

ERACON 2015**Internationalization at Home - The Case of Cyprus****Abstract**

Over the past decade university internationalization has been described and occasionally debated with some claiming its inevitability while others speaking of its demise. But while there may be little consensus on what internationalization could or should entail at universities around the world, the ambition of most universities is to engage in internationalization on a strategic, comprehensive level. In the current context, many universities are reaching a saturation point and have now begun the process of strategic reinvestment. The very idea of which international projects are valuable, and why, is being continuously challenged. How should universities make decisions about which international projects to pursue? What choices are there for internationalization with what effects? Is mobility of students and academic staff sufficient for an Internationalization policy? Although, Internationalization is a high policy priority, engagement in positive action varies between countries, as well as between HEIs in the same country. Cyprus is no exception. Following the top-bottom processes encouraged by the Bologna Process, Universities in Cyprus have for the most part engaged with internationalization in many ways, including co-taught courses and degrees, open online courses, collaborative research projects and student exchanges. Most notable differences occurring between for profit and non-profit HEIS. Nonetheless, although maintaining international partnerships and collaborations is considered of undeniable value both in Cyprus and abroad, more reflection and research is encouraged with reference to current trends.

HEIs in Cyprus (public and private) were asked to reply to the following questions:

1) Has your Institution developed a clear internationalization strategy? If yes, how would you describe it in terms of:

- * Mobility (within the EHEA area and outside the EHEA)
- * Curriculum Development
- * Joint Degrees
- * Quality Assurance – Recognition
- * Social Dimension
- * Promotion and marketing

2) In your opinion, which Internationalization practice has been particularly successful in your Institution?

3) Finally, what measures would you suggest to your Institution for a more successful Internationalization practice

Workshop Questions during ERACON 2015:

- ▶ How should universities make decisions about which international projects to pursue?
- ▶ Is only mobility of students and academic staff sufficient for an Internationalization policy?
- ▶ What measures would you suggest to your Institution for a more successful Internationalization practice?

Findings:

Question 1:

How should universities make decisions about which international projects to pursue?

-HEIs are expected to have a clear strategy, have knowledge of their strengths, and what they can or cannot implement.

-Decisions are expected to be taken according to what fits the Institution (with reference to how flexible it is in providing courses in other than the native language).

-Decisions are also expected to include a mixture of bottom-up and top- down approaches.

It is advisable for each Department to have an internationalization strategy (a strategic plan) – one that preferably fits with the overall Institutional Strategy on internationalization-

-With reference to the social dimension, support to Incoming Students and Staff is a considered a must internationalization technique

-Internationalization strategies should take to consideration neighboring countries with which cooperation is possible and offer incentives to academic and other staff for potential collaboration in projects.

-Mobility should expand beyond Erasmus exchanges (as not all students have the capacity to participate in Erasmus) including researchers mobility, as well as placement networks.

Question 2:

Is only mobility of students and academic staff sufficient for an Internationalization policy?

Mobility for students and Staff is a vital part of the internationalization strategy however it should be completed by other measures such as :

-International Joint Curricula

-Open On-line courses

- Classes in Foreign Languages

-International Recruitment techniques

- Vital Partnerships

- Academic Community awareness
- Continuous feedback on the outcomes and outputs of mobility.

Workshop Question 3:

What measures would you suggest to your Institution for a more successful Internationalization practice?

- Internationalization must become a priority in the Strategy followed by the University. It should be regularly revisited and discussed, as to involve all updates in science and research.
- Deans, Academic Staff, as well as the Staff involved are expected to be committed as well as to play an active role in the implementation of internationalization practices.