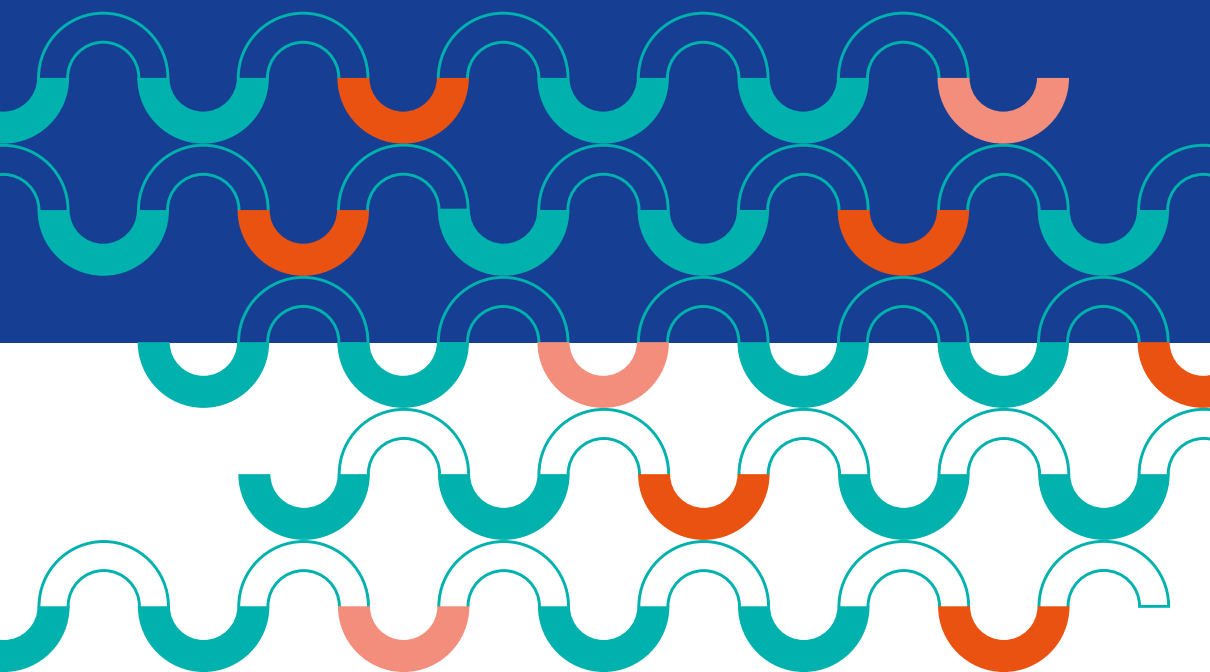*Conference Conversation Starter*

CONNECTING CURRENTS

Connecting currents

Edited by Laura E. Rumbley
EAIE Director for Knowledge Development and Research

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Foreword

'Connections' and 'currents' are the twin notions guiding the [EAIE's 33rd Annual Conference and Exhibition](#), and for good reason. The field of international education is deeply influenced by the full array of developments rapidly shaping and reshaping our wider world. As such, the need to better understand the currents of change around us is urgent, just as it is vital to make sense of the connections that already exist, and those that can yet be forged, that will allow us to both respond to and lead change in our sector.

One way to explore some of the many fascinating and timely aspects of 'connecting currents' in our field is to spend some quality time with this year's *EAIE Conference Conversation Starter* publication. The half-dozen essays contained in this collection cover a remarkable range of issues that speak to some of the most exciting and most challenging dynamics affecting higher education institutions not only across Europe but also well beyond. They also raise both thorny questions and inspirational possibilities.

For example, as you think about the way your institution conducts its internationalisation activities and engages partners around the world, to what extent are there *critical* discussions about the possibility that unintended harm may result (or be perpetuated) through these actions and how such detrimental effects could be mitigated? In what ways can some of the world's most marginalised students gain access to life-changing education through partnerships that span universities, local community centres and refugee camps around the world, tied together through networks of low-cost, highly accessible technologies? What makes intergenerational engagement and collaboration so powerful, and how can this approach be leveraged in a broader effort to strengthen higher education for future generations? And what do we have to learn from the unique internationalisation experiences of higher education institutions situated in small island states around the world, literally on the front lines of climate change as sea levels rise? Our authors touch on these questions and more, including pragmatic pathways to infusing decolonisation into contemporary partnerships and perspectives on how to pool diverse cultural and educational resources in addressing the shared challenge of effective water management around the world. Connections and currents ripple across these pages in many different ways, indeed.

