De Wit called for leadership and action to create an inclusive and sustainable future for mobility in higher education.

Francisco Marmolejo, Education Advisor for the Qatar Foundation and Former Global Lead of Tertiary Education at the World Bank, shared a similar view of De Wit's argument on elitism in higher education and exclusion in physical mobility practices. He proposed that institutions and individuals move beyond the traditional concept of internationalization and instead, recognize mobility of ideas, experiences, and perspectives. To elaborate on this view, Marmolejo referenced student mobility (e.g., physical exchanges) that suffers from a bubble effect, where a

group of privileged students enter the same spaces and learn from the same perspectives without interacting or connecting with local communities and cultures. As a result, these exclusionary practices in mobility reflect structural inequalities rooted in neocolonial economic, ideological, political, and institutional interests and have proven unsustainable.

...Marmolejo expressed concern for the notion of “waiting for things to become normal again”, recognizing that mobility programs in the past have regarded students as commodities and called for these perverse incentives to be challenged. – Francisco Marmolejo



sion, Marmolejo advocated for the need to responsibly re-envision mobility programs through technology and to enhance the future of international education, especially in pursuit of equity and inclusion for all.

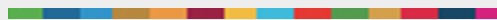
Lorna Jean Edmonds, former Vice Provost of Global Affairs and Assistant Vice President of International Relations at Ohio University, United States, reinforced the views of the other panelists by suggesting that higher education institutions should be responsible for creating more inclusive mobility programs. She outlined the crucial role of higher education institutions in impacting global knowledge-sharing, accessibility, and engagement. In her intervention, she posited that universities require a shift from an individualistic and competitive standpoint to one which advances inclusive and collaborative frameworks with other institutions and stakeholders. She also alluded to eliminating the traditional notion of borders that typically define internationalization, given that virtual spaces provide opportunities to increase participation and reach wider audiences, especially in a COVID-19 context. In leveraging the various learning opportunities that have emerged for an inclusive approach to mobility, Edmonds maintained that universities must adopt and enact a universal framework to promote inclusion, participation, and diversity of students in higher education globally. Additionally, she noted that social media and online mobilization play a central role in enhancing higher education models, and considered its benefits to generate compassionate social justice, accessible learning, wellbeing, cooperation, and governance of the world within the universal sustainability landscape.

Edmonds' concluding remarks noted that individuals in

higher education institutions are drivers of change and leaders in knowledge production that form and inform student experiences and government actions. She urged academics and researchers to become global influencers by tackling visible and invisible pandemics and barriers across communities (i.e., racial injustices, COVID-19, climate change), collectively working with students, and other institutions to create a pathway towards sustainability that makes mobility in higher education a boundless and borderless possibility for all.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This session urged academics and researchers to become global influencers by tackling visible and invisible pandemics and barriers across communities (i.e., racial injustices, COVID-19, climate change), collectively working with students, and other institutions to create a pathway towards sustainability that makes mobility in higher education a boundless and borderless possibility for all.



Discussion and Q&A

The question period which followed the interventions invited the panelists to elaborate on further solutions and pathways for higher education institutions to address equity and inclusion. In response, the presenters agreed that universities need to be more transparent and accountable to minimize the gaps and barriers in higher education. Additionally, more interdisciplinary and participatory conversations are necessary to increase the development and progress across non-western educational settings. They strongly urged that universities break away from their traditional ways of thinking and teaching and instead take collective action to create an adaptable system for all.

Conclusion

This plenary highlighted the complexities, needs and potential solutions to pivot mobility and internationalization in higher education towards inclusion and sustainability. As articulated, there are profound benefits to learning and collaborating across borders. However, it is equally important to involve and consider local communities in internationalization processes. As Marmolejo stated: “We shouldn’t forget that at the end of the day we are preparing people. It is not about making international the goal, as international only makes sense if it is connected to local communities.” In addition, the panelists also spoke to the elitism and exclusion seen in physical mobility programs which undermine its sustainability for the future. Instead, institutions, students, and researchers should welcome, recognize, and encourage equal exchange of ideas, experi-

ences, and perspectives of diverse communities. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the panelists supported virtual learning and online conferences as an alternative approach to intercultural interactions that can be used to uphold and expand environmentally conscious, inclusive, and collaborative practices in line with the SDGs. Many inequalities can persist through the digital delivery of education and while, virtual mobility is not a perfect solution, it is an opportunity that challenges conventional practices

and frameworks of internationalization. As such, emphasizing the experience of the mobility participants (or lack thereof) will be key to creating ethical and sustainable internationalization activities.



Parallel Session 1: International Mobility in Practice: Institutional, National, and Regional Responses



INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY IN PRACTICE

Institutional, national, and regional responses

International Mobility in Practice: Institutional, National, and Regional Responses



Introduction

This session was chaired by Adel El Zaim, Chief Internationalization Officer, University of Ottawa, Canada. International Mobility and Sustainability are relevant concepts that have been brought to the forefront of higher education institutions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within less than 5 years since the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, academics and professionals in higher education have started questioning the traditional definitions and practices that have historically dominated internationalization strategies in higher education and have discussed how relevant or dysfunctional those dominant practices are in relation to the concept of sustainability. This panel was concerned about questioning, proposing new definitions, and providing examples from their home institutions to highlight concepts of internationalization, mobility, and sustainability using COVID-19 and the SDGs to uncover the gaps in perceiving those concepts.

Aaron Benavot, Global Education Policy, University at Albany, SUNY, United States and Former Director, UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report and Giorgio Marinoni, Manager, Higher Education and Internationalization, International Association of Universities (IAU), primarily discussed the 2030 Agenda addressing a sustainable future in five dimensions: Planet, People, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. Benavot mentioned that this agenda brings together environmental, economic, social, and educational factors in learning environments from early childhood through higher education. It most recently included the notion of lifelong learning, with the focal point on SDG target 4.B (Scholarships). Substantially, this expands glob-

ally the number of scholarships available in developing countries for enrollment in higher education in developed and developing countries. He explained the importance of both higher education and international mobility of scholars and students in relation to several SDGs (including SDGs 3, 5, 8, 12, 13, and 16). These SDGs explicitly refer to education looking at its relationship, influence and impact on sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity. In the 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, Benavot noted the relationships between higher education and each of the other SDGs. He pointed out that as higher education increases and promotes sustainability of both in terms of knowledge and awareness, there is an increase in resilience regarding various kinds of climate-related risks that are emerging. Higher education – for international and domestic students – fosters several soft skills (e.g., communicate effectively and appropriately with people from other cultures; being empathetic; adjust and review personal worldviews and beliefs; think critically and sustainably) that are needed both in the country of origin and in the host country. Higher education promotes sustainable lifestyles, help train future workers for emerging green industries, as well as hiring skills for research, development, and innovation for a greener economy. Furthermore, the importance of higher education is evident in terms of promoting gender equality and empowerment, and sustainable farming practices respecting indigenous knowledge. To conclude, he mentioned the many ways in which higher education is being called upon to contribute to the enhancement of the five dimensions of the 2030 Agenda within international education programs.

Giorgio Marinoni, Manager, HE and Internationalization, International Association of Universities (IAU), France, established the framework for the discussion on the concepts of internationalization, student mobility and sustainability in higher education. Marinoni argued that the current model of internationalization and student mobility is “neither sustainable, nor inclusive”. As for the concept of sustainability, he stated that, for long and pre-COVID-19, “the internationalization community limited the definition of sustainable development to environmental protection, while ignoring its much wider potential benefits in all aspects of life”.

Marinoni stated that pre-pandemic, internationalization was more of a corporate strategy which promoted student mobility based on economic rationale and governed by market values, limiting access to a few privileged individuals. Traditionally, international mobility was defined as physical mobility (i.e., moving across borders), with the benefit of learning and integrating in other cultures. The COVID-19 pandemic unveiled the limitation of this model. With travel restrictions, online learning became the only way to access international higher education. He proposed redefining internationalization to an experience perspective that can widen and provide more inclusive opportunities. Recognizing the limitation of technological access, he proposed virtual mobility as an alternative to reach out to students in other cities and countries, with the purpose of exchanging and experiencing different cultures and norms.

As for the concept of sustainable development, Marinoni mentioned that the common approach to sustainable development that has been limited to discussion of environmental issues. Like Benavot, he recognizes that sustainable development, as defined by the United Nations’ 17 SDGs, needs to be more comprehensive and interdisciplinary supporting the notion that sustainability should not only be integrated in the academy but also in the strategies, administrative practices, and policies. He concluded that in order to achieve a sustainable internationalization strategy that promotes sustainable development in all fields, the SDGs need to be part of the current and future higher education institutional strategies.

Alessandra Scagliarini, Vice Rector for International Relations, Università di Bologna in Italy, stated that “mobility is one of the most powerful instruments of global citizenship education”. The University of Bologna has approximately equal number of incoming and outgoing students due to the networking and diverse pathways that the university has created with partners in higher education. However, she recognized the limitations of access to those opportunities and stressed that there are increased efforts to expand those opportunities to a wider population. The University of Bologna is committed to the SDGs and is involved in higher education sustainability initiatives, with a focus on SDG 5 on Gender and Equality at both academic and administrative levels. She highlighted the importance of measuring the success of internationalization initiatives not only quantitatively but qualitatively while exploring feasible and low-cost mobility options such as virtual exchanges and mobility between University of Bologna and its partners in Europe and in Africa. While quantitative measurement of mobility programs provides the university with access to funding resources for

research and academic advancement, the university has also included qualitative indicators that can enable the institution to measure other integral components of internationalization such as the SDGs on diversity, collaboration, and inclusivity.

Scagliarini also discussed the Italian for Higher Education African Initiative that is based on SDG 17, Building Partnerships. The partnership initiative started pre-COVID-19 and involved six major Italian universities and was created to offer multi-scope educational programs in multiple disciplines for African nations like Tanzania, South Africa, Botswana, and Ghana. Despite the COVID-19 disruption, which limited student and staff’s mobility, they have had 50 students participating in both asynchronous and synchronous modalities with the University of Bologna while also engaging the faculty in an online collaborative project with the African partners. This project was aimed to discuss innovative research planning and management as well as an outlet to share good practices in different fields related to agriculture, energy, sustainability, and cultural heritage. The University of Bologna is actively engaged with eight other universities as part of UNA Europa, the European University Alliances, created by the European Commission. The mission of this alliance is to create an inter-European university environment, outstanding research linked to transnational learning and innovative critical thinking. She stressed the importance of diversifying and expanding the fields of study and internships to multiple disciplines. Through the collaboration and responsiveness of its partners since the start of the pandemic, the alliance was able to create a virtual alternative mobility structure for both student and academic staff called Transform Emergency Now. Scagliarini identified this type of learning as challenge-based learning where students have been brought together across different universities of UNA Europa to do an open innovation design challenge pertaining to a myriad of societal barriers as a result of the pandemic. The themes of the challenge included redefining entertainment and culture, safeguarding privacy and preventing misconception in digital world, and ensuring travel safety and avoiding food waste. As for academic staff, a new joint hub was created with faculty from UNA Europa called Joint Teaching Unit (JTU) where academics can collaborate, exchange knowledge and experiences while also allowing students from multiple universities to work and collaborate with other professors from those different universities.

Barnabas Nawangwe, Vice-Chancellor, Member, Council of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, University of Makerere in Uganda, presented another example of the shift from physical to virtual international student mobility. He spoke about University of Makerere’s initiatives that aim to diversify their student mobility experiences. He focused on the Sandwich Model which is a 20-year-old collaborative partnership between the University of Makerere and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), Sweden’s government agency for development cooperation. Nawangwe mentioned that this student mobility model was created to support graduate students, particularly PhD students and their academic advisors. The program is entirely funded by SIDA, which has invested over 120 million dollars since it started and aims to create a research environment that is conducive to research development and practices. This opportunity allows students and supervisors to be trained and to collaborate with their peers in Swedish universi-

ties. Each graduate student is supervised by a senior supervisor in Sweden and another supervisor at the University of Makerere, while the supervisor in Makerere is supported and trained by their Swedish counterpart. The slogan “support the supervisor to supervise” emphasizes the goal of creating an enabling environment which can provide access to literature, grant credits, and fund research and collaboration.

Nawangwe stressed the importance of a carefully designed program that can allow continuous collaboration, create an opportunity for joint publications, access to literature and pathway for academic growth to reduce brain-drain and loss of talents in Africa. – Barnabas Nawangwe.

Nawangwe explained three main issues in Uganda and in Africa: (1) The very low number of research and publications; (2) The high number of “brain-drain” associated with student academic mobility, and (3) The poor resources and facilities. He discussed how the Makerere-SIDA created a better research, teaching and learning environment for the University of Makerere in the last 20 years. There was 100% retention of 400 graduate students who were trained through this program and later hired in the university, increasing the ratio of PhD holders to 70% of the faculty. Also, 250 faculty were trained as supervisors

raising the supervision capacity by 300%, which allowed for increased admission of graduate students and improved the quality of teaching and learning raising the number of research and publications from 120 to 900 in Africa. Nawangwe shared that this program was switched to virtual mode during COVID-19 with alternative online resources for the limited access to physical spaces (i.e., laboratories). He stressed the importance of a carefully designed program that can allow continuous collaboration, create an opportunity for joint publications, access to literature and pathway for academic growth to reduce brain-drain and loss of talents in Africa. His conclusion suggests that this Sandwich Model has helped in creating a sustainable ongoing learning collaboration with Sweden which is richer in academic capital and research.

Sandra Guarín, Director of the Office for International Relations at the Universidad Antonio Nariño (UAN) in Colombia, presented the UANs perspectives on student mobility and sustainability. In 2016, UAN started its participation in the internationalization laboratory of the American Council on Education, called the UAN-INT-LAB. Since then, it has adopted comprehensive internationalization as its conceptual model in which student mobility is one of the seven pillars of internationalization. The UAN-INT-LAB was a collective mutualistic order and a multidimensional construction process. She explained that for

the development of the pillar of Internationalization and the SDGs, UAN considered indicators which correspond to the three action fronts: (1) Internationalization at home; (2) Mobility; (3) and Cooperation. Within UANs lines of action within the pillar of internationalization and SDGs, online mobility was not considered until the arrival of the pandemic. As a result, UAN developed and implemented a program called UAN Mobilize Online, which seeks to develop the participants’ inter-cultural and cyber-cultural skills through learning experiences mediated by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). She said that this program allows students to choose one or more types of online mobility with pre-authorization from the program director from among the following: student exchanges, internships, short programs, and co-tutoring. According to her, the new global scenario has led to a greater articulation at UAN between the coordination of mobility and the coordination of internationalization at home which shares similar objectives of physical mobility as these two should supplement each other. UAN Mobilize Online allows an experience of international interaction for students who may not be able to access and experience face-to-face mobility for economic, personal, or work reasons which results in democratizing internationalization. She mentioned that online mobility not only allows for the overcoming of social and economic barriers, but it is also efficient in terms of time and cost and contributes to the environmental dimension of development and sustainability. She concluded by stating that the democratic and inclusive nature of online mobility should continue to be encouraged and strengthened beyond the COVID-19 scenario.

Conclusion

All presenters agreed that sustainable internationalization strategies are needed in order to promote sustainable development in all academic and professional fields, bearing in mind the effects of the pandemic. The panelists discussed traditional and innovative models in their home institutions while explaining how they have adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed ideas converge to one model of alternative student mobility which is the virtual mobility through online learning. The presenters recognize the limitations of a virtual model due to the limited access to technology by underprivileged students. It was also evident from the talks that Europe is leading in those initiatives with a focus on the European population but limited in terms of providing access to other continents, such as Asia and Africa. Europe is likely to have a more robust framework for student mobility with carefully designed processes and outcomes.



