

UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AS A MEANS FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Viktoriia DONCHENKO*

Abstract: *Programs of international cooperation in higher education claim to promote peace and intercultural understanding, contribute to development of efficient human resources as well as research and innovation. For centuries, universities were centers of progress that ensure community's development. Processes of globalization, internationalization, rapid development of information technology transform the mission of university, challenging modern universities to join forces to meet growing needs of knowledge society. The European Higher Education Area is continuously working to reduce mismatch of skills between the workforce and labor market. International cooperation in education has fundamental potential for reducing economic disparity. Ukrainian government views higher education as a means of growth and development and considers international activity pivotal in responding to global and regional change and achieving world quality standards of education. The aim of this paper is to explore potential of international cooperation in higher education in globalized world by examining selected international projects and their outcomes.*

Keywords: higher education internationalization; globalization; programs of international cooperation; international partnership

Introduction

Implications of globalization and internationalization on dynamics of society's development challenges modern higher education institutions to make an extra effort to maintain their status as a source of progress and development. Global knowledge economy puts an emphasis on quality improvement for better human resources development, which requires implementing international standards. Researchers in different fields debate on nature and possible outcomes of globalization process, however, it is clear that nowadays globalization is one of the major factors which shape higher education.

Altbach states that globalization in higher education addresses mass demand for higher education and societal needs for highly educated personnel, involves information technology and the use of a common language for scientific

*PhD candidate, Sumy State Pedagogical University, Ukraine; e-mail: VictoriaDonchenko@yandex.ru.



communication. (Altbach, 2005, p. 64). Globalized world requires interactions between different nations, in order to respond to challenges, governments and academic systems adopt policies and programs to cope with or exploit globalization. Apart from sector of higher education, government agencies, international organizations, professional association get involved in issues of education modernization and strengthening.

Researchers consider internationalization an effective tool in institutional attempts to steer the process of globalization (Altbach and Knight, 2007). International activities of higher education institutions in regards to internationalization include student and faculty mobility; attracting international students; joint research projects; curriculum development and enhancement; joint or double degrees; development and capacity building projects; campus internationalization. As a rule, institutional priorities and degree of internationalization vary depending on type, size and location of institution, funding amount and sources, degree of centralization, commitment of administration to internationalization, strategic goals and vision.

1. Partnerships in higher education

International partnerships in higher education construct a common form of internationalization. They allow institutions to establish information and resources exchange in order to join forces to meet the challenges of globalized society. Samoff and Carrol define academic institutional partnership as “a collaboration that can reasonably be expected to have mutual (though not necessarily identical) benefits that will contribute to the development of both institutional and individual capacities at both institutions that respects the sovereignty and autonomy of both institutions” (Samoff and Carrol, 2004). While Institute of International Education approves the definition, given by Office of International Affairs of Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis: “Bi-national (or multinational) communities of higher education in which there is a constant flow of people, ideas, and projects back and forth, as well as the development of new projects and common goals.” (Clark, 2015). As we can see the definitions emphasize different aspect of the phenomena, thus, the latter one stresses the constant exchange and common goals, while the former concentrates on the nature and the results of cooperation.

Fielden distinguished three types of international partnerships in higher education on institutional level:

- *Level one* partnerships are primarily strategic; they are developed at a senior level within a higher education institution with the aim of the link becoming deeply embedded institution-wide across a range of faculties and activities, including both teaching and research.
- *Level two* partnerships are mainly developed and operated at faculty level. However, they often involve professional support from the central administration if academic exchange is involved.

- *Level three* partnerships are individual links between academic staff in different institutions. Usually, they are based on common research interests, but may also relate to teaching exchanges and short-term stays. These type of partnerships are numerous, often they are not monitored by central international office (Fielden, 2011). The number of level three partnerships is considerable in many Ukrainian universities. For decades Ukrainian higher education institutions signed numerous cooperation agreements with foreign institutions, which have not resulted in significant activity due to mismatch of resources or the activity may have not been expanded beyond one particular project or international initiative e.g. international conference, short-term exchange visit, joint publication etc.

Partnerships can be divided in transactional and transformational, the former ones are compared to business deals, where services are traded in a manner that resembles transactions in a marketplace, while the latter are considered to be of higher level since they change or transform entire cooperating departments, offices, and institutions. Transformational partnerships combine resources and view linkages as sources of institutional growth and collaborative learning. They often get expanded and involve new initiatives (Obst and Sutton, 2011). The specific features of each type of partnerships are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Transactional vs. Transformational partnerships

Transactional	Transformational / Intentional
Give-and-take nature of interaction No institutions change results from partnership Instrumental in nature Trade resources	Change institutions Generate common goals, projects, products Combine resources Emphasize the relationship as much as the product Expand over time Create basis for global learning Establish a bi-(or multi) national unit of higher education within an evolving global system