These are complex, fluid and – eclectic though they may seem – fundamentally interconnected topics. Some of them touch us more directly than others, but all of them have an impact on the broader space in which we work, as we move, with fluctuating degrees of grace and dignity, through a world of 'connecting currents'. Ultimately, our goal with this collection of essays is to bring to the surface a series of examples and ideas that will animate, stimulate, agitate and more. As you explore both the waterways and the conference hallways in Rotterdam, we hope this resource will indeed assist you in connecting currents.

Laura E. Rumbley
EAIE Director for Knowledge Development and Research

Imagining internationalisation otherwise: a critical approach

— By Santiago Castiello-Gutiérrez, Jhuliane Evelyn da Silva and Sharon Stein

In recent years, our field has begun to acknowledge that the benevolent discourse of internationalisation as an inherently good or benign process is limited, and that it has been – despite our best intentions – built upon an ahistorical and apolitical perspective. We seem to be at a stage where many recognise that current practices of global engagement by higher education institutions are both harmful and unsustainable (Stein, 2017). For at least the past decade, prominent scholars have highlighted several significant challenges associated with traditional conceptions and implementations of internationalisation. These challenges include the perpetuation of local and global colonial legacies (Huaman *et al.*, 2019; Majee & Ress, 2018), the exacerbation of higher education's global carbon footprint (Shields, 2019), the intensification of market-oriented practices (Bamberger *et al.*, 2019), and the emergence of neo-racism and neo-nationalism (Lee, 2016; Lee & Rice, 2007). As general awareness of these challenges has grown, more people have also begun to address the complexity and multidimensionality of the problems internationalisation creates and exacerbates, recognising that there are no simple solutions and those of us who critique internationalisation are also implicated in it (George Mwangi *et al.*, 2018; Stein, 2021).

As scholars, practitioners and scholar-practitioners of international higher education, we must confront our complicity in perpetuating the problematic aspects of internationalisation. While we may critique current practices and highlight their shortcomings, it is crucial to acknowledge that we are embedded within the systems we critique. This recognition calls for a deeper level of reflexivity, humility and self-interrogation. Given the systemic nature of these issues there are no easy, immediate or simple solutions. However, we can commit to a practice of continually asking how we can more responsibly intervene in our own contexts. Critical internationalisation studies – and in particular, approaches grounded in 'internationalisation otherwise' – can support efforts to interrupt ongoing harm, enact repair for harm already done, and experiment with possibilities for different futures.

WHAT IS CRITICAL INTERNATIONALISATION?

Critical internationalisation is an approach that seeks to identify, challenge and ultimately interrupt how mainstream approaches to the study and practice of internationalisation have contributed to the reproduction of systemic harm in higher education and beyond. As its name suggests, critical internationalisation stems from criticality as a theoretical perspective. This framework places great importance on challenging the naturalisation and normalisation of existing social institutions and practices, while also advocating for transformative interventions that could lead to deeper forms of cognitive, emotional, relational, social, economic and ecological justice and well-being (Andreotti *et al.*, 2015, George-Mwangi *et al.*, 2018).

Based on this perspective, critical internationalisation is also an invitation to challenge the oftentimes-dominant discourse that positions the internationalisation of higher education as inherently positive or at least neutral; an apolitical and ahistorical process of win-win global engagement (Stein, 2021; Vavrus & Pekol, 2015). It is a call to recognise the historical and ongoing roles of colonialism and capitalism in higher education, including by critically examining how knowledge production and academic standards uphold and normalise Western oppression and ways of knowing (Stein and Andreotti, 2017). Critical internationalisation is not simply about critiquing what is flawed with our current practices, but more substantively it entails a "deep questioning taking into account both the new world and higher education order and old colonial continuities" (Stein, 2021, p.1772).