Parallel Session 2: Greening Student and Scholar Exchange: Concrete Ideas and Practices



GREENING STUDENT & SCHOLAR EXCHANGE

Concrete ideas and practices

Greening Student and Scholar Exchange:

Concrete Ideas and Practices



Introduction

Chaired by Ravi de Costa, Associate Dean, York University, the Session focused on new ways and successful solutions to make higher education mobility more inclusive and sustainable for young people. The panel focused on how student and scholar exchange can become more conscious through institutional decisions and new ways of virtually, visually, and artistically collaborating with young people. Based on the discussions, there are many global innovative projects being implemented in order to raise awareness of the universities' ecological footprint and the impacts of climate change. As an example, many of the speakers noted that this can be accomplished through Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, holding youth-led conferences, and making video documentaries presenting climate change effects across the globe.

This panel also discussed the importance of building human relationships beyond home. In order to make in person exchanges and mobility successful, panelists advocated for university institutions to be responsible and accountable for making exchanges more accessible and greener for all stakeholders. This can be done by developing interdisciplinary inclusive programs and alternate learning pathways to encourage student engagement and discussions. Lastly, the session ended on the topic of youth mobilization and genuine participation and inclusion of young people around the world. The speakers agreed that universities and non-profit organizations must move away from tokenism and integrate student's and young people's voices in

the policy making process and in the critical conversations around this topic.

Jana Dlouhá, Second Vice-Chairman of the Czech Commission for UNESCO at Charles University in the Czech Republic, examined the influence of mobility in higher education institutions. She analyzed how international student and staff mobility impacts the carbon footprint in climate change. She identified a significant gap in the study of the effects of international mobility amongst incoming international students and conference-based research trips by academics. By comparing data from Université Libre de Brussels and Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Dlouhá explained that in both universities, carbon emissions from student and staff (international or local transportation) account for about half of all carbon emissions from the respective universities. These carbon emissions are mainly caused by plane travel, mobile transportation, and students commuting to school. She noted that mobility related emissions account for over 50% of total emissions from higher education institutions, international travel, such as travel by international students, account for more than 25% of this mobility footprint. As part of the reduction strategies for new internationalization, she recommended for universities to consider the following measures to reduce their carbon footprint:

- Offering different forms of international experiences for students and contacts;

- Hosting longer exchanges and visitations for faculty and foreign students;
- Attracting more returning talents at regional universities;
- Hosting more virtual collaborations and conferences, and;
- Providing dual degrees and diplomas for exchange students.

She said that these measures can reduce higher education institutions' carbon footprint while advancing inclusive practices because they include different approaches and experiences for students and faculty, they mitigate the economic concern, and they consider individuals' accessibility needs.

Mark Terry, Director of the Youth Climate Report and UNESCO Chair Associate at York University, stated that youth are often overlooked and forgotten on the topics on climate change. He warned that the exclusion of young people is unacceptable and Western researchers and academics need to create accessible networks and inclusive mobility programs that students can participate globally with reduced environmental carbon footprint. He introduced the youth-led project called the Youth Climate Report. This one-week project brings students together from five different continents telling a story on climate research impacts from their own communities. This platform uses a Geo-Doc (Geographic Documentary) format to present three to five-minute-long films created by students giving them an opportunity to express their ideas on climate change and to be heard by the UN. He explained how the project integrates principles of creative storytelling in the classroom to further the SDGs and climate action. Through videos, students can present their work at various research conferences and contribute to discussions by policymakers under the UNFCCC. Furthermore, he stressed that there needs to be more responsibility and accountability from universities in youth engagement and decision making. He called for the education sector to be more transparent and inclusive by listening to youth's voices. He said this transparency and inclusivity can help universities produce high-quality data about climate change while creating intergenerationally equitable decisions.

Judith Naidorf, Independent Researcher of CONICET, Institute of Research in Educational Sciences, Universidad de Buenos Aires, addressed the importance of cultural and knowledge exchange through international mobility. She highlighted that international conferences have her with rich opportunities for cultural exchange with other scholars and partners within the field of Social Sciences and Humanities from Honduras, Mexico, Japan, and many other countries. She mentioned language ability as one of the many skills developed in exchange offerings, sharing her own experience as a native Spanish speaker who improved her foreign language skills during conferences in various international locations. She suggested that by encouraging the study of shared experiences, CLACSO (Latin American Council of Social Sciences) encourages student and academic exchange globally to advance cultural and intellectual knowledge transfer. She maintained that for students participating in mobility programs, there should be more discussion on what

they learned, their relationship to the place, and the construction of new knowledge from their encounters. Although mobility programs provide areas of debate surrounding emissions and greening practices, she strongly believes in the cultural experiences and knowledge acquisition from exchanges. She concluded by further highlighting that the types of learning and understanding achieved through in-person experiences in different parts of the world cannot be easily replaced if the in-person element is non-existent.

Tyrone Hall, Head of Communications, NDC partnership, World Resource Institute, United States, concurred with fellow speakers on the need to improve the awareness and action from the education sector on addressing the carbon footprint in mobility programs. He shared that his organization, the World Resource Institute, launched a global initiative that involves young people to help guide and provide structural solutions with climate organizations and non-government organizations on climate change. The youth-led organization, called the Youth Task Force, is an initiative co-chaired and organized by and for young people. This project looks to ensure that young people's voices worldwide are heard and understood in decisions around sustainability issues. He said that the initiative develops systemic ways in which youth can help reach the SDGs and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by providing the necessary resources and tools to help policymakers and researchers design a climate change plan. He also emphasized that it is important for universities and non-profit organizations to empower youth to address this climate challenge. Young people around the world show interest and are already involved in solving climate change in their local communities. However, many do not have the resources or connections that would assist with their projects. He noted that instead of perceiving youth and young people as add-ons, researchers, policymakers, and academics should start listening and including diverse youth in the decision-making processes.

Discussion and Q&A

At the end of the session, the panel addressed the question "What responsibility do those working with mobility programs have on this issue [green scholar exchange]?" Panelists agreed that mobility in higher educational institutions needs to become more diverse and start actively involving youth and students to be a part of the process to advance inclusion. In addition, it was agreed that higher education institutions should transparently disclose results for public access in an understandable and accessible format. More accountability and stringent measures can be an effective solution to hold universities and corporations responsible for their ecological footprint. A key issue among institutions is the inclusivity and transparency in data collection and monitoring. The panel agreed that it is problematic that developing nations and international research communities are often forgotten and excluded from the conversation, negatively impacting the progress of their work and their ability to achieve results.

Conclusion

Overall, the overarching message the panel agreed upon was the need to increase transparency, diversity, and accountability in higher education institutions to reduce their carbon emissions. Naidorf suggested that after critical data collection universities need to publish their data for transparency as a requirement. Dlouhá noted that institutions will only disclose emissions if there are other institutions following suit. The perpetual controversy of institutions starting to disclose their emissions results in inaction. To develop a culture of transparency, the panel agreed that there needs to be a global collaboration for emissions transparency among institutions. The session ended with the question: “What action can be taken to embed a culture of sustainability in international student exchange?”. In response, Terry outlined that in order to integrate sustainability, we must be able to approach youth through the channels of engagement that they already know — such as social media. According to his experience, youth are more receptive and willing to participate in projects when they see a social element.

Reflections from the Chair and Way Forward

This session allowed participants to focus on their experiences and efforts that were inherently valuable and broadly instructive. Attendees were seized by the imaginative strategies for sustainable internationalization that were explored,

both departing from the panelists’ diverse presentations, the thoughtful discussions about the current challenges and also catalyzed by lively discussion in the chat. It is important to note that this session was a welcome relief and was characterized by a sense of energy and imagination. A feeling of excitement prevailed, panelists in good humor and attendees chatting freely, even confronted with a technically maladroit session chair. It seemed that everyone was encountering each other for the first time, but with a generous curiosity; all bringing a willingness to share both their experiences and hopes about whatever might be a sustainable internationalization in higher education.

The discussions that took place in this session helped identify established and emerging best practices in international education from a sustainability perspective, including a focus on longer and deeper forms of exchange and a commitment to more balanced and reciprocal programs. Panelists explained the need to improve their engagement with youth. In addition, several specific initiatives happening at York University were mentioned, including the award-winning Youth Climate Report, which takes the form a “geo-doc”, combining mapping and film-making technologies to balance local stories from students all over the world and global access. This also aligns with the Planetary Health Film Lab initiative, which provides training and support to student filmmakers telling stories about climate research and impacts from their respective communities. As an example, the Youth Task Force (by the World Resources Institute) enabled approaches that bring young people together around specific projects on the SDGs and climate action decentering some of the assumptions made in the Global North. Finally, panelists emphasized on the importance of language training in successful models of internationalization.



Plenary Session 2: Student and Professional Mobility 2030 and Beyond: Transferability of Degrees, Credit Transfer, Refugees, and Immigrants



Photo by: KOBU Agency

Student and Professional Mobility 2030 and Beyond:

Transferability of Degrees, Credit Transfer, Refugees, and Immigrants



Introduction

Chaired by Liette Vasseur, President, Canadian Commission for UNESCO and UNESCO Chair on Community Sustainability: From Local to Global at Brock University, Canada. This plenary focused on the ways in which higher education could tackle the challenges for student and professional mobility going into the future. The panel shared concrete ideas and examples on how policy and technology tools were used to improve the structures around mobility, with special attention paid to issues such as transferability of degrees, credit transfer, and refugee and immigrant rights. As well, the panel acknowledged the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and discussed some of the adjustments that have been or should be made to reach the intended outcomes for mobility programs even with the limitations on physical mobility.

Bergan concluded that when refugees are motivated and valued, they are better enabled to contribute to their host countries as well as their home countries, if they return home.

– Sjur Bergan.

Sjur Bergan, Head of Education Department, Council of Europe and author of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the European Qualification Passport for Refugees, stated that the main lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic is that mobility needs to adjust to unforeseen circumstances. He said: “This may mean, in some cases, interrupting

exchanges and ensuring that foreign students are catered for at and by their host institutions or helped to return home safely. This also means that public authorities need to be flexible, for example regarding visa extensions or continued financial support”. Bergan discussed the importance of higher education institutions working along with their countries so that individuals visiting those institutions feel welcomed and included. He highlighted that part of this challenge has been the rise of populism in Europe and in other parts of the world, which views the world in terms of us versus them and it is often rooted in more closed mindsets. Bergan mentioned the foreign degree recognition as part of one of the instruments to make mobility easier. This tool allows universities to recognize foreign academic work and degrees. For example, the Diploma Supplement does not replace a University Diploma but it provides a description of the degree (or academic program) for those who are not familiar with the host country’s educational system making it easier to understand what these qualifications represent and entail. He said that institutions should issue the Diploma Supplement automatically, free of charge, and in a common language. Bergan commented that developing qualifications frameworks have gained much attention in the last few years because these frameworks not only describe individual qualifications, but they also show how they are interconnected and how they can move from one degree to another. In Europe, self-certification is the process through which national authorities demonstrate that their framework is compatible with the

overarching framework, also known as the Bologna Framework. This framework should answer three important questions:

- The quality, workload, and level of qualification,
- the profile of the qualification, and
- The learning outcomes.

Finally, Bergan highlighted the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees, which offers a tested method for assessing and describing qualifications that cannot be adequately documented. He maintained that the qualifications passport can make the difference between a vicious circle, where refugees are put to one side, kept passive, told they are not worth much, and eventually lose both their competences and their motivation, versus a virtuous circle in which refugees are valued, motivated, and can be used to build on their qualifications. He concluded that when refugees are motivated and valued, they are better enabled to contribute to their host countries as well as their home countries, if they return home.

Fabio Nascimbeni, Senior Expert of the UNIEMD, Mediterranean Universities Union, Italy, Senior Fellow of the European Distance and eLearning Network (EDEN) and a fellow at the Centro de Estudos sobre Tecnologia e Sociedade of the University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil and at the Nexa Centre of the Politecnico di Torino) shared lessons from the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange pilot program launched by the European commission in 2018 for peace-building and digital learning. 30,000 young people from Europe and the South Mediterranean region in both higher and non-higher education participated in this program for over 3 years. He said that the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange pilot program proved to be an innovative alternative approach to mobility when physical mobility was not possible. He said that the project encouraged participants synchronous and meaningful interactions. According to Nascimbeni, virtual mobility has allowed experiences to be better prepared, more inclusive, more intercultural, and more balanced. These are important characteristics that physical mobility should consider and integrate. He explained that the virtual exchange is viewed as a sustainably designed pedagogical process, one that is technology-enabled, scalable, experimental, and learner-led. Nascimbeni reported that young people involved in the project valued the opportunity to speak online with others from different backgrounds about a range of topics describing the experience as mind opening. He mentioned that a project like this can help students learn about other countries before deciding where to go physically. He stated that although traditional mobility is a cornerstone of internationalisation, it can be boosted and complimented by virtual exchange as a preliminary activity and a follow up activity that strengthens multicultural understanding and community building. He added that it is common to see participants continue working, becoming facilitators, keeping in touch with the community, and creating strong bonds that, in many cases, are not guaranteed by physical mobility.

Ethel Valenzuela, Director of the Southeast Asian Minister of Education Organization, SEAMEO Secretariat's, presentation focused on academic mobility and how SEAMEO was able to sustain and pivot mobility programs even during the unprece-

dent COVID-19 situation. Valenzuela said that SEAMEO's academic mobility initiatives started 5 years ago, with the vision of promoting greater mobility in Southeast Asia and reforming and revitalizing teacher education with the Southeast Asian Teacher Network (SEA Teacher) and Southeast Asia Technical and Vocational Education (SEA TVET) programs. The SEA Teacher academic mobility program was a successful project where pre-service teacher education students spend one month in another institution outside the country and a host university supervises the teaching experiences of that student. Valenzuela said that SEA Teacher Program in partner universities considered options for conducting mobility programs online to ensure the continuity without risking the health and safety of students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The team embarked on a SEAMEO lecture series and asked the SEAMEO TVET and Teacher Network to share video clips from their institutions on topics including how to teach in this new normal, how to utilize technology in teaching, and how to use various apps and resources. In the first trial, the program received more than 100 video lectures from all institutions participating in the mobility program. She stated that, although different from what was originally envisioned for SEA Teacher Mobility, the SEAMEO lecture series produced practical and easy-to-replicate teaching strategies that can be used to make the shift from the traditional to virtual delivery. Valenzuela warned against allowing COVID-19 to disrupt learning and highlighted some of the lessons to be learned from this pandemic in terms of continuity and the value of internationalizing universities in the new normal. Her conclusion suggests that internationalization is a way of enhancing teaching, research, student services and the expansion of programs.

Bergan added that credit systems in universities could encourage interaction between domestic and international students to create more opportunities for the development of intercultural competence if domestic students can earn credits for working with their international peers. -Sjur Bergan.

Discussion and Q&A

The panelists commented on a few additional topics after their individual presentations. On the topic of how institutions can make mobility more inclusive by reducing the cost for participants, the panelists highlighted the importance of preparing potential participants on practical issues and considerations, including helping them understand what to expect for life in the host country as well as where and how to look for funding. In addition to offering scholarship opportunities for mobility, the panelist agreed that sharing and reasonably distributing the expenses among host and guest institutions have also been a useful

model for reducing the costs for participants in mobility programs. On the topic of how mobility programs can better address intercultural competences, Nascimbeni mentioned that

this is a key objective for virtual mobility exchanges that could be reached through a safe online space, proper facilitation, and relevant content. Bergan added that credit systems in universities could encourage interaction between domestic and international students to create more opportunities for the development of intercultural competence if domestic students can earn credits for working with their international peers.