Source: Author's representation

Transformational partnerships are more complex in their nature and presuppose changes in all partner organizations involved. Teichler states that major changes in regards to nature of international cooperation happened in 1990s, namely the transition from a predominantly “vertical” pattern of cooperation and mobility towards a major role of “horizontal” international relationships, as well as from casuistic action towards systematic policies and related activities of internationalization. Integrated internationalization of higher education, which infers incorporated and institutional-wide approach, was introduced in the course of time (Teichler, 2009). Typical process of partnerships evolution for higher education institutions involves:

- Taking stock of existing affiliations;
- Establishing a partnership approval process;
- Articulating overall partnership goals and strategies;
- Spreading a culture of partnership;



- Developing policies, procedures, and organizational structures for managing partnerships;
- Providing baseline financial and other support;
- Developing effective practices for initiating partnerships;
- Drafting well-crafted Memoranda of Understanding and Implementation Plans;
- Pursuing effective practices for sustaining partnerships over time;
- Establishing procedures for reviewing, revising, and/or terminating partnerships.

2. European Commission as an agent of internationalization in Europe

European Community encouraged the first activity in the sphere of internationalization – cross-border mobility. From 1986 to the early 1990s, the European Community established 14 programs to provide support for European cooperation in education (Teichler, 2009) Various European education programs emerged such as SOCRATES for education and LEONARDO DA VINCI for vocational training. In 1989, the EC supported the establishment of a European Credit Transfer System (ETCS), which addressed the issue of recognition of study results and allowed to increase international exchange.

Supported by European Commission, European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS), commenced in 1987, which according to U. Teichler triggered internationalization process in Europe and led to the systematic embedding of international activities into the general activities of higher education institutions (Teichler, 2009)

The Jean Monnet program¹, launched in 1989, aims at stimulating teaching, research and reflection in the field of European integration studies at the level of higher education institutions within and outside the European Community. The program is present in 72 countries throughout the world. Between 1990 and 2011, the Jean Monnet Program has helped to set up approximately 3,700 projects in the field of European integration studies, including 165 Jean Monnet European Centers of Excellence, 879 Chairs and 2,139 permanent courses and European modules (Jean Monet Programme).

Conducted in 2013, the International Association of Universities 4th Global Survey on internationalization based on responses from a total of 1,336 institutions worldwide, covered a lot of ground, including questions about strategic planning for internationalization; infrastructural supports; expected benefits and perceived risks; drivers and obstacles; mobility patterns and targets; internationalization of the curriculum; and learning outcomes (Egron-Polak and Hudson, 2014). Among other issues, the survey focused on geography of international cooperation of higher education institutions in different parts of the world. The results are presented in the table below (Table 2). Institutions focus their internationalization efforts in Europe, which as a rule is among the priority areas of cooperation for

¹ For further details see: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/jean_monnet/jean_monnet_en.php

institutions all around the world. We can observe that institutions give preference to partners in their own geographical regions, creating stronger ties within the region. North America and Middle East prioritize cooperation with institutions in different regions, thus, Middle East institutions focus on Europe and North America, while North American universities priorities cooperation with Asia and Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean.

Table 2. International partnership preferences by geographical regions

		Regions of respondents					
		Africa	Asia and Pacific	Europe	Latin America and Caribbean	Middle East	North America
Region of cooperation priority	Africa	1					
	Asia and Pacific	3	1	2	3		1
	Europe	2	2	1	1	1	3
	Latin America and Caribbean				2		2
	Middle East					3	
	North America	3	3	3	1	2	

Source: Green, 2014

Nowadays the activity of European Commission focuses on realizing the tasks to achieve the objectives defined by Strategic framework – Education and Training 2020. EU countries have identified objectives to address common challenges, namely ageing societies, skills deficits in the workforce and global competition. Four priority goals are set: making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; improving the quality and efficiency link to another EC website of education and training; promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship; enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training (Strategic framework – Education & Training 2020).

3. TEMPUS program and its outcome for Ukraine

TEMPUS² is the European Union program active in 1990-2013, established to support modernization of higher education between EU and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Western Balkan and Mediterranean regions, managed by the Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. In 2014³, it was integrated in ERASMUS+ program. The general objective of program was to contribute to the creation of an area of cooperation between the European Union and TEMPUS

² See: <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participatingcountries/impact/ukraine.pdf>

³ See: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/tools/documents/tempus_study_issue16_achiev_EastCount_en_130726.pdf.pdf



Partner Countries. Specific objectives were the following: to promote the reform and modernization of higher education; enhance the quality and relevance of higher education; increase the capacity of higher education institutions in particular to cooperate and modernize; to foster reciprocal development of human resources; to enhance mutual understanding between the peoples and cultures of the EU and the partner countries.

Priority themes under Tempus are defined around the main components of the EU's higher education modernization agenda and are, therefore, structured in the following three building blocks:

Curricular reform: modernization of curricula in academic disciplines identified as priorities by the partner countries, using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the three-cycle system and the recognition of degrees;

Governance reform: university management and services for students; introduction of quality assurance; institutional and financial autonomy and accountability; equal and transparent access to higher education; development of international relations.