INTERNATIONALISATION OTHERWISE

Rooted in this general critical internationalisation perspective, in this piece, we would like to put forward an invitation for moving towards an **'internationalisation otherwise'**. This is one particular critical internationalisation approach grounded in de-/anti-/post-colonial, abolitionist and Indigenous critiques that challenge not just our ways of doing and thinking, but our ways of being (ontology). To truly imagine internationalisation otherwise, we must confront the ways in which our own actions, assumptions and positions contribute to the reproduction of systemic harm. It requires acknowledging that we are not outside observers but active participants in the processes we seek to transform. This self-awareness compels us to critically examine our own roles, privileges and responsibilities within internationalisation practices.

This approach to internationalisation also requires humility, as we must be open to questioning our own assumptions, certainties and biases. It calls for an ongoing commitment to self-reflexivity, unlearning ingrained and often unconscious patterns of thinking grounded in the status quo, and actively challenging 'business as usual' in our specific contexts. Recognising our complicity requires us to critically reflect on the institutional structures and policies that shape our work. We need to examine how power dynamics are embedded in these structures and how they perpetuate inequities, reinforce hierarchies and reproduce colonial legacies. By critically interrogating our institutional contexts, we can uncover the extent to which we are fulfilling our social and ecological accountabilities.

At the same time, we want to highlight that facing our complicity is not about self-flagellation or immobilising guilt. Rather, it is a call to action and a recognition of our responsibility to effect change. It invites us to use our positions and expertise to challenge the status quo, advocate for more inclusive, sustainable and equitable internationalisation practices, and centre the voices and experiences of systemically marginalised communities. In this way, we can mobilise our critiques to take meaningful steps towards (re)imagining internationalisation otherwise.

NAVIGATING COMPLEXITY AND CONTRADICTIONS

Reimagining internationalisation requires navigating the inherent complexity and contradictions embedded within the field. There is no one-size-fits-all approach or prescriptive roadmap to guide us. Instead, we must embrace the discomfort of ambiguity and engage in nuanced and critical dialogues.

We must recognise that internationalisation is a multifaceted endeavour, entangled with various ideological, cultural and political tensions. Different stakeholders hold conflicting ideologies, desires and interests. Rather than seeking consensus, we must create spaces for dialogue and engagement that bring together diverse perspectives. It is through these complicated dialogues that we can explore the tensions and contradictions that arise, challenging our assumptions and fostering transformative change.

At the heart of navigating complexity and uncertainty is the recognition that there are no easy answers, nor are there any quick fixes. The reimagining of internationalisation requires practical interventions that are context-specific, recognising the power dynamics, policies and theoretical commitments unique to each situation. These interventions may be temporary and imperfect, and they will undoubtedly give rise to new challenges. However, by remaining committed to ongoing reflexivity and adaptation, we can continue to navigate the complexities with a critical lens, striving to dismantle harmful practices and experiment with alternative possibilities.

THE CRITICAL INTERNATIONALIZATION STUDIES NETWORK

It was in an effort to bring together people from different places and traditions – but with a shared interest in internationalisation – that one of the authors of the present essay, Sharon Stein, founded the Critical Internationalization Studies Network. This network is currently co-chaired by the essay's lead co-authors, Jhuliane Evelyn da Silva and Santiago Castiello-Gutiérrez. Within the Network, which among other things offers a free and self-paced masterclass in critical internationalisation studies, several organising orientations shape our work. We briefly describe them below and offer them to you as starting points in reimagining internationalisation efforts from a critical perspective.

1. **Considering internationalisation's impact** on systemically marginalised communities, both nearby and distant; involving them in decision-making processes and critically examining the power dynamics that determine which approach to internationalisation is chosen.

2. **Promoting respectful relationships** by striving for more equitable distribution of resources, questioning the assumption that there is a single authoritative knowledge source, and anticipating and generatively addressing negative emotions and biases that can arise when different communities interact, especially when there is conflict.

3. **Recognising the complexity and interconnectedness of internationalisation,** understanding that there are different approaches and theories of change. Identifying areas of tension and contradiction within these approaches, which makes rethinking internationalisation a challenging task. Breaking free from circular patterns of critique and analysis.