Conclusion

The panelists agreed on the importance of building systems and structures that can reduce barriers for mobility and encouraging participant success. This includes the recognition of foreign experiences and qualifications, the establishment of a culture that values intercultural understanding and competence at the institutional level, and the agility to balance and combine physical and virtual mobility to allow for more inclusive and diverse programs. Finally, the panelists agreed that visa requirements can be challenging obstacles for mobility and called for a shift towards more relaxed and sensible policies in this regard.

Reflections from the Chair and Way Forward

The session underlined many major points to consider in the future with or without a pandemic. My reflections touch three aspects that underline the importance of mobility. My first reflection related to ensuring safe space for intercultural exchange and understanding. The pandemic has enhanced the populism attitude in many countries as we saw a rise of anti-Asian movement. There is a need to promote cultural education to all to ensure a better understanding of the various cultures that create our world. This can start in all our own institutions. Mobility programs can also contribute to this in many ways. I really like the idea of online exchanges as a first step to allow this safe space to happen. However, and this is my second reflection, I would caution that online mobility should not be regarded as the only way. I still believe that personal experience in another country is a great way to understand better that various cultures and become more tolerant and emphatic towards others.

My third reflection relates to the importance of mobility programs. They should be more valued and reciprocal among institutions. My experience has been that students who had the

opportunity to be part of mobility programs are more open to the world, understand better international issues and have a clearer vision of their role in society. As a way forward, institutions should better engage their students in experiencing intercultural exchanges. Rethinking about the UNSDGs, mobility programs can offer a great way to contribute to many of them not only through education but also experience in the field with communities. Mobility programs should not only be passive or theoretical where students remain on a close campus. Most cultural experiences are coming from being present, engaged, and practicing their skills in communities or in the field where students can use and transfer what they have learned in class to contribute to the SDGs.

Keeping in mind the current globalization trend, Barragán Codina & Leal López (2013) mention that higher education institutions need a comprehensive transformation to adequately prepare students to the current internationalization and cultural and social diversity happening across the world. Mobility programs should therefore be an integral component of this process of transforming institutions into a more global and inclusive community. To do this, in the future, mobility programs should also include in their curricula classes on the SDGs and how everyone can contribute to the betterment of our world. Interestingly, because it is often regarded to be under political or social sciences, from my experience, the SDGs are rarely discussed and even less presented to students in natural or life sciences. This may also affect the number of students taking advantages of mobility programs coming from these disciplines, with the exception of doctors, veterinarians and engineers without borders. While there may be several barriers to international mobility for many students (Kehm, 2005), it has many advantages that cannot be denied. Making these programs more accessible and organized in an effective manner can help secure them in the future, especially for countries where they have been seen as an ad hoc activity.

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Parallel Session 3: Assessment of Intercultural Development in Mobility Programs



Assessment of Intercultural Development in Mobility Programs



Introduction

Matthias Barth, Co-director of the Institute for Sustainable development and learning (ISDL) at Leuphana University, Germany, set the objectives for the discussions. The development of intercultural competencies has been widely held as a key value in global learning programs. At the same time, Barth noted that the development of assessment tools is not always regarded as an important element in the design of mobility programs. Understanding this context, Barth invited panelists to share their expertise in designing learning outcomes, developing tools to assess both the short and long-term impact on participants, and ultimately bringing more awareness to the value and need for assessment as part of the learning journey within international mobility programs.

Peter Wells, Chief of the Higher Education Section at UNESCO Headquarters in France, opened the discussions by interrogating the assumptions of international education. He questioned the possibilities of studying abroad and suggests that the value of studying abroad is a difficult question to answer. He thinks that international educational experiences and collaboration are important for students, faculty and researchers but international studies are not for everyone, and there should not be much pressure on some individuals who may not want to experience these abroad opportunities. Drawing from his experience, Wells questioned whether intercultural learning can be quantified or qualified and whether there is a real value to intercultural learning. In particular, he warned that physical mobility programs alone have a limited potential fostering intercultural development and awareness of new cultures. While the connection to intercultural learning experiences to the field of Interna-

tional Affairs is clear, Wells underlined the challenge in defending the value of the intercultural learning experiences and mobility programs to fields of study that are not necessarily international in nature. Finally, Wells acknowledged that physical mobility programs may not be suitable for all learning paths. As a result, avenues for intercultural development should be available at a wider institutional level.

Darla Deardorff, Executive Director of the Association of International Education Administrators, United States, expanded on the topic of developing models for intercultural competencies. For many years, the field of intercultural learning has been holding onto a myth that assumes that simply sending students abroad is sufficient to reach new quantitative and qualitative heights in internationalization. Instead, Deardorff recommends incorporating intercultural competencies within the design of their mobility programs. To this end, Deardorff addresses three key misconceptions in assessing intercultural development:

- Pre and Post Assessment Tools are sufficient to encourage intercultural development;
- Assessment of the mobility programs can be equated to assessment of intercultural learning;
- There exists one-single tool or practice that will address intercultural learning.

Deardorff explained the focus should not be on the assessment tool, as it should on the reasons and needs to assess intercultural development. In addition, it is important to look at the

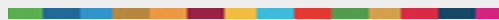
evidence in the literature as well as other perspectives in intercultural development allowing to change the paradigm in assessment. This Paradigmatic Change focuses on intercultural development as a key learning outcome for mobility programs moves beyond immediate results, towards a holistic lifelong journey. The foundation of this approach requires learners to be capable of articulating the meaning and value of intercultural learning. Through meaningful outcome assessments, the learner can become an agent in this learning process. To be effective, these assessments must be tailored to individual learners and must be informed by a holistic account of the personal development of students, emerging from a multiplicity of voices (including self, host families, instructors, peers, and even future employers). As argued in one of the latest UNESCO Reports “Global Citizenship Education: taking it local” (2018), perspectives from the Global South, such as the South African notion of Ubuntu, challenge and displace the dominance of those voices from the North. Thus, the question of assessment of intercultural competencies cannot merely be resolved by the adoption of one best assessment tool. Instead, Deardorff emphasizes that focus should be on qualifying the journey, rather than quantifying the destination.

Heather Williams, Work Integrated Learning: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Project Manager, Simon Fraser University (SFU), Canada, offered similar questions and considerations to those expressed by Deardorff on the value of assessment and lifelong intercultural learning. Her work in designing and assessing intercultural learning in the English Language Learning curriculum for international students seeking employment in Canada is unique in its ability to intentionally weave Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Committee’s Calls to Action into the curriculum and learning outcomes. Williams mentioned the use of Deardorff’s model of intercultural competence to help guide SFU’s learners throughout their ongoing development, as well as aligning the learning outcomes with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) rubric. Since the development of the curriculum, it has been shared with 14 institutions across Canada and has been adopted for professional development for the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) and most recently Colleges and Institute Canada (CICan).

Williams explained how the program has used assessments before and after the completion of the program to qualify the growth in learning and awareness of the key themes amongst the students. With the use of impact assessments, the program administrators were able to identify the top themes that people learned about including reconciliation and allyship. These assessments have served as self-reflexive exercises for students because they can reflect on their own learning. Results have also demonstrated a commitment to lifelong learning, reconciliation, mindfulness, and attention to the emotional aspects of intercultural interactions while building relationships across difference. Williams concluded with a reminder of the importance of constant reflection on the benefits and risks of the assessment practices, to examine potential areas of marginalization, exclusion, and gaps in current global learning programs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

With the use of impact assessments, the program administrators were able to identify the top themes that people learned about including reconciliation and allyship.



Alex Rendon, Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ), Ecuador, Dominique Scheffel-Dunand, York University, and David Huerta Harris, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico reported on their experiences in Virtually Augmented Mobility (also known as Globally Network Learning or Collaborative Online International Learning) programs. These programs (in collaboration with peers across geographical and cultural borders) offer students an opportunity to build 21st Century skills by exploring challenging content such as human rights, diversity, and global forced migration. The presenters framed and situated their experiences within the discussion as a case study of the challenges and successes when operationalizing some of these emergent points and principles. The Virtually Augmented Mobility programs successfully brought together staff, faculty, and students at different levels of their educational trajectories, from three different post-secondary institutions. In forming their Virtually Augmented Mobility program, Rendon and Harris emphasized the experiences of staff and faculty’s preparation alongside those of students. There was a shared determination to understand the impact of participating in collaborative and intercultural networks, in reference to current practices of knowledge production and sharing as well as the emergent propensity for future cross-institutional and intercultural faculty collaborations. Faced with the need to invent new and shared learning outcomes and assessment tools, difficult questions such as “What is meant by intercultural competencies?”, “Who measures them?”, “According to which standards?” suddenly required immediate and tangible responses. Scheffel-Dunand explained how with more conventional methods of data collection such as surveys, focus groups, and sprints, assessment of the student, faculty and staff experience included sentiment analysis. The sentiments and vocabulary used by staff, faculty and students on social media to describe their virtual interactions or even comment on the tools used, were collected to be analyzed in the interest of future scalability.

Conclusion

This panel concluded with a final question posed by Wells about their international learning experiences. The purpose of this question was for each presenter to share their academic and work journeys further solidify the positive benefits of internationalization. Whether from living

in many cities and countries, or to simply experiencing the diversity and culture of a single town at home, these testimonies exemplify the possibilities and effectiveness of internationalization and online mobility programs. Unanimously, this panel of speakers and chair impose the notions of lifelong learning and how institutions can quantify the validity and impact in which these intercultural mobility programs have on students. To return to a story Wells shared, he asks, “If you travel to Greece and you go to see all of the phenomenal history, does that make you a person who understands what Greece is all about?” In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the value and necessity of assessment processes for mobility programs is crucial to of measuring impact and strengthening intercultural competencies within post-secondary education.

Reflections from the Chair and Way Forward

Contributions in the panel clearly pointed out the complexity when it comes to assessing intercultural development in mobility programs. There is no easy answer how to design learning outcomes and how to assess impacts on the learner in a meaningful way and there are many pitfalls to be avoided. The panelists added nuances and insights to the discussion of the value and need for assessment within international mobility programs.

Three underlying themes became obvious in the session’s discussion and conclusion. First, there is a need to acknowledge individual learning experiences in which international and inter-

cultural exposure may happen in many different ways and to different extents. Diversity in such pathways should be considered both in mobility programs and in ways to assess the impact interventions have on the learner. Second, this also holds true for assessment procedures. To acknowledge the diversity on the learners side means to consider different tools and assessment procedures. There is no one fits all solution. Third and finally, a strong impetus was given on the need for lifelong learning. While mobility programs can be strong triggers for intercultural development, they are just one building block out of multiple in the learning journey. Accordingly, support for intercultural development need to take the bigger picture into consideration and to avoid planning in silos.

Based on the discussion of these underlying themes, requirements for ways forward became obvious. To empower students to develop intercultural competencies and being able to positively contribute to the SDGs means to not only assess but to foster learning in a meaningful way. Multiple learning opportunities in mobility programs – but also complemented in regular studies – will increasingly support individual lifelong learning pathways. Additionally, such learning pathways do not only ask for assessment and thus feedback on efficacy and efficiency but much stronger for an evaluation of the learning process. Such an evaluation needs to open up spaces for self-reflection for the learner which in turns will support the learning process. Digitalization will play an important role in all these developments as it offers new ways to experience internationalization and by opening up new ways of evaluation and assessment.



Parallel Session 4: Mobility Programs Beyond Academics: Global and Community Engagement



MOBILITY PROGRAMS
BEYOND ACADEMICS

Global and community engagement

Mobility Programs Beyond Academics:

Global and Community Engagement



Introduction

Community service has been called the Third Mission for Higher Education Institutions. This session focused on how mobility programs contribute to this mission and provided examples of local community and student engagement programs in Dadaab, Kenya, Las Nubes Biological Reserve in Costa Rica, Ethiopia and other international networks. Mobility programs harness transformative knowledge transfer from academia and research to local associations communities in global to local practice. Knowledge, culture and experiential exchange are beneficial to both students and the local community. Some of the many examples outlined by panelists include knowledge exchange with grassroots organizations, visits to local farmers, biological reserves and hospitals taking students outside of the classroom to connect with their local community. However, knowledge ownership and bureaucracy are often a barrier to action. To make community service successful, there must be inclusive and collaborative opportunities to work cohesively with the local community. Unfortunately, access to technological resources and the Internet are not as readily available to developing nations and the COVID-19 pandemic has further limited online learning between university networks and favored those with access to technological resources.

Addise Amado Dube, Head of Development and Communications, Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST), Ethiopia, shared learnings from mobility programs conducted by EGST throughout local communities in Ethiopia to take academia beyond the classroom. He argued that mobility programs mutually enhance stakeholders and is essential to learning, but it

is important to reimagine the approach to education to include community engagement. He highlighted that mobility programs should take students outside of their urban settings and into rural areas that they may have never experienced before so that they [students] can think and act locally.

Mobility programs that offer local community programs benefit knowledge acquisition for local organizations, community members, and students. He noted that although education is essential for critical theories, community service and mobility programs enable comprehensive education and practical application of theories. Within the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, students have experienced community heritage and community life of rural dwellers and practitioners in food, agriculture, gender and health services. In-person student learning inspires further research and enhances knowledge and skills in health, agriculture and community development. Through mobility programs, students are generally encouraged to share their resources in service with the community. He also drew a direct benefit of bringing academia to real-life experiences. Dube challenged the colonization of knowledge. He highlighted that knowledge institutions hold a wealth of knowledge, and it is their responsibility to share knowledge with the local community, but in practice community application is often dismissed.

Ana Maria Martinez, Research Associate, York University, introduced the Las Nubes Project which is an initiative of the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change at York University and is supported by the Fisher Fund for Neotropical Conservation. The Las Nubes Project supports the protection of the bio-

logical, ecological and social values of the Las Nubes Biological Reserve and adjacent areas in southern Costa Rica. She explained that with the arrival of Felipe Montoya, Las Nubes Project Director, the focus is now on contributing to community wellbeing in ways that are conducive to environmental conservation. This is achieved through the three main pillars of research, education, and community engagement. As an example, the Las Nubes Coffee supports coffee production and simultaneously incentivizes sustainable practices such as the shifting from sun-grown coffee to shade-grown, the reduction of agro-chemical use, and the implementation of fair-trade practices. Another project highlighted was the Casita Azul project, where Las Nubes in collaboration with York University's library share their facilities and run a local library and resource center to provide training opportunities and access to technology and books to local students. She highlighted that one of the most impactful changes was the new policy where students had to stay with local families throughout the length of the course, offering students a more immersive experience of day-to-day life in rural Costa Rica. The Las Nubes Project and students also helped organize a festival to create awareness of The Alexander Skutch Biological Corridor and to offer a window into the community's wealth including the national, cultural, scientific, artistic, and agricultural resources. This festival has been kept and continued by the locals and held annually under the name Expo COBAS.

Finally, Martinez highlighted that York University students have demonstrated increased interest and participation in the Las Nubes Semester Abroad Program. She mentioned that a considerable number of undergraduate students, who have taken their courses, were inspired to pursue their graduate studies and some were persuaded to conduct their research at Las Nubes. She emphasized that since its creation in the late 1990s, the Las Nubes project has come to understand that this biological corridor cannot merely be a biophysical canvas upon which agro-ecological techniques are implemented but rather as a space of multiple intersecting and interconnecting layers that influence each other affecting the entire matrix.