Higher education and society: training of non-university teachers; development of partnerships with enterprises; knowledge triangle education-research-innovation; training courses for public services (ministries, regional/local authorities); development of lifelong learning in society at large; qualifications frameworks.

Ukraine joined TEMPUS in 1993. The projects carried out in Ukraine at that time focused on improvement of university governance and management, upgrading of old curricula and development of new courses and programs, professional development of teachers, especially in disciplines such as economics, foreign languages, social science, European studies and law. Ukrainian universities from all the regions have been active in the program since the beginning, Tempus projects have been implemented in nearly all the regions. Tempus priorities in Ukraine, defined by Ukrainian education authorities and the European Commission, have placed a strong emphasis on Bologna process criteria.

Participation in the program TEMPUS resulted in the following outcomes:

- development of many new courses and curricula that respond to labor market needs;
- update of knowledge of specific subjects by the faculty;
- introduction of new teaching and assessment methods;
- enhanced internationalization by means of sustainable partnerships that have frequently led to further cooperation and research opportunities long after projects end;
- elaborated terms of the introduction of new degrees and of the two-tier degree system.



Table 3. TEMPUS projects involving Ukraine

	TEMPUS I and II	TEMPUS III	TEMPUS IV				
	1990-1999	2000-2006	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Joint Projects	35	80	12	9	5	8	16
Compact Projects	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Structural Complementary Measures (Tempus III)	0	29	0	3	0	1	7
Structural Measures (Tempus IV)							
Total	49	109	12	12	5	9	23

Source: TEMPUS in Ukraine

One of the projects sponsored by the TEMPUS program of the European Commission is “Quality Assurance Tools for the Management of Internationalization” (QATMI), the project involved eight universities from five different countries, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The project lasted from January 2009 till January 2012.

QATMI pursued the following aims:

- The self-assessment of the state of internationalization and the definition of performance gaps.
- The development and establishment of internationalization goals for the participating universities.
- The creation of a training program to assist in the achievement of the individual work programs and internationalization goals.
- A second self-assessment / benchmarking after two years as a means to check how well the recommended measures were implemented.

Within the framework of project, trainings and workshops on different aspects of internationalization were organized. A comparative survey of internationalization in partner institutions was conducted and recommendation were provided with respect to specifics of region. Necessary infrastructure for implementation of internationalization was formed.

Another TEMPUS Program project “Integrated University Management System: EU Experience on NIS Countries’ Ground” (15 October 2012 – 14 October 2015) involves a partnership of 17 universities from Germany, France, Netherlands and Poland and Partner countries universities in Georgia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

Project goals and objectives:

1. Analysis and use of the EU experience in the development and effective implementation of integrated information management systems at universities.
2. Design of the model of integrated university information management system and its application in partner universities.
3. Solving the problems of educational systems in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Georgia related to the lack of market-oriented university management; harmonization of the approaching of Ukrainian educational management to international standards.



Project activities included: analysis of experience in development and implementation of information systems at the EU universities; design of University Information Management System, using modern software; organization of retraining courses for IT centers' staff; design and integration of the new software for information support of university governance based on analysis of business processes and information flows; adaptation of the new software to specific conditions of university governance in partner universities; creation of training courses on information management systems; preparation, publishing, purchase of the new teaching materials, handbooks, syllabi; creation of Innovation and Education IT centers at the NIS universities.

Expected results:

1. Updating of existing and introduction of new elements of university integrated information management system; retraining of universities' staff; innovation and education IT centers at the NIS universities; developed guidance on the principles and practices of development and effective use of integrated information management system; retraining of IT administrators as well as creation of new software modules of automated systems.

2. Development of the concept of university information management, guidance on development and effective use of integrated information management systems; development of courses on modern methods in university management for administrative staff.

The project "Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Social Psychology to Solve Migration Problems in Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan" (15 October 2011 – 14 October 2014) coordinated by Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Romania. Aimed to update curricula for Bachelor's and Master's programs in Social Psychology to address contemporary migration issues, the project presuppose development of accreditation and the introduction of new practice-oriented programs and modules of Bachelors, Masters Programs in Social Psychology and establishment of four regional centers of excellence. Within the framework of project, organization of six information sessions for interested schools and social services was planned, as well as pilot training of 42 teachers and 170 students for new programs and modules.

Conclusions

International partnerships are common and effective form of internationalization of higher education, they aim to facilitate institutional development, foster research and innovation, enhance quality of education and create opportunities of resources exchange, including but not limited to information and knowledge. Numerous partnerships are created within the framework of European Union programs. The programs in question seek to build institutional capacity of participating institutions, as well as enhance quality of education and research. TEMPUS is one of European Union's programs that involves cooperation of European higher education institutions with institutions in different regions of the world, focused on promoting European higher education, sharing the positive

practices and assisting partner institutions in responding to challenges of globalization.

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