4. **Challenging inherited hierarchies of knowledge** by questioning and understanding the limitations and possibilities of all knowledge systems. Bringing different knowledge systems together while respecting their uniqueness and autonomy and acknowledging that they may not always align or be directly comparable.

The Annual EAIE Conference is always a great forum for higher education professionals from different countries to engage in a variety of collaborative projects and partnerships, and this year's theme of 'Connecting currents' encourages participants to consider the many ways such collaborations may take shape and the various currents of thought underpinning our approaches to such work. In closing – and in the hope of problematising some of the limitations of our current practices and research, as well as prompting us to imagine internationalisation otherwise – we invite you to view your experiences of this year's conference through a critical and self-reflexive lens, with an eye towards how internationalisation might be 'otherwise' approached in the years to come. We also encourage you to share your own experiences in this area with other conference participants, so that we can learn from each other about what has worked, what hasn't, and what the next steps might be for deepening our critical engagements.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How are we, as scholars and practitioners of internationalisation, complicit in higher education's coloniality? What opportunities are there to interrupt this coloniality and imagine, create and nurture a university, and internationalisation, otherwise – beyond the modern/colonial university model?

2. What geopolitical patterns and relationships exist in our internationalisation practices? How do these relate to larger systems and longer histories of uneven, exploitative and extractive flows of power, people and resources? Are there any biases, prejudices or stereotypes embedded in our selection of partners?

3. When designing education abroad programmes, how does the curriculum incorporate local perspectives? Whose voices are prioritised? How is the programme balancing different versions of the history surrounding the destination site, its culture and its people?

4. What are the environmental impacts of study abroad programmes? How can we assess and reduce their hidden environmental costs?

5. Are international students' educational needs prioritised over financial gains? Are their voices and perspectives incorporated to ensure their agency and active participation and to enhance their overall experience?

Note: Questions adapted from Castiello–Gutiérrez and Gozik (2022) and from Stein, da Silva, and Castiello–Gutiérrez (2022)

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Connecting tradition and innovation: Online higher education at the margins

— By Peter Balleis, SJ

Despite the many currents connecting us across countries and across cultures, access to traditional higher education is unequally distributed across the world. Armed conflicts, state-sanctioned discrimination or the absence of a functioning state at all are just a few of the burdens that fall disproportionately on communities which find themselves in various ways at the margins of society.

Thankfully, the current state of technology and global interconnectedness, combined with tried-and-true traditional approaches to teaching and learning, means that the tools necessary to build bridges over such troubled waters are at our fingertips. It is based on this thinking that Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) – in cooperation with ten partnering Jesuit universities in India, Europe, Africa and the USA – provides youths in marginalised communities with access to higher education.

JWL disrupts the current paradigm of inequity by making quality higher education accessible in these fragile contexts by bringing the university into communities in cost-effective ways, through the internet, smartphones or laptops. In 2022, over 7500 students were enrolled in the various JWL programmes, and in 2023 that number is expected to reach 10,000 students spread across 70 JWL Community Learning Centres in 30 countries. One quarter are enrolled in academic programmes and the other three quarters in English Language programmes. The approaches – both innovative and tradition-bound – taken by JWL to overcome obstacles and empower learners facing significant barriers to higher education can serve as an inspiration to other actors around the world seeking to similarly 'connect currents' for the greater good.

A WINNING COMBINATION OF STAKEHOLDERS AND COLLABORATORS

Scalability, transferability and sustainability were written into the DNA of JWL when it started as a pilot in 2010 in two refugee camps in Malawi and Kenya. The model has proven to be scalable in numbers of Community Learning Centres, in numbers of students and transferable to new contexts and marginalised communities. What once started as a pilot in a refugee camp is adaptable to the context of indigenous and other marginalised communities.

The JWL model is organised around a direct collaboration between JWL, its network of accrediting partner universities, local communities and designated field partners (student-based organisations, Jesuit organisations and institutions, INGOs/NGOs). The local communities and field partners take care of their own facilities, buildings, internet costs, coordinators and – in the case of the Global English Language programme that serves as a steppingstone to JWL's professional and academic programmes – English language teachers.