Don Dippo, Education Professor at York University and the Co-Director of Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER), focused on the curricular and pedagogical benefits of blended integrated courses between domestic and international classrooms in refugee and displaced zones. He highlighted that his work is part of the universities' third mission to provide access to education for refugees, displaced, and war-affected individuals. The BHER program along with four universities and two NGOs aims to bring education to refugee camps in Dadaab and Kakuma, Kenya. He outlined the case for refugees' education: new knowledge mobilization and contributions to scholarships, community capacity building, improved quality of life and personal growth, development and the capacity to inspire. As part of the program, BHER offers online, blended forums connecting a classroom with a refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya, with his lecture classroom at York University in Toronto. These online pedagogical experiences are beneficial to both classrooms and students as they provide cultural knowledge and facilitate learning experiences that are outside of their current contexts.

Dippo maintained that social change is a common outcome

for the BHER programs and community engagement. He stated that the program had successfully catalyzed graduate students in self-organized efforts at the Dadaab refugee camp to form their research and advocacy organization, and that students' capacity to do research has helped develop their capacity to aspire. He explained that research enables hope, desire and creates goals through systematic approaches. He stressed that without knowledge or mobilization, despair and demotivation are exacerbated. Finally, he reported that the program's impact has multiplied in Canada, where numerous students have progressed their careers to give to local communities in Kenya and conducted advocacy work for refugee education.

Nidhu Jagoda, Masters of Climate Change Student at the University of Waterloo and National Network Coordinator for the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Canada – Youth Chapter, raised the case for internationalization beyond academics and highlighted that the SDGs are based on the premise that they apply to every country equally and the success and end goal for them is linked to the development of others. Jagoda stated that although progress is being made in many areas and places during this decade of action to reach the goals by 2030, the speed of action is not sufficient. She said that the SDGs, the Higher Education Institution (HEI) and the academic mobility programs are aiming to have a big-picture agenda and a common vision, to grow a generation of global citizens, create a global collaboration, and cross-sectional dialogue, with the purpose of building a capacity for research and mobilizing talent. However, in a post-pandemic world, she wondered whether these cosmopolitan ideals behind the mobility programs are still environmentally sustainable and inclusive for certain disadvantaged groups. Jagoda stressed that no single government or institution can take on this work alone, which is why the higher academic institutions can assist by fostering growth and partnerships. She said that "...higher academic institutions and networks can learn, think and act as agents of change and they must go beyond academic internationalization to empower localized action in the communities". Jagoda explained that SDG Networks guide communities to find their own SDG solutions with resources, case studies and tools to support further action. It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic has not slowed down their operation and collaboration. She reported that some of the existing SDG Networks which are gaining traction are Sustainable Development Solutions Network, The Association of Commonwealth Universities, HESI, and University Global Coalition. The projects and initiatives are quite diverse and include everything from educational tools for SDGs, scientific modeling, KPIs and benchmark indicators for Municipalities to track SDGs performance.

Conclusion

Throughout the session, the panelists outlined numerous mobility programs beyond academics to engage in local and global communities. Dippo outlined that The Border-

less Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) program has been dramatically impacted because students have been unable to access in-person learning resources. He outlined an inherent lack of funding even before the pandemic and stated that education is a luxury in fragile and war-torn contexts. Similarly, Dube stated that Ethiopia's online learning had been limited because of connectivity and technological resources. Martinez and Montoya noted that COVID 19 had halted international exchange experiences creating local economic roadblocks community partners who benefit from international tourism and exchange.

However, solidarity has increased among local and international networks to mobilize regardless of travel barriers. Jagoda agreed that although the Internet has evident accessibility and inclusivity issues, global programs have historically operated online and have further reach. Therefore, global networks enable practitioners to organize and work in solidarity.



Plenary Session 3: The Futures of Education



Photo by: KOBU Agency

The Futures of Education

Introduction

Hilligje Van't Land, Chair of this plenary and Secretary-General, International Association of Universities in France, introduced the session by emphasizing that the development of education for sustainable development could only be achieved if the link between internationalization dynamics and sustainable development is strengthened. She highlighted the importance for the universities to engage in the United Nations' (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, while pursuing various activities in teaching and learning, research, and community engagement. She pointed out that there is also a need to better connect to the local, and a need to connect the local to the global. She stated that this initiative is designed as a co-construction project that calls for public engagement in all sectors. The Futures of Education plenary session discussed how higher education needs to examine the post-pandemic world moving forward. It also relates to UNESCO's Futures of Education initiative, launched in September 2019, which aims to rethink education and shape the future. The initiative is catalyzing a global debate on how knowledge, education and learning need to be reimagined in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty, and precarity.

Noah Sobe, Senior Project Officer on the Futures of Education Global Initiative, UNESCO Headquarters in France, Vice President of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) and on-leave Professor of the Cultural Education Policy Studies at Loyola University in Chicago, posed the question: "how do we use knowledge and learning to shape the futures we want for humanity and the planet?" He spoke about the Futures of Education-Learning to Become initiative and how COVID-19 shaped and reshaped this initiative since its inception. He stated that the United Nations, and UNESCO specifically, are engaged in releasing an education initiative almost every generation. The Futures of Education Initiative, as he

explained, is the third after two prior editions released in 1972 and 1996 respectively.

As part of the lessons learned from COVID-19, Sobe mentioned that we have demonstrated to be good at planning, but we do not really integrate crisis management in the planning process that would enable communities and societies to act and not react to the crisis. He said that "this is a really potent powerful moment— many decisions made now in the short-term are going to have significant long-term future shaping consequences". While disruptions by COVID-19 call for building pandemic resilience for the future of education, he cautioned against the assumption that this pandemic resilience would prepare us to face all possible futures. He also mentioned that future disruptions are likely to continue to come from both expected and unexpected angles, and that "COVID has actually been useful in showing us that dramatic change is possible".

Sobe stated that while there could be many other dramatic changes that the Futures of Education has predicted, it shows us that it is imperative, to not only adopt and think of the 2030 Agenda but to look towards a Horizon of 2050 which means to move beyond the SDGs agenda and to think about the world we want to shape. He stated that the latest scientific assessments demonstrate that the scale and implications of climate change are much more severe than anticipated when the SDGs were created. He said that more attention needs to be paid to the scale of technological transformations that are underway (e.g., artificial Intelligence, digitalization and machine learning algorithms) and the implications towards the future. He observed that these technology trends are working their way into more and more areas of human living, bringing great possibilities but also dangers.

Sobe highlighted the contradiction in some of the ideological underpinnings of the SDG model. He pointed out that the SDG model recognizes the inequality and the injustice resulting from

the abuse of natural resources and the current practices of technological and economic development. Nevertheless, the SDG model does not clearly question the continued belief in economic growth as the main driver of development and the notions of development to bring societies within the caring capacity of the planet. He maintained that the key message in the Futures of Education is that our collective capacity to thrive in the coming century is going to require massive collective effort in intense stewardship of the common good, and that education is probably one of the most important global commons and one of the most important pillars and resources for human development on this planet. By considering education as one of the most important global commons (in the order of water, atmosphere and biodiversity), we recognize the diverse knowledge resources of humanity, the collective processes of education at use, and the various types of infrastructure that support learning and knowledge creation. His conclusion suggests the need of thinking about education in the future in addition to thinking about education for the future. Thinking through these two lenses involve different concepts and activities; however, they must be both considered at the same time in order to move from reacting to shaping change.

Tan Sri Dzulkifli bin Abdul Razak, Rector of the International Islamic University, Malaysia, mainly discussed humanizing education through the process of creating a roadmap and a learning ecosystem based on the SDGs in the International Islamic Universities. He stated that this initiative started in 2018 with the need to create a learning ecosystem where academics, staff and students would gather to increase collaboration, project and research development as well as knowledge exchange. Part of this process did not only involve adapting the SDGs in their current form, but they were adapted to suit the local environment in Malaysia and the University's spiritual background. He translated Islamic beliefs in mercy, compassion and humanization to the SDG goals while creating links among the human traditional, cultural, and spiritual practices with the sustainable global goals. Razak stated that the University relied on transformation to move forward and searched for ways to eliminate the silos and leave the comfort zone that can block the moving forward towards sustainability. In consultation with the university community, the University created flagship programs that integrate people, curriculum, pedagogy and make them transdisciplinary to reduce segmentation when sharing and co-creating information. This is known as the Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) where researchers work together during the whole research and innovation process in order to better align both the process and its outcomes with the values, needs and expectations of the community. He also added that online and face-to-face knowledge versatility and blended environment acknowledging are both important. In addition, he mentioned that ethical research, project creation and reflective practices can increase collaboration and have productive and impactful outcomes that would expand knowledge sharing and growth. As part of this, it is important to replace tests as the only form of assessment with summative and formative assessments. He defined ethical research as research that deeply engages in knowing how people in the research are implicated in the process and to do research from a human ethical perspective. He stated that the learning ecosystem created an active and engaged

community of practice where learners and teachers are involved in a dynamic exchange of knowledge. This environment has enabled them to address gaps in research and identify opportunities for further pursuit of knowledge and research.

Tan Sri Razak introduced that this new model or learning ecosystem is known as *Sejahtera Academic Framework*: Humanizing education "*Rahmatan L'l Alameen*" (e.g., mercy to all) which includes all forms of life (human, animal, and the environment). This framework has four components: (1) International, cultural, and experiential learning; (2) High touch community engagement; (3) Responsible research and innovation; and (4) Global relevance and citizenship. With the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19, it is important to consider the topic of wellbeing by building a form of spirituality and value-driven thinking where people can be more resilient when it comes to issues around mental health. He stated that goal of this model is to create a balanced leadership with equitable prosperity, a balanced mind and heart, and the creation of a sustainable ecosystem that looks at inclusivity, ingenuity, and intangibility. He defined this framework as the common platform for collaboration, co-creation and cloning of research practices and knowledge exchange. He stressed the importance of knowing and measuring the impact of knowledge produced on the environment and the value it brings to humanity, not necessarily through key performance indicators, but through qualitative indicators as well. The outcome of this project included the creation of collaborative initiatives within the university and other partners to work on those projects, the creation of a broad value system, the creation of a knowledge management system to document and store the output by students and academics, and the recognition from national and international partners. According to him, this initiative's outcomes and impacts included 300 SDGs proposals to the university as part of the community work, 100+ videos and posters produced, sustainable issues in the university diagnosed and identified, 100+ reflective journals, blogs, and websites, and at least 20 published articles in journals and mass media. Finally, Tan Sri Razak recognized Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing. He stated that there is an assumption that sustainable development is a recent concept that was only developed in the last 30 years, however, this was embedded in the Indigenous cultures hundreds of years ago. Because of this, there is a need to learn from others, from the past to mainstream it into what education ought to be.

Larissa Bezo, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) Canada, spoke about the opportunities and the role that CBIE offers to post-secondary institutions in Canada, specifically for international education. She said that CBIE in the last year provided Post-Secondary Education (PSE) institutions with space and opportunities to connect and negotiate education for sustainable development. She explained that the Canadian education landscape is complex and multilayered because there are several factors involved such as race, gender equity, poverty, health, energy, among others. She thinks that those issues require PSE institutions to commit to the sustainable development agenda since 2015, which requires changes in strategic direction, in mindsets, in institutional culture, strategic direction, in institutional governance and in human resource capacity to allow this meaningful work to unfold. She said that lately, experts in the

fields agreed that the world is at a critical juncture and that when politicians are busy putting up walls, universities should be opening the doors and creating spaces for conversation that can lead to concrete action.

Bezo acknowledged that the challenges of the pandemic have made institutions think much more inward than globally. According to her, it is the time to think about transdisciplinary education, intercultural competencies, and global citizenship education. She said that due to the inability to predict accurately and know the types of jobs the future will bring, institutions are responsible for training and shaping those future leaders on sustainable development. She suggests that institutions should include concrete operational elements that can be embedded in integrating the SDGs into the curricula, providing students not only with the knowledge but also with the skills to address these challenges. Finally, she mentioned that PSE institutions need to have concrete conversations with their local communities about the impact that they can have on the real quality of life in their societies. She called for these institutions to investigate deeply and engage into topics about racism and identity where knowledge is more valued in order to translate the SDGs locally.

Conclusion

The speakers in this plenary session engaged in a discussion on the transformative power of education, espe-

cially higher education, and its societal and economic impact in a post-COVID-19 era. They discussed the challenges and opportunities in adopting the 2030 Agenda and shared the lessons learned from the impact of COVID-19. Education is not anymore tied to economic development exclusively, but also its value and impact on the human and societal levels is a key to progress and sustainable development. On the other hand, the speakers presented different views on what it means by having a human-centered education. Abdul Razak highlighted the importance of sympathy and compassion in the discussions about humanity and integrating these values in the education system. In addition, Bezo stated that in order to create a system of education that is based on empathy and compassion, we first need to address systemic issues (e.g., racism) and engage in real conversations about them at the society and institution levels.

Sobe commented on his suspicion around the term human-centered education because he believes that we should center our relationships with the planet, with technology, with machines and with each other. On this topic, Tan Sri Razak mentioned that we need to start with ourselves and then outwards. He explained that we need to relate the SDGs to ourselves first and then externally. That would be a different approach, he said, from the present one where people talk only about external actions when it is difficult to change our environment when we are not changed.



Parallel Session 5: Inclusive Student Exchanges and Experiences



INCLUSIVE STUDENT EXCHANGES & EXPERIENCES

Inclusive Student Exchanges and Experiences

Introduction

This panel on Inclusive Student Exchanges and Experiences was chaired by Wagaye Johannes, Director of Operations & Organizational Development at Diversity Abroad, United States. She opened the session evoking the centrality of geopolitics and social location in definitions and invited each panelist to capture and explore the term inclusive from their own location and work by stating that “inclusion is a powerful word that demands definition”. The panel also offered an opportunity to think more closely, systemically, and with greater intention about the complex social dimensions and hermeneutics of the integration of calls for Indigeneity, anti-coloniality, anti-racism and anti-imperialism into the project of internationalization. Creating sustainable goals for the future relies on the ability to connect and collaborate across difference. In the words of Heila Lotz-Sisitka, “...it is hard to imagine how we might respond to global changes (e.g., climate change) without human learning across boundaries”. The core belief nested within this statement gives meaning to the overall conference on Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization, and the experience of internationalization and/or outbound mobility. It is a shared belief in the human capacity to experience and critically compare, coupled with an opportunity to think reflexively, and to work collectively, to transform our social realities. Opportunities to experience such possibilities, however, have been restricted to a minority. Profound systemic barriers, both material and intangible, old and new, continue to impact the wider democratization of such processes. Understanding these barriers and exploring how such boundaries may be transgressed is essential in both the context of, and for the purposes of, internationalization.

Students may not be aware of the value. It could also be that students don't care, but what has contributed to them not seeing the value in it? – Diane Barbariĉ

Diane Barbariĉ, Higher Education Public Policy Researcher at the University of Toronto, Canada, focused on the political contours and significance of the use of the expression systemically embedding. The following questions served as her guiding concepts to approach this presentation:

- “How can we enhance and systematically embed the internationalization of higher education Outbound Student Mobility (OSM) in sync with call for Indigeneity, anti-coloniality, anti-racism and anti-imperialism?”; and
- “How do we ensure broader participation and a more inclusive exchange experience?”

She began by describing the Canadian public policy by setting a context, where systemically embedding outbound student mobility would require above all, its reconceptualization as a societal issue. According to Barbariĉ, education is a under the provincial and not the federal level in Canada. Based on her research, she found that only a 17% of documents at a federal level and 4% of documents in Ontario (as a provincial example) over a 30 -year time period advocate for OMS. She suggests that OSM is still imagined and considered as an opportunity for the personal benefit of a few, making it difficult to assess the mean-

ing and impact of inclusivity. The research allowed her to conclude that not many government or private groups advocate for OMS. Therefore, recognizing and articulating its value to the larger community is also paramount to ensuring a broader participation. Barbarič maintained that current individualistic conceptualizations of outbound student mobility, coupled with a general lack of data and advocacy on the part of sectorial constituents, ultimately contribute to a discourse of international mobility experiences as distant and elitist. In the poignant words of an Ontario student representative interviewed by Barbarič: “Students may not be aware of the value. It could also be that students don’t care, but what has contributed to them not seeing the value in it?”.

Anna Veigel, Head, Kulturweit – International Volunteer’s Service, German Commission for UNESCO and the Federal Foreign Office, Berlin, Germany. Veigel started her discussion with similar questions of value and systemic barriers to inclusion. Kulturweit is a program that offers young people the opportunity to get involved in Germany’s foreign culture and education policy by volunteering abroad for 6-12 months. The mission of this organization is based on the premise of mutual understanding and learning while taking each other’s perspective where people work and live together. Veigel recognized that a significant amount of youth who volunteer with Kulturweit come from a privileged background within the German society. Over the years her team has realized that financial barriers are only one aspect of disengagement in internationalization. Kulturweit has identified that an increasing number of students have not been able to see the value of going abroad, and more so, they do not identify with the idea of international experiences. Based on these findings, Veigel posed two key questions: “how do we attract more young people with disabilities and those from a lower socioeconomic background?” and “What changes must be made structurally to ensure broader and inclusive participation?”. Reflecting on these questions, she shared the experience of a volunteer in the program called Tabia, who has inspired and demonstrated the impact of and urgency for change to the internationalization of higher education. As a blind student, Tabia volunteered for 12 months in the Official German School in Santiago de Chile where she was able to share her story, immerse herself in daily activities, lead discussions on inclusion, and even start her own project called Wegweiser (Signpost). Her project and contributions led to the development of audio guides that provide an orientation of the school in both German and Spanish as well as the placement of braille across different rooms. In effect, raising awareness of the meaningful impacts and shared benefits of truly inclusive, accessible, and diverse opportunities for youth, which Veigel highlighted, is a process of real change that Kulturweit is ready to learn from, expand on, and embark upon.

Heila Lotz-Sisitka, Chair of the Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC) at Rhodes University, South Africa, further explored and scrutinized the connections between international mobility, inclusivity and social change. As she demonstrated, in sustainability and environmental education, she believes that the ultimate orientation must always be one of global relevance, while still maintaining contextual reflexivity. To Lotz-Sisitka, inclusivity is thus not only an ethically just

aspiration, but it acquires an additional critical epistemological dimension. She stated that “we need to know enough about each other and how to support empathetic and meaningful, (non-patronizing, colonial and imperializing) global change responses in our own and other contexts.” Inclusivity becomes a measure of the quality and meaningfulness of our cross-boundary interconnections. In the absence of sufficient knowledge of the other, the potential for transformative and transgressive learning embedded in international work across boundaries diminishes. Lotz-Sisitka mentioned that in the field of environmental and sustainability education and research, inclusivity means restoring and renewing those worldviews and cultural legacies which have been overshadowed, marginalized, and even erased by colonial practices. This is synonymous with the struggle against barriers to knowledge production and dissemination that favor the global North. Additionally, working towards inclusivity can also mean working to overcome contemporary patterns of physical exclusion, including right-wing orientations to migration and borders and the unequal regime of visa costs/payments. In the direction of more equitable international exchanges that go beyond predominantly North-South and North-North trends. In her final remarks, Lotz-Sisitka gestured towards incommensurability of presence, leaving the panel with following question: “Are we able to fully see each other and our worlds via the rapid emergence of data cultures? What are we losing and who is gaining what?”.

Kao-Cheng Wang, Vice President of International Affairs at Tamkang University in Taiwan, presented on the Asian Community Leadership Seminar (ACLS) as an example of inclusive approaches to mobility. A three-week program was created in 2016 to extend cooperative networks and enable broader and inclusive participation for students in Ritsumeikan University, Japan, Kyung Hee University, South Korea, and Tamkang University in Taiwan. The operational pedagogy of the project involves project-based, cross-cultural, cooperative and experiential learning. The objectives of ACLS are to offer youth the opportunity to engage with cultural differences, to create peaceful mindsets, and to educate students with future-oriented thoughts. Respectively, each university focuses on one of these goals. In Kyoto, students are encouraged to examine and discuss cross-cultural differences amongst the participating Asian countries. While in Seoul, the focus is on peace studies, including identifying challenges and opportunities that the region faces. For instance, previous topics have included the impact of gender inequality and ageing population. The final week is in Taipei, where students are encouraged to think about the potential of development in Asia and to brainstorm forward-thinking possibilities to achieve these visions. In the interest of expanding and improving ACLS’ goals for broader participation and inclusive practices, evaluations are conducted at the end of the program by the students. Wang’s presentation revealed some of the skills appreciated and gained by the participants, including cooperation skills, innovative thinking, and curiosity towards cultural values. Through an inclusive and sustainable approach, ACLS is structured to give youth an opportunity to discuss important questions of diversity and to share their differences. Wang noted that the program is not running virtually under the COVID-19 context because student participation and the opportunity to learn and live together is crucial to the goals of the ACLS pro-

gram. It is Wang's hope that the program will safely resume soon.

Discussion and Q&A

During the question period, it was revealed some of the complexities to achieve inclusive internationalization during the COVID-19 era. The youth speaker, Christine Marton, asked panelists to reflect on how virtual approaches to education could incorporate the traditional learning and employment opportunities offered by international experiences for students while remaining physically local. All the panelists agreed that digital interactions could not replace personal meetings. Wang, Veigel, and Barbarič recognized that virtual engagement has broadened the possibility of learning and creating networks of solidarity that serve as a complement to physical mobility. However, Lotz-Sisitka noted that a digital divide has deepened exclusive access to internationalization and indicated a need for multidimensional interaction and communication that cannot be solely dependent on e-learning or online platforms. In sum, "there is something about looking into someone's eyes when in their presence, and really getting to know people."

Conclusion

In examining intentionally inclusive student exchanges and experiences, the session demonstrated global setbacks and opportunities. As presented, attaining a sustainable future requires acknowledging the histories of Indigeneity, and the outcomes of colonialism and imperialism that have embedded structural and systemic patterns for the many and privileges for a few. While the COVID-19 pandemic has presented barriers for connectivity, it has also accentuated the need for change and offered a sudden, however, necessary pause for governments, universities, researchers, and students alike to collaboratively re-direct inclusive and accessible international mobility pathways moving forward. This dialectical approach covers essential conversations and perspectives on the differences and tensions in approaches, experiences, and expectations for implementing equitable, conscious, and synergetic internationalization in higher education. It has also given voice to the potential for its success.



Parallel Session 6: Leveraging Technology and Digital Learning: Can We Experience Abroad Online?



LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY & DIGITAL LEARNING

Can we experience “abroad online”?

Leveraging Technology and Digital Learning: Can We Experience Abroad Online?

Introduction

The panel session explored the topic of “Leveraging technology and digital learning: can we experience abroad online?” chaired by Isabelle LeVert-Chiasson, an Education Program Officer with the Canadian Commission to UNESCO. LeVert-Chiasson mentioned the new urgency and meaning given to digital learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mass closures of schools forced institutions and instructors around the world to find ways to adapt to the online learning environment. While online learning environments may be capable of simulating several aspects of in-person learning, there are also immense limitations and challenges. Reflecting on the theme of inclusion, LeVert-Chiasson reminded the panelists that this new age of digital learning was not without its casualties, citing that school closures have left over 1.6 billion children and youth without access to education. In addition, this shift to online learning has greatly impacted traditional internationalization efforts, including physical mobility and experiential learning to foster intercultural awareness and global competencies. Building on these key concepts, panelists share their insights and experiences in digital learning, intercultural learning, and internationalization strategies.

James C. Simeon, Professor at York University, in cooperation with Vania Ramirez Camacho and Itzel Barrera De Diego from Tec de Monterrey, Mexico; and Hugo Muñoz from Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador (USFQ), presented their Globally Networked Learning (GNL) experience. This collaborative and innovative approach brought together 6 different instructors from the 3 universities, engaging at least 150 stu-

dents across multiple countries in one online experience. Ramirez-Camacho said that the project was successful in sharing expectations and objectives, visualizing the ice-breaking activities for the students, and encouraging discussion and research. For Simeon, it was an opportunity for innovation and cross-cultural collaboration for both faculty and students. He noted that the experience pushed faculty to be open to innovative ideas and new ways of teaching and collaboration, whereas for students, it promoted inclusivity and students’ cultural awareness and sensitivity. Therefore, the GNL approach is a proven method by which educational institutions can engage students in a common experiential learning experience that was risk-free, practical and cost-effective due to technology. Based on survey responses shared by Muñoz and Barrera de Diego, 76% students considered that the methods of engagement used in the GNL were effective. Students enjoyed the synchronous icebreaker activities used to establish contact and exchanges with others in real-time alongside expert opinions. For a generation that lives 60% of their lives virtually, Barrera de Diego concluded that the online abroad is a good starting point to start the conversation and spark interest for other groups. In addition, she mentioned that while activities do not allow students to experience the idiosyncrasies of the culture (as it happens in person), they allow learners to interact with other cultures with less obstacles as it would happen in a physical context. Their survey results highlighted that in the future, the universities should aim to encourage more interaction among the students by including more discussion that is inspired by students’ field of study.

Della Burke, Coordinator of Campus Internationalization, ITESO, from the Jesuit University of Guadalajara, Mexico, acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the new strategy of internationalization at ITESO which builds on preexisting internationalization efforts and on increasing new initiatives that aims to provide an internationalization experience to a 100% student-body. This strategy would result in a culture shift that is purposeful, has a small carbon-footprint and it is inclusive and accessible for all students. Burke discussed three major actions that make internationalization equitable: (1) Increase Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) in which on campus and virtual training was provided for staff and internationalization liaisons were delegated from different departments to facilitate more agile interdepartmental communication; (2) Increase courses taught in English by utilizing English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) pedagogy and overall increasing the number of courses taught in English while providing training to instructors. Burke suggested that training and guiding instructors who were interested in using English created more opportunities for collaboration virtually and in-person. By leveraging knowledge in their networks, they brought EMI pedagogy workshops in-house; and (3) Pivots during the pandemic. Burke discussed the programs impacted by the pandemic, and their transition to virtual mediums. As an example, The International Summer Research Program between ITESO and University of Toronto the program pivoted virtually, with Toronto students working on the methodology of research from their homes, while ITESO professors provided information from the field site. According to Burke, these pathways brought about a significant cultural shift; wherein international programs were expanded beyond the summer exchange programs. As a result, she demonstrated that the program has become more purposeful, produced a smaller carbon footprint, and has been more inclusive and accessible for all students. Technology and digital learning are paramount for this integration to take place. Finally, Ms. Burke recommended that participants consider how building on existing resources, while using technology and digital learning tools and methodologies, can expand a campus culture of internationalization. Additionally, best practices, adapted to campus realities, can result in a purposeful, sustainable, and equitable internationalization for all students, and ease the implementation for an internationalization strategy.

“the future is not face to face, future is not online, future is blended education, so we have to go in for the blended education” -Pankaj Mittal.



Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General from the Association of Indian Universities in India, shared her insights on four key challenges experienced by member universities in India during the global pandemic and the shift to online learning. These challenges include addressing the digital divide, building the capacity and the skills for online learning amongst educators, reinforcing experiential learning, and

responding to mental health challenges. Acknowledging that

inequalities amongst students would leave many without access to the tools to participate in an online environment, Mittal recommended institutions to shift their spending from physical infrastructure to digital infrastructure, thereby ensuring equal access to sufficient bandwidth and internet connection. Furthermore, in this shift to online learning, many teachers had to quickly adapt to new technologies, platforms and pedagogies to facilitate online learning. To tackle this challenge, Mittal shared how the Association of Indian Universities had to expand and update its resources to support the teachers, including the launch of various courses. They partnered with organisations to expand the scope of this training and saw success in the improvement of online teaching. Furthermore, ensuring the continuity of experiential opportunities was an important priority for the Association of Indian Universities. To this, Mittal highlighted the use of technological solutions to ensure that internships and placements continued, so that students could have the opportunity to have hands-on learning opportunities. Mittal also underlined the need to respond to the mental health and wellness challenges associated with online education and social isolation. The Association of Indian Universities opened many counselling centers to address the students' needs and launched online cultural programs for students to remain engaged. Finally, the presentation underlined how the shift to online learning has changed the future of internationalization as a whole and that “the future is not face to face, future is not online, future is blended education, so we have to go in for the blended education”.

Mirian Vilela, Director of the Earth Charter Center on Education for Sustainable Development, University for Peace, Costa Rica, addressed the opportunities and limitations of online experience with over 10 years of experience of online learning. According to Vilela, online learning brings people from different spaces and contexts together to exchange experiences and knowledge. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, she noted that the exchange between students was routinely practiced in an in-person setting and evidently limited by geographic proximity. Unencumbered by logistical and financial costs associated with in-person meetings, Vilela demonstrated that online learning experiences have a flexibility that increases the capacity to engage larger and more diverse groups of people in intercultural dialogues. Therefore, she maintains that the online learning space can amplify the capacity to bring together people from various countries, enriching the experiences of students by introducing new approaches and perspectives to their disciplines. Vilela echoed similar challenges from the preceding panelists, including preparing faculty to shift to online teaching and addressing the digital divide. In addition to these challenges, Vilela reflected on the social and cognitive differences between learning in person and online. Online formats, for example, may require more discipline to stay focused and engaged during synchronous activities. In contrast, she stated that learning in the same space can facilitate connections and build community with more ease and less interventions than within an online learning environment. To address these challenges and improve online intercultural experiences, Vilela stressed the importance of flexibility to mitigate institutional stiffness that serves as a barrier to cross-geographical collaboration among institutions across the globe.

Discussion and Q&A

Panelists were asked by participants to further elaborate on digital learning including human connection in online spaces, factors for success, and intercultural development. Vilela spoke to the ownership and presences in online spaces, in relation to the human connection, saying that “In a physical space, you aren’t invisible. You have a sense of belonging to the process, rather than behind the scenes in a passive way.” The presenters agreed that institutional support is a necessary factor in the success of online learning, whether to facilitate partnership-building or to provide resources or overall support in the development and design of online learning experiences. Simeon also recommended that all instructors need to be open, and listen to their colleagues, in order for the program to succeed. In addressing intercultural development amongst the students, Barrera de Diego shared that using this comparative view of academic concepts gave the students the opportunity to explore the social, cultural, and political histories that contribute to intercultural learning and a deeper understanding of a global context of the course material.

Conclusion

From the various contexts, each panelist provided insights into new ways of supporting faculty and students, leverage digital tools, and create online learning communities. These digital communities have great potential to transcend borders and barriers to participation and encourage intercultural learning, ultimately creating a more inclusive approach to internationalization. However, the

panelists recognized that digital learning has various challenges. Institutions and instructors must continue to find ways to create interpersonal connections, mitigate the digital divide and engage students. Nevertheless, lessons gleaned from this panel session demonstrated a common understanding that COVID-19 has irrevocably changed the face of education, inviting practitioners to reimagine pedagogical approaches to address the benefits and limitations of both in-person and online learning.