The quality of academic programmes is monitored and guaranteed by the accrediting partner universities, although JWL works closely with the university to ensure the quality of the student's learning experience, from the start of the course until its completion. A student is enrolled through JWL with a university, but any academic decision – such as admission, grading and awarding of degrees – rests with the university. JWL hires for each virtual classroom of up to 20 students an academically qualified faculty with MA or PhD approved by the university who works with the students online, responds to questions, clarifies, and grades their weekly essay and tasks. Students very much appreciate the feedback of the online faculty. In return, online faculties find the work with the students at the margins very enriching and rewarding. Ultimately, this presents a win-win situation for all involved. Underserved students and communities gain access to quality educational opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable to them, and, for little investment, the accrediting universities benefit from engaging with a global student body from places they would never be able to reach with the classic model of international scholarships.

LEARNING IN AND THROUGH COMMUNITY

"We are fortunate to have the privilege of studying in such remote areas… which might be the farthest and the remotest area in Afghanistan, where no one can get education these days." This testimony comes from one of the 190 young people who are enrolled in JWL online programmes in Afghanistan, 70% of whom are female. Thousands of kilometres away in Myanmar, where access to university education is very limited due to the political situation, youth from marginalised communities there learn together with their Afghan colleagues by taking part in the same online programmes. In Northern Iraq, Yezidi people returning home after fleeing the violence of ISIS have taken their education with them, transferring the JWL Community Learning Centre established at the refugee camp in Khanke back to their home in the Sinjar mountains. In Kenya, over 500 young people at Kakuma, the largest refugee camp in the world, visit their Community Learning Centre on a nearly daily basis.

A key characteristic of the JWL model is the community of learners at its core, which is at once local and worldwide: rather than an individualised educational offering, JWL programmes are offered on a community basis with global connections. Youths can only apply to a JWL programme through a community learning centre, and as such upon registering become a student of that specific centre. Ideally, for each course there is always a group of students learning the same material and meeting onsite at the community learning centre, but at the same time these students are engaging with others around the world through their work online in the global virtual classroom.

Each community learning centre forms a study group and meets for weekly discussions coordinated by the on-site facilitator, who does not need to teach but instead supports and accompanies students.

A NEW PEDAGOGICAL MODEL GROUNDED IN TRADITION

Innovative technology in the hands of the students is key for this new model of higher education at the margins. While an internet connection is needed to register as a student, download course packages and upload weekly essays, student feedback underlines the fact that the JWL Learning Management System is effective at making eLearning accessible in regions where internet may not be stable.

Technology itself, however, is simply a tool, whereas pedagogy specific to eLearning is essential for successful online learning. That 70% of JWL students successfully complete their programmes is a solid indication that its pedagogical design keeps students engaged: JWL courses are not simply 45 minutes recorded or synchronous lectures, but well-structured learning modules using text, graphic images, audio and video resources, quizzes, group discussions and discussion boards as learning tools.

Beyond the interactive multimedia format of the courses, JWL draws inspiration for its eLearning pedagogy from the 450-year-old tradition of Jesuit pedagogy, specifically the elements of context, analysis, reflection, action and evaluation. These traditional insights into how people learned before the advent of modern technology are still valid today. Ultimately, the faith-inspired Jesuit view of human dignity and freedom shapes this approach, which aims to cultivate leaders with critical thinking skills, creativity and compassion. Interestingly, though this pedagogical tradition is rooted in the Catholic faith, JWL's successful implementation around the world points to the relevance of these same values and aspirations in many different cultural contexts; again, a notable example of 'connecting currents' in our diverse and complex world.

BEYOND THE UNIVERSITY WALLS

Across the world, young people love to connect and to be connected. Studying in globally connected virtual classrooms opens their thinking to the main issues facing the world today, which are global in nature and require globalised learning experiences and collaborative solutions. Yet, young people living in fragile political and socioeconomic contexts are at grave risk of being disconnected from such transformational educational experiences.

To achieve the goal of making higher education accessible to marginalised communities, disruptive models like that offered by Jesuit Worldwide Learning must be implemented more widely. This work should focus on breaking with the notion of sustaining traditional university campus walls. It must reject the commodification of higher education. And it must change the classical teaching paradigm by transforming teachers into facilitators. As JWL has demonstrated, this effort can connect the currents of both traditional foundations and contemporary technology, working together in service to human dignity, opportunity and