Reflections from the Chair and Way Forward

The pandemic has significantly altered learning systems around the world. With school closures, educational institutions had to quickly come up with distance learning solutions. This panel explored how to create inclusive online experiential learning experiences, the challenges of online learning, and the support that both educators and students need to ensure a collaborative and positive online experience.

The future of education will without a doubt include some dimensions of digital learning and technology. Yet to create student-centered learning experiences, educators cannot teach online using the same methods applied inside a classroom. Innovative and open pedagogy such as collaborative international learning experiences can allow students to address real-live global problems from their local community. With proper institutional supports, educators can learn how to best leverage technology for the benefits of students. Let’s also not forget that online learning will never replace real life learning experiences, but it may help fill some gaps.



V. Select Papers on Key Issues and Topics Discussed at the Conference

Globally Networking Learning (GNL) on Refugees and Forced Migration Through Innovative Collaborative Pedagogy in Mexico, Ecuador, and Canada

James C. Simeon, Hugo Washington Cahueñas Muñoz, Itzel Barrera De Diego, and Vania Ramírez Camacho



Photo by Josep Martins

Globally Networking Learning (GNL) on

Refugees and Forced Migration Through Innovative Collaborative Pedagogy in Mexico, Ecuador, and Canada

Amid a pandemic, can we experience abroad online? York University and Tec de Monterrey have a reason to believe so. Keep reading to know why.



The Context

This Globally Networking Learning (GNL) experience was brought together in August 2020 per the initiative of the York International's GNL Initiative at York University and involved York University (Canada), Universidad San Francisco de Quito (Ecuador) and Tecnológico de Monterrey (Mexico). The courses of the three institutions were very different but did share the main axis of talking about diverse international people having to adapt to an unknown international context.

This GNL course came together several months after the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic “lockdown” of higher educational institutions across the globe. Students enjoyed the opportunity to work with students from other countries and cultures on the subject matter cited above, that is international by its very nature.

The Logistics

Faculty partners had to grapple with three different course schedules, structures, and time zones. One main digital tool that facilitated faculty members to create a collaborative environment was the web platform. The GNL web platform best suited our needs by providing easy access for both faculty and students without having to install any specific software.

The Experience

To facilitate the learning process, the GNL must be oriented to maximizing student learning. It must engage each of the students and sustain their interest and curiosity throughout the course or instructional session.

Accordingly, the GNL partners sought to incorporate both synchronous and asynchronous modes of online instruction. Students were assigned to work in international teams and were introduced to each other with a request to read and to watch relevant, but reasonably short, readings and videos on the central concepts and concerns regarding those who are seeking international protection from those persons in their countries of origin who are persecuting them.

After formulating their international work team's response to one of several assigned questions, the student work teams (comprised of students from Mexico, Ecuador, and Canada) must post their responses on the GNL course website Padlet. After doing so, the student international work teams were then assigned to comment on two other work teams' contributions on the Padlet.

These exercises were preceded by a guest speaker's lecture/conference that allowed students to hear a presentation on a rel-

evant topic from a noted expert in the field. Thus far, we have had one guest speaker from Mexico and another from Ecuador.

What Students Thought

Around 72% of the students responded to a final survey. The survey was sent out to 145 students who had participated in a one/two-week online learning collaboration. One of the challenges was to integrate the GNL with the regular courses. Fortunately, 89% of the answers show that GNL was well integrated into their regular course. Moreover, 76% of the students would like to participate in a GNL again; and 85% would recommend other students to participate in a GNL experience.

What We Learnt

The internationalization of students is a trend that has grown exponentially in recent years, but internationalization, so far, has concentrated in the elite of some countries. COVID-19 transformation from an epidemic to a pandemic within a year, the exclusive costs of going abroad resulting in entire social classes exclusion, alongside structural circumstances that prevent all students' participation (namely, the English language proficiency) could all be alleviated by using online tools.

However, even though we can experience study abroad online, it is no substitute for the physical experience. We need to make sure that physical mobility is available for all. Our GNL was a starting point for students to see the benefits of global peer connections. It is up to our institutions to follow through on their students' aspirations.

Finally, considering some survey comments, in future GNL courses, we should be open to encouraging more work team interaction, including more discussion within their work teams

and on the students' fields of study during the initial Icebreaker exercise.

Final Advice

- Make sure to understand the curriculum needs of your partner. An embedded GNL is key to success, to student engagement and to educators' appreciation of the GNL as an added value to their course.
- Prepare both synchronous and asynchronous activities. Make sure students have access to a common platform to review previous support materials so you make sure they all come with a baseline knowledge, regardless of their unavoidable diverse background.
- Be certain that students find themselves comfortable in the GNL working language. Refraining from participation can be pinned to language limitations rather than disinterest from the subjects.
- Be mindful that online conference time runs differently. Keep the conferences short, the Q&A section brief and controlled and the synchronous meet and greet session the one to have the most time dedicated. This is where the students find the true added value of a GNL.



Academic and Professional Mobility and its Transformative Potential

Brittany Foutz and Brian Polkinghorn



Photo by Josep Martins

Academic and Professional Mobility and its Transformative Potential

Abstract

With the development of exchange mechanisms, periods of mobility abroad have become frequent, sometimes unavoidable, in the school curriculum of a student. Taking the form of semesters of study in a foreign university or work placements for higher education students, the skills acquired during these immersion phases, both linguistically and technically, and in terms of know-how, are undeniable and valued by numerous research works. In this paper, we will review the impact of international exchanges on the professional integration of students. We are interested in the academic and professional gain linked to the international mobility that organizations, such as Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) locations, can offer to college students. We propose, in our research, to examine the construction and contribution of the opportunities that these RCE locations can offer to students, in terms of academic, professional and social development. This study will highlight RCE Salisbury, of which is hosted by the organization the Bosserman Center of Conflict Resolution, as a case study.

Introduction

As is known, since ancient times, traveling and discovering new cultures was an experiential way of acquiring new knowledge. The registration of student mobility has been carried out since Roman times when the best students traveled to Athens or Alexandria to acquire knowledge because in their place of origin it was scarce. The phrase “travels illustrate ... the enlightened one” (unknown author) was frequently used during the Renais-

sance era, because the exploration of the New World represented an inexhaustible vein of knowledge where different cultures contributed from their different socioeconomic areas. The benefits that this way of acquiring knowledge brought was regulated and legalized until modern times, when educational treaties emerged. In the last three decades, student mobility in emerging countries has developed, observing displacement of students to developed countries due to: economic status, hegemony of the English language and sources of financing for higher education. Various organizations have also been founded to promote international student mobility. In labor practice, a phenomenon has emerged called the “brain drain”, where emerging countries encourage and finance their students for international mobility and developed countries employ them. All this panorama teaches us that international education mobility has become an increasingly greater topic and area of concern.

In the last decade, the school context has been affected by profound changes expressed with targeted choices that have placed the international dimension at the center of the university courses and with international mobility as a youth employability improvement strategy. In recent years, educating for global and intercultural citizenship seems to be the priority objective of the educational institutions that aim for the training of competent and competitive people in the labor force. In the orbit of the internationalization of economies, the opening of channels for mobility is considered essential for the dissemination of knowledge to the interaction of cultures and socioeconomic development. Mobility provides new opportunities for personal and professional development, being of capital importance between disadvantaged social groups, for example, in the case of the young population. Changes in the structure of the labor market

have forced this group not only to develop and train skills in tune with labor demands, but also to have a network of contacts that promote their access to employment. This exacerbates the need to emphasize in those training processes that can have a positive impact on their employability.

Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development

In 2003, in response to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD), the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) launched a global multi-stakeholder network of Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD (RCEs). RCEs facilitate multi-sector collaboration and utilize formal, non-formal, and informal education to address sustainable development challenges in local and regional communities. In essence, RCEs are a tool for transformation to a more sustainable society, combining education and action for sustainable development.

As we enter the new “ESD for 2030” decade, RCEs will continue to construct platforms for cross-sectoral dialogue between regional stakeholders and actors to promote and strengthen ESD at the local level. RCEs have committed to helping advance the five priority areas of action established in the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD and the new UN decade “ESD for 2030”: advancing policy by mainstreaming ESD; transforming learning and training environments using whole-institution approaches; building capacities of educators and trainers; empowering and mobilizing youth; and accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level.

RCEs are uniquely positioned to serve as shepherds in the realization of the new “ESD for 2030” decade. As of January 2019, 174 RCEs have officially been acknowledged by United Nations University worldwide, with eight RCEs in the United States (US): Georgetown, South Carolina; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Greater Atlanta, Georgia; Greater Burlington, Vermont; Greater Portland, Oregon; North Texas, Texas; Salisbury, Maryland, and Shenandoah Valley, Virginia. These efforts are particularly poignant in the US, given that the nation is no longer a Member State of UNESCO. With the onus of responsibility now on civil society, US RCEs serve an essential role in the achievement of “ESD for 2030” goals by translating its global objectives into local contexts of their communities.

RCE Salisbury

RCEs in the US are working on innovative ways to make the Global Goals real within their communities but also promote mobility learning at home. RCE Salisbury, located in Salisbury, Maryland (US), housed within the nonprofit the Bosserman Center for Conflict Resolution, specializes in conflict prevention and creative problem solving, and is the only RCE that is designated with this area of expertise in the world. At RCE Salisbury, the promotion of mobility learning is done at the Center to provide many avenues of practical experience for students there and from other parts of the world. RCE Salisbury can take students beyond theoretical knowledge transmitted by books and through academia, and can facilitate and accelerate the acquisition of

knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for employability today. As an RCE, the Bosserman Center is part of a network along with the other locations, able to share expertise and work together on large projects, not only in the U.S., but around the world. When fostering student research, RCE Salisbury specifically focuses on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 Quality Education; 13 Climate Action; and 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, of which addresses the core needs in the region such as disparate access to educational opportunities, the disproportionate impact of climate change, especially in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and more generally the need to bolster local institutions so as to improve access to justice and build peaceful communities. Thus, RCE Salisbury essentially acts as the bridge to move knowledge to and from the community and university.

RCE Salisbury has become the sandbox where students can engage in major grant research; ongoing undergraduate and graduate education; and innovative and impactful training at the local, national, and international levels, especially in ESD. This is where capacity has been built to promote mobility learning to provide many avenues of practical experience for students in the region and from other parts of the world. Evidence of RCE Salisbury’s experience with SDGs 4, 13, and 16 and international mobility can be seen through extensive practitioner experience in service, training, workshops, and academia in the RCE Salisbury region. One example of these experiences is a current research project being conducted by one of RCE Salisbury’s research fellows from India who is virtually examining the evolution of Environmental Education (EE) and Conflict Resolution (CR) in India, but also the presentation of local environmental conflict and injustice issues in India’s EE and CR curriculums. Here at RCE Salisbury, students are able to engage in not only in-person but virtual research exchanges with one of the leaders in the field of CR.

Is it necessary, then, to extend mobility beyond academics and travel to another country to conduct research, when one can stay home at home and conduct virtual research, such as what many of the research fellows are already engaged in at RCE Salisbury? Staying at home, one can certainly reduce their ecological and carbon footprint. At RCE Salisbury, students are able to find the skills that they would already develop while going abroad, such as intercultural skills and being ready for the global market. Student mobility programs have traditionally allowed students to enter in contact with different cultures and institutions, where they can acquire not only professional but, also, intercultural skills. This has helped students to become more autonomous and independent, as it stimulates the need to identify useful strategies to adapt to an unfamiliar context, mobilizing all cognitive, emotional and functional relational resources to achieve study and personal growth objectives. At RCE Salisbury, research fellows are engaged with other fellows from all over the world on writing the curriculum for various training programs, conference presentations, book research, and much more. Furthermore, students are worked with to enrich themselves and prepare for an increasingly global job market.

Conclusion

Not every student who intends to engage in international research must travel to their destination via airplane, which is a significant source of greenhouse gases. RCE locations bring together educational institutions, governments, businesses, and other organizations, whether local, national, or international to advance sustainability education. These individuals can come together worldwide to work together and share experiences and challenges of projects on biodiversity, sustainable consumption and production, climate change, engaging youth, promoting higher education, and much more. These are valuable contributions that can promote sustainability, increase awareness of ESD, and accelerate collaboration and collective impact.

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International Collaboration and the Problem of Teaching in Authoritarian Countries

Richard Kool



Photo by Josep Martins

International Collaboration and the Problem of Teaching in Authoritarian Countries

In this paper, I want to examine one component of international cooperation in higher education; the risk to faculty members teaching particular kinds of subject matter in institutions located within authoritarian regimes—and consider how higher education institutions might address this issue.



Background

Since 2014, I have taught a course, *Leadership and Sustainable Development*, in the Master of Arts in Environment and Management (MEM) program that the School of Environment and Sustainability of Royal Roads University offers in China to Chinese students through the Tianjin University of Technology.

Over my three trips to China (2014, 2016, 2018) I have seen increasing control exerted by the Communist Party of China (CPC) over many aspects of life there, and the increasing influence of the CPC in post-secondary education. I was aware of, for example, [Document 9](#), *Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere*, which was released in September 2013 (Buckley, 2013; Li, 2013): “the Party leadership was being urged to guard against seven political *perils*” which include, for example:

- Promoting Western Constitutional Democracy: An attempt to undermine the current leadership and the socialism with Chinese characteristics system of governance
- Promoting “universal values” in an attempt to weaken the theoretical foundations of the Party’s leadership
- Promoting civil society in an attempt to dismantle the ruling party’s social foundation

(Document 9: A ChinaFile Translation: How Much Is a Hardline Party Directive Shaping China’s Current Political Climate?, 2013)

As the rule of the CPC under President Xi Jinping seemed to tighten, I found, for example, that some of my translators seemed uncomfortable translating when I spoke about topics like “courageous followership” or “power”. By 2018, I was spending hours with Google Translate providing more and more of my PowerPoint slides and videoclips with both English and Chinese text so that I could be sure (to some extent at least) that I wasn’t being censored by the translator.

When two Canadians, businessman Michael Spavor and former diplomat Michael Kovrig, were arrested and incarcerated in December 2018 a few months after I had returned to Canada, I wondered about my safety if I returned to China to teach in 2020. Those concerns were highlighted in December 2019, when The New York Times reported on the “growing number of “student information officers” who keep tabs on their professors’ ideological views [...] to help root out teachers who show any sign of disloyalty to President Xi Jinping and the ruling Communist Party” (Hernández, 2019). I wondered if it was dangerous to teach a course on leadership inside a dictatorship.

In June 2020, the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong provoked the central government to promulgate a new National Security Law: “The four major offenses in the law — sepa-

ratism, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign countries — are ambiguously worded and give the authorities extensive power to target activists who criticize the party, activists say” (Hernández, 2020). These new laws were announced at a time when, were it not for the COVID-19 ban on travel, I would have been in China teaching about leadership at a time when those actually demonstrating leadership were being jailed. Had I been teaching then, should I have been extra-cautious given the nature of the course I was teaching? Would it have made sense to self-censor so as to not potentially offend the official dogma and thus keep myself safe?

The Question

This whole experience left me wondering about the enterprise of western universities offering academic programs in potentially risky political contexts. My concerns were not about China in particular, but instead related to the question: *should, in the context of internationalization of higher education, universities be sending faculty to countries with weak academic freedom/freedom of expression statutes, or into situations where their academic freedom to teach without worry as to the political/legal implications of what they are saying may be compromised, and where the free and open expression of course content may put the faculty member at risk?*

This can be broadened even further, going beyond a concern for the content of a particular instructor’s course, to: *should institutions of higher education be formally involved in political jurisdictions where faculty might be at risk because of their political views, personal history, gender, sexual orientation or identity, or religious or ethnic identity?*

I am concerned in this paper with the establishment of overseas partnerships for *in-country student education*, i.e., offering programs in a country for students from that country. I do not address the issue of international students coming to Canada, of Canadian students taking educational excursions overseas, or of faculty wishing to carry out research overseas.

The Problem

Over past decades, universities in North America and Europe have had an increasing presence in developing countries and those with rapidly growing economies but without a fully developed higher education system. While many universities have worked hard to attract foreign students to come to them, a smaller number have gone to host countries and set up “satellite programs” to educate in-country students “at home.” As a result, a number of university faculty are spending time living and teaching students in countries with political systems that range from “free” to “unfree” (i.e., authoritarian and dictatorial) (Freedom House, 2020).

I find it interesting that the UN’s SDG4, which calls on nations to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, doesn’t tie the provision of “quality education” to the necessity of academic staff having the freedom to teach and carry out research in a way congruent with widely accepted understandings of academic freedom. In a recent paper which examines “the ways in which higher education can help to achieve and exceed the out-

comes enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals”, the authors note that their evidence “shows that limited academic freedom and institutional autonomy impede the full realisation of the potential of higher education” [to achieve those developmental goals] (Chankseliani et al., 2020, p. 109).

What is worrying to me is that a number of universities have created partnerships and opened campuses in countries run by authoritarian and even dictatorial government and where those partner institutions may offer seriously “limited academic freedom”. For example, and based on the limited information available (List of American universities and colleges abroad, 2020, Dec 7), 54 US universities have overseas campuses in places other than western Europe: while 21 of those campuses are in “free” countries (39%), 13 are in “partly free” (24%) and 20 are in “not free” (37%) countries (Freedom House, 2020).

Academic staff who travel to and work in partly to fully authoritarian contexts operate in and accommodate to a far less-permissive academic environment than where their home institutions are located. This less-permissive environment may not be a problem for those faculty members working in the natural and applied sciences; however, academics from liberal democracies who work in the arts, humanities or social sciences are often dependent on the protections offered by 1) a shared understanding of academic freedom, 2) by contractual / collective agreements defining and protecting members academic freedom, or 3) by the law and legal precedents (Robinson, 2019). These protections are not present in dictatorships.

In response to the risk posed by authoritarian governments to foreign academics who might engage in speech normally not permitted in those states, some universities working in places such as China have incorporated academic freedom language in their various partnership agreements.

Most U.S. universities we reviewed include provisions in written agreements with their Chinese partners or other policies intended to uphold academic freedom or U.S. academic standards... Most universities we reviewed include language in their written agreements or other policies that either embody a protection of academic freedom or indicate that the institution in China will adhere to academic standards commensurate with those at their U.S. campus (United States Government Accountability Office, 2016, pp. 15-16).

There is no evidence, however, that the agreements signed by these institutions for example, would be of any value were an American academic to be detained for violations of the China’s laws against certain kinds of speech. For example, the recent tension between the US and China have led to potential risks to American academics:

Beijing has threatened to arrest American academics in retaliation for the prosecution of Chinese scientists charged with US visa offences, it has been claimed. Chinese officials have made repeated threats through multiple channels, including the American embassy in Beijing, according to unnamed US government sources cited by The Wall Street Journal. The officials are demanding that the US drop legal proceedings against several Chinese scholars begun in the past few months. Beijing has adopted similar tactics against other governments that displease it in a growing atmosphere of hostility with the West. (Parry, 2020)

In the 2016 report cited above, the authors state: “Several faculty members who had also taught at Chinese

universities not affiliated with a U.S. university noted that students and teachers could not talk as freely at the Chinese university, with one faculty member noting he had specifically been told not to discuss certain subjects while at the Chinese university". (p. 20)

There are three topics that most foreign faculty learn, one way or another, not to talk about in China: Tibet, Taiwan, and Tiananmen (referring to the death of perhaps hundreds of Chinese students and workers in and around Tiananmen Square in June 1989) (Das, 2019).

Faculty members teaching in more authoritarian contexts, and their in-country students, may experience academic restriction such as:

- The inability to access academic resources through institution libraries and the open internet
- The perceived necessity of self-censorship, resulting in a narrowing of what might be taught and thus the modification of course content to keep within permissible boundaries
- The acceptance of racist, sexist or discriminatory behaviors in the classroom e.g., women sitting at the back or not being allowed to speak

Institutions from democracies operating in authoritarian countries may feel also pressured to restrict which faculty members are permitted to teach in their off-shore programs by virtue of their gender, age, religion, political or sexual orientation etc.

Engaging in the work of teaching and research can be difficult or even dangerous when one approaches the boundaries of any authoritarian government's political or intellectual tolerance. In some countries that universities from liberal democracies are now engaged with, the space for open inquiry is shrinking (Furstenberg et al., 2020) (e.g., Turkey has had a recent 31point decline in aggregate Freedom House score; Venezuela had a 23 point decline had a 23 point decline (Buyon et al., 2020, p. 14). To safely operate in those "partly free" spaces may necessitate some careful self-censoring by individual teachers; to teach in "not free" countries may nearly always require some self-censorship.

Possible Guidelines for Decision-Making

I believe that any Canadian university should have guidelines that govern how decisions are made regarding that institution's collaboration with off-shore higher-education institution, especially when those institutions are located in authoritarian regimes. These guidelines should be both demonstrations of a university's commitment to supporting democratic institutions and values, and of their commitment to individual faculty members' safety by not asking them to expose themselves to risks they might incur as they carry out their assigned tasks in a less-permissive political context. At the same time, institutional concern for equity, inclusion and diversity, often expressed in collective agreements or university policies, should also help to inform choices of international academic partnerships.

I propose using two credible tools for helping to determine which countries a university a) should or should not be engaged

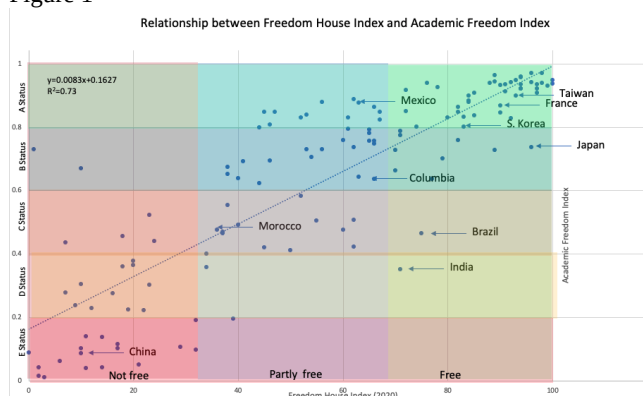
with in terms of offering in-country programming; or b) should send faculty members to teach in academic programs.

Freedom House (2020) is a Washington DC-based non-partisan organization created in 1941 that "is founded on the core conviction that freedom flourishes in democratic nations where governments are accountable to their people." Since 1973, it has produced an annual report, *Freedom in the World* (Freedom House, 2020) based on a set of social science indicators— electoral process, political pluralism and participation, the functioning of the government, freedom of expression and of belief, associational and organizational rights, the rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights— to rank countries as either free, partly free or not free. Freedom House Rankings (FHR) are widely used in political science research and correlate highly with other measures of democracy (Buyon et al., 2020).

The relationship between free, partly free and not free countries and the ability to teach without fear of retribution is well-demonstrated in an analysis using the Academic Freedom Index (AFI) (Grimm & Saliba, 2017; Kinzelbach et al., 2020) created by the Global Public Policy Institute in Berlin (<https://www.gppi.net/>). This index uses a variety of approaches (event data, expert surveys and large-number questionnaires) to examine three dimensions of academic freedom; personal, legal and economic (Grimm & Saliba, 2017).

The relationship between the Freedom House scores and the AFI is very clear (See Figure 1): there is little academic freedom in *not free* societies.

Figure 1



Even more striking is a comparison of the means of the two indices when the data set is split into two equal-sized groups (Table 1). The AFI means of the *not free* countries indicate that there is little academic freedom in those contexts, and any professor teaching there takes a risk when they stray, intentionally or not, away from what is acceptable to the regime in power.

Table 1

	Mean Low half	Mean High half	statistic
FHR (range from 0-100)	33 (unfree)	79 (free)	$t=-13.35$, $p<.0001$
AFI (range from 0-1)	.39 (D status or less)	.87 (A status)	$t=-16.25$, $p<.0001$

While there are many different considerations that would go

into the formation of academic relationships with foreign institutions and governments, the risks to faculty as outlined above need to be given serious consideration, as should the moral risks to any institution running programs in collaboration with repressive regimes.

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VI. Moving Forward

“Words Make Worlds”

Pablo Idahosa



Photo by: Robert Keane

When an academic or policy-orientated conference is said to produce more questions than answers, it can sometimes be understood in at least two ways. Either the conference themes, papers/presentations and discussions lacked direction and sufficient cogency; or, that the generative richness of the themes, ideas and initiatives engendered demands for more deliberation, providing resources for more substantive discussions to operationalize possibilities into practicable, but also, hopefully ethically and equity orientated outcomes.

The latter was provided through plenaries, presenters and interlocutors; an array of ideas, practices, and possible ways to bridge theory to practice and policy by academics, students, practitioners and institutional policy-makers who addressed or tackled a re-thinking of the shifting understandings of forms of international exchanges and mobilities, prior to and through the many logistical constraints set by COVID-19. Theoretical, conceptual, communicative and experientially first-hand, descriptive case illustrations through different mediums and platforms presented a timely moment to reflect equally upon some of the constraints along with the successes of certain existing practices faced during COVID-19. The conference imagined mobilities and exchanges beyond always uncertain futures, which COVID-19 has underscored and exacerbated, especially, but not only, the inequalities built into various exclusions that many students might experience. From an inclusive, equity or access standpoint, not all participation in mobilities and exchanges are equal. Exchanges between, and mobilities for, academics and those who administratively represent institutions are qualitatively not the same as these between students. For students exchanges might mean real mobility to another place, not just online “exchanges”, and which might be a one off, or for whom they might be a steppingstone to many other mobile, exchange and even research and career opportunities.

Without addressing all these ideas and practices, among the

various equity constituencies recognized through which some operated, were refugees, the rural poor, marginalized women, indigenous, racial and ethnic minorities, and many poorer students displaced from, or having diminished access to, educational resources and institutions under COVID-19. Also recognized among the mixed and unequal experiences of COVID-19 were some of the unevenly distributed regional exchange initiatives; the sometimes unequal collaborative exchanges between some universities in the global north and global south; and deepening digital divides, one of which was identified through the more affluent beneficiaries of exchanges, mobilities and online capacities. Some of this was spread somewhat (though not always) evenly throughout conference’s themes. However unevenly, it also tried to ensure that various voices from all world regions were represented. Europe and North America were disproportionately represented, as were, obviously, countries that spoke in English, or people who had some familiarity with it. As York is home to a bilingual Campus, Glendon, French was another language that people used to communicate.

However, distilling key recommendations from such a conference that was a complex and wide-ranging compendium of ideas and initiatives is no small task, even through the lens of ostensibly measurable goals of inclusion and sustainability, and in particular the aspirational and laudable 2030 *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), and notwithstanding the 169 targets within the indivisible set 17! (Not without contradiction, one participant noted in critically addressing the goals and claims of the SDGs. Some ask for sustainable environmental goals yet assume growth models where environmental concerns are exogenous. Also, much of the commentary of some of the participants made little reference to conference keywords, which were more descriptively alluded to more than explicitly analytically integrated. For the record, equity and inequality considerations can be found in SDGs 1-5 and 8). Further, despite the acknowledgment of the need for the specificity of diversity, the

same terms of reference are also eminently contestable, even conceptually ambiguous. In the broadest moralistic sense, most desire some tacit notion of what inclusion and sustainability are, and ethically do right by them in the context of practices that might constitute practicable policy for institutional direction, rather than having to buzzword vagueness, which invocations to both inclusivity and sustainability can (and often have) become.

To be inclusive implies trying to bring resources to those who might suffer from multiple intersectional disadvantages across a specific or a wide range of social and, of course, educational *exclusions*, whether as choices or rights – who can do what, and what are they not getting that they are entitled or have a right to? To be sustainable implies to make something both viable in that what is enacted has the resources to be maintained over time, and which is – this sustainability – consonant with the goals of the SDGs, including what is environmentally sustainable. If the conference also sought to highlight how inclusion and sustainability might be re-drawn for universities and institutions of higher education in times of uncertainty, and during a time of questioning the value of certain kinds of mobilities, then the ethical pulse in these practices could not be more relevant, not only for the host institution, York University, but for that matter any institution of higher learning. York itself has mapped across, or illustrates in its academic plans and in some of its strategic practices, a highlighting of particular commitments to strategic goals of internationalization within the wider, though not always specified, responsibilities to inclusivity and sustainability and the institutional obligations to the SDGs across peoples, knowledge and places at and around the university.

If equity and inclusion in education have become central to the responsibilities to SDGs and for UNESCO, then most apposite here for York appears to be upholding the SDG development pledge or promotion for an equivalence of the notion of a shared educational prosperity, analogous to “no one getting left behind”. Might this be an internal policy with regards to mobilities, and how could this actually not just be mapped, but commissioned into concrete practices for those who may not have historically been given opportunities to engage in mobilities and exchange, and thus sustainable in both senses?

In being analogous here, inclusive *development* implies ensuring that the socioeconomic benefits of economic growth are not concentrated among society’s wealthy or privileged, but rather are shared in general by all people. Is this singular human development norm and metaphor for the inclusive side to material and economic inclusivity an appropriate analogue to the ethical and practical considerations for equitable inclusion and the understanding and recognition of others in everyday life, and to which education plays such a central role? If so, it implies both a measurement and identification of ways in which to remove institutional barriers through encouraging and providing opportunities and resources to increase the access of various groups to development opportunities (Silver, 2015). It is surely one part of an animating purpose of any educational and cultural exchanges and *who* gets to move, or not, and participate in them—indeed, one of the overarching themes of the conference.

The relevance of the 2030 Agenda here, then, lies in persis-

tent unequal distributions of resources and opportunities, especially among those considered to be systemically excluded because of inequalities across, among others, “gender, remoteness, wealth, disability, ethnicity, language, migration, displacement, incarceration, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, and other beliefs and attitudes” (UNESCO, 2020: 6). As pointed out at the conference, this is often *not* the case in regards to exchange mobilities of whatever kind, where it is generally those with resources and/or ambition who commonly get to be the beneficiaries of them.

It remains, however, that inclusion, like considerations of excellence and equity, or respectively academic merit and social justice, does not always coincide with the mandates of universities, even when often claiming both for their visioning remits. Social justice and fairness in relation to, for example, academic excellence, are institutional norms not always so easily squared, but which York and other universities claim to aspire to. Even when purposively employed, inclusion itself within broader academic demands can be located between both reservation and/or displacement and even outright invisibility and erasure, especially when considerations of individual, instrumental student educational goals of (self) advancement are seen as paramount.

Like its sustainable and developmental buzzword cognates, inclusive can gain its normative resonance, traction and power through a moral evocation with traits that are often, at best, obliquely ill-defined, and where they encompass many possible meanings (Cornwall, 2007). They can imply different worlds, but they can also be equally veiled in lofty vagueness. To combine inclusivity with sustainability means to ask the question, sustainable for whom? It is not enough to committing to the broad parameters of, for example, social justice mobilities. Universities need to come up with an evaluative process that can serve policy in rethinking the nature of the relationship between mobilities/exchanges and partnerships. If evaluative devices do not always make good policy, policy cannot do without them.

What might be required, like a carbon audit, is a systematic review that measures mobilities for whom and for what? Unlike the tendency to have exchanges with sites that are financially value added, and which become budgetary entries without which universities cannot function, or constantly needs funding from outside sources for, what would one evaluate the content of the learning experience of the ostensive cultural and symbolic capital that students derive from their cultural literacies that are part of the normative justification of internationalization?

When reassessing mobilities induced by COVID, or in looking at new ways to harness technologies of access, an inclusively sustainable policy on mobility might establish genuinely ethical niches in worlds of academic mobilities. Through privileging equity considerations a university can inscribe spaces for those on both sides of the mobility exchange that are genuinely equal in how they are practiced and represented. While in principle striving for universalism of access, it can acknowledge advocacy of those facing specific and often systematic barriers others do not face. Some forms of mobility and contact remain less “an extravagance, but a basic necessity” that for many can be an underrepresented impossibility. Words not only make

worlds; equitable practice make them meaningful possibilities to those excluded from them.

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Special Youth Contribution

Althea Reyes and Humayra Safa



Humayra Safa and Althea Reyes, York University undergraduate students and participants in the Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization Virtual Conference, explained that the opportunity to take part in this conference allowed them to realize the major role that post-secondary institutions play in the implementation of the SDGs. Initially, they believed that only NGO's and other government institutions had this responsibility. However, with the understanding that universities are involved in this process, they recognize that they have easier access to collaborate and be part of the SDG implementation as students from their respective academic fields. They have witnessed how York University has emphasized and invested in SDGs. As an example, they mentioned the SDG Student Hub where they currently work. This Student-led Hub aims to raise awareness and encourage students to take action, get involved and collaborate in research or projects that promote SDGs. In addition, they have seen how more efforts and interest from faculty members to integrate SDGs in research projects and curriculum. Similarly, York has made evident the SDG interest in the implementation of institutional, departmental, program and classroom policies.

They commented on COVID-19 and the impact this pandemic has had on the topic of mobility and equal accessibility to events and academic opportunities. On the positive side, virtual settings have allowed to reach out more students and a bigger audience which has increased SDG awareness. It has also allowed them to participate in conferences that they would not otherwise been able to attend giving them a space to interact with more people and network with other students and experts. In a specific example, they mentioned that a conference in past was only held in Ontario and gathered mostly students from this province. With the pandemic, this conference was available for all Canadian students bringing more perspectives in the discussions. Nevertheless, COVID-19 brought some challenges such as zoom fatigue,

lack of interest from some students and the awkwardness that comes with attending online gatherings.

After the experience in the conference, they said that there is much expectation and interest in continuing the efforts they have started. For this reason, they continue to work at the SDG Hub. In their roles, they work in creating learning opportunities for students at York through engagement in research and academic activities and in raising awareness on social media. They explained that the SDG Hub offers a non-credit certificate credential that confirms their post-secondary engagement in SDGs. In order to receive the certification, students need to satisfy courses (free of charge) and 70 hours of volunteering hours an NGO. To this date, the Hub has 40 active members.

For the short-term goals, they plan on incorporating the SDGs in their academic and professional opportunities. They have asked their current supervisors to integrate and consider the importance of SDGs in their projects. According to them, supervisors are receptive, open and supportive which allows to raise awareness, educate and continue the work. In the long run, they want to integrate SDG work in their post-graduate degrees and research.

As part of the suggestions for future events and their feedback from their participation in this conference, Althea and Humayra recognized the importance of voicing students and making youth an active role in the future SDG implementation work. They suggested involving students in conferences and not limiting them to only ask questions. They want to see students more involved in the discussions. An idea would be to change the format of the conference panels, where professors and researchers are the experts, into a round table where everyone has an opportunity to speak and be heard. It is also recommendable to support students through more research opportunities, conference attendance and

spaces for discussion and conversation. Finally, they mentioned that universities should give students skills and tools to be more involved and network.



Reflections from the Co-Chairs on the Conference and a Way Forward

Vinitha Gengatharan and Charles Hopkins



Photo by: Robert Keane

York University's campuses are located in Canada's largest city where the majority of its population has been born outside Canada. This opportunity brings to our institution an enormous wealth of heritage, traditions, languages, and a possibility of living in a setting of lifelong learning and sharing of cultural experiences.

In 2018-19, the academic community including students, faculty and administrators at York University started questioning the purpose and impact of studying and researching abroad. What started as a conversation evolved into critically questioning existing educational approaches towards internationalization in a new framework of the SDGs and with a new university-wide academic plan on the way, it seemed natural to explore a better understanding of providing excellent services in internationalization at York University. With a strong conscience of their own ecological footprint, and participation in alternative structured concepts, such as Globally Networked Learning (GNL), students and academics were already creating new forms of virtual mobility and exchange that did not seem to depend on access to physical travel.

The Sustainable on the Go Initiative is the result from the support of the Academic Innovation Fund (AIF), York International and the UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability. This initiative started a dialogue with scholars and practitioners in international education from Canada and other regions in the world that questioned international mobility in practice, greening of student and scholar exchange, leveraging technology and digital learning, community engagement, inclusivity of exchange programs, and assessment of intercultural development.

As Co-Chairs, in partnership with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the International Association of Universities and Okayama University in Japan, we brought together a diverse group of speakers and participants in the first virtual global conference on the future of sustainable and inclusive internationalization in higher education. This opportunity allowed an open and global forum between two groups of experts from the fields of international education and education for sustainable development that traditionally had not been in direct conversation. Furthermore, the event was held at the height of a worldwide pandemic when international academic exchanges and in-person learning were not permitted.

The consultation process and adoption of the Toronto Declaration in 2021 by more than 500 participants from 60 countries, representing government and non-government institutions, private sector, international organizations and global networks demonstrated the unanimous commitment to enhancing sustainable and inclusive internationalization efforts and most of all create a holistic understanding of sustainability to be addressed in its three dimensions: environmental, economic and social. Thank you to all who took part for your engagement and contributions in making this conference so successful!

Post-pandemic internationalization in higher education will face new expectations by its stakeholders, will respond to the calls for more responsible ways of traveling, being more sustainable in its outcomes and being inclusive. Virtual opportunities to continuously learn, gain experience, and mobilize knowledge beyond borders have tremendously broadened our horizon without a direct increase of ecological footprints. Hopefully, they help reducing internationalization's environmental impact in the future. Creating transformative actions that contribute towards a sustainable future requires more than exchanging knowledge. Building global citizen competencies for our future graduates and higher education professionals with practical problem-solving skills, understanding cultural awareness and values that address issues of justice, equity, interdependence with others, and the ability to address actual community needs through relevant research and community science, require an exposure to the realities beyond our own limited familiar habitat.

Only then, we will develop a deeper and empathic connection to those affected by global realities. Such compassion will influence our own lives, their sense of identity and can lead to transformative action in their own future choices or lifestyles. These steps will empower graduates of an internationally linked education to act for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society empowering people of all genders, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity (UNESCO 2020).

The Sustainable on the Go Initiative at York University that was successfully started with the 2021 Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization Virtual Conference and significantly grounded through the Toronto Declaration, will further aim to strengthen the foundation for transformative action of students and scholars. Through this Initiative, we aim to continue to critically reflect towards enhancing student's travel literacy, making our programs more sustainable and inclusive, continue learning with and from our peers, and are fully committed to contribute towards building a better future in partnership with our global networks.

Vinitha Gengatharan, Executive Director, York University

Charles Hopkins, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability, York University

York University and strategic partners – International Association of Universities, Canadian Commission for UNESCO and Okayama University – invite scholars, students and youth, international mobility professionals and practitioners, policy makers, sustainability experts and other stakeholders to pledge their support and commitment to the ***Toronto Declaration on the Future of Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization in Higher Education***.

We look forward to receiving your short statements of commitment to the Declaration.

Visit the [YorkU Sustainable On The Go Declaration Homepage](#)
[Download the 2021 Toronto Declaration \(pdf\)](#)

If you have any questions, suggestions, or feedback, please email us to sotg@yorku.ca



VII. Annexes

List of Participants



Photo by Surface

Name	Country	University/Institution
Abbas Sumar	Canada	Brock University
Abhijeet Dhere	India	Pune University
Adiel Charles	Barbados	The university of the West Indies, Cave Hill
Aditi Garg	Canada	University of Saskatchewan
Agnes Poleszczuk	Canada	York University
Aisha Shibli	Canada	University of Waterloo
Alakananda Gahir	India	Utkal University
Albert Schram	Italy	University of Maryland
Alessandra Ribeiro de Moraes	Brazil	The State University of Mato Grosso do Sul
Alexander Dela Cruz	Philippines	University of the Philippines Diliman
Alexandra Gibson	United Kingdom	University of Essex
Alexandra Osorio Brito	United States	University of Kansas
Alexei Petrenko	Canada	York University
Ali Hashemi	United Kingdom	Pagoda Projects
Alison Jane Clinton	Mexico	ITESO, the Jesuit University of Guadalajara
Aliya Bukusheva	Russian Federation	Saratov State University
Aliyyah Nazeem	Canada	World Education Services
Allison Broadbent	Canada	University of Guelph
Allison Donahue	Canada	Wilfrid Laurier University
Alyssa Graham	Canada	University of Toronto Scarborough
Alyssa Szilagyi	Canada	Western University
Amaia Ojer	Spain	My international world
Amira El Masri	Canada	Sheridan College
Amna Wasty	Canada	King's University College
Ana Luiza Pires de Freitas	Brazil	Federal University of Health Sciences of Porto Alegre
Ana Martins	South Africa	University of KwaZulu-Natal
Anastasia Vedernikova	N/A	N/A
Andre Kozak	Canada	N/A
Andrea Delgado Morrow	Canada	University of Calgary
Andreea Ciucurita	Canada	Western University
Andrew Sedmihradsky	Canada	University of Toronto Mississauga
Andy Guagnini	France	Université Grenoble-Alpes

Name	Country	University/Institution
Anete Veidemane	Netherlands	University of Twente
Angelo Jake Ko	Philippines	University of the Philippines
Anjeanette Sy	Philippines	University of the Philippines Mindanao
Anna Bruun Månsson	Sweden	Malmö University
Anna Pautler	Canada	Sheridan College
Anna Rumyantseva	Russian Federation	Saint Petersburg university of management technologies and economics
Annick Betancourt	Canada	University of New Brunswick
Anouk Abramovici	France	Université Jean Monnet Saint-Étienne
Anteneh Gebremariam Kallo	Ethiopia	Hawassa College of Teacher Education
Antonio Ortiz Diaz	Canada	University of Ottawa
April Hoy	Canada	University of Toronto
Arnd Watchter	United Kingdom	Crossing Borders Education
Arturo Segura	Canada	University of Ottawa
Ase Kelly Berg	Canada	University of New Brunswick
Ashley Sheppard	Canada	St. Francis Xavier University
Asma Bader	Palestine	Al-Quds University
Aurlie Brayet	France	Université Jean Monnet Saint-Étienne
Aymen Karoui	Canada	York University
Azirah Hashim	Malaysia	University of Malaya
Azure Lefebvre	Canada	York University
Barbara Covarrubias Venegas	Austria	Fachhochschule für Management und Kommunikation in Wien, (FHWien der WKW)
Beatrice Valencia	Philippines	University of the Philippines Diliman
Betsy Jardine	Canada	Cape Breton University
Bich-Ngoc Nguyen	Germany	Justus Liebig University Giessen
Birthe Witt Jason	Denmark	Sabro-Korsvejskolen
Bosen Lily Liu	Venezuela	UNESCO
Bradley Kemp	Australia	Western Sydney University
Brian Adams Burgarin	Philippines	Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University
Burcu Sarsilmaz	Turkey	KOC UNIVERSITY
Carine de Wilde	Netherlands	University of Amsterdam
Carla van den Heuvel	Netherlands	Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
Carolina Favre	France	University Grenoble Alpes

Name	Country	University/Institution
Carolina Rodriguez	Brazil	Faculdades de Campinas (FACAMP)
Cathy Stein	Canada	University of Waterloo
Cecilia Christersson	Sweden	Malmö University
Cecilia Sanchez	United States	University of Miami
Celine Blondeau	France	Université Catholique de l'Ouest (UCO)
Chantal Bolduc	Canada	University of Ottawa
Charles G. Pewee	Kenya	University of Nairobi
Charmaine Lace Pascua	Philippines	Tarlac Agricultural University
Chen Chen	Canada	University of Guelph
Chenaz Seelarbokus	United States	Kennesaw State University
Chiedza Pasipanodya	Canada	World Education Services
Chioma Blaise Chikere	Nigeria	UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT
Christian Daniels	Germany	United Nations University
Christine Volkmann	Germany	Bergische Universität Wuppertal
Christoph Hebermehl	Canada	Fields Institute
Christoph Hinske	Netherlands	Saxion University of Applied Sciences
Clarisse Esteban	Canada	Humber College
Claudia Rodriguez	Peru	Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola
Colleen Packer	Canada	University of Calgary
Cristina de Moura Joao	Brazil	Universidade de São Paulo
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Daniel Schugurensky	United States	Arizona State University
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Daryll Anne Marie Allam	Philippines	Reckitt Benkiser-Mead Johnson Nutrition
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Doris Knasar	Austria	University of Graz
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Esther Wainaina	Canada	Brock University
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Jack Lee	United Kingdom	University of Edinburgh
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Jon Rausseo	Canada	University of Ottawa
Jon Yee	Canada	United Nations University
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Jos Hermans	Netherlands	COMMEET Fellowship
Jovita Movillon	Philippines	University of the Philippines
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Kimberly Pallozzi	Canada	University of Windsor
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Mariuxi Alvarado	Ecuador	Universidad Tecnológica ECOTEC
Marleen van der Ven	Netherlands	Utrecht University
Marr Angelo Nicolas	Philippines	University of the Philippines
Martina Eick	Brazil	University of Buenos Aires
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Megan Anguiano	United States	University of Texas
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Paula Echeveste	Canada	Seneca College
Paula Mattila	Finland	Finnish National Agency for Education
Peter Szyszlo	Canada	AIMS Canada
Petra Rabitsch	Austria	University of Graz
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Renan Rosalis	Brazil	Universidade de São Paulo
Richard Quansah	Canada	York University
Riza Romero	Philippines	University of the Philippines
Rob van Leeuwen	Netherlands	Radboud University
Robert Daudet	Canada	International College of Manitoba
Robin Cox	Canada	St. Lawrence College
Robyn Finlay	Canada	Government of Canada
Robyn Phillips	Australia	University of Tasmania
Romain Thinon	France	Université Jean Monnet Saint-Étienne
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Vivian Trinh	Canada	Royal Roads University
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Yui Ugai	Canada	York University
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Zuzana Ritzer	Canada	Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)



Overview on Speakers and Chairs

Many speakers and chairs contributed to the calls for more sustainability and inclusivity in the internationalization of higher education during our conference. Only with their support and contributions, it was possible to make the conference a special and truly international event in the virtual space. The organizers express their gratitude for the willingness of speakers and chairs to participate in this new dialogue, that brought together aspects of International Education, Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development within the framework of the SDGs.

To find more about the conference speakers and chairs as well as information on their professional background, you can visit the [SOTG website](https://yorkinternational.yorku.ca/sotg-presenters/) (<https://yorkinternational.yorku.ca/sotg-presenters/>).



Sustainable Development Goals

With *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, all United Nations member states have unanimously agreed on an aspirational action plan, aiming for universal peace and larger freedom for all by 2030. The 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), stating the most pressing challenges in our world, is of critical importance for our future and serves as an interconnected strategic framework for all dimensions of sustainable development: planet (environmental), prosperity (economic), and people (social) in peace and partnership.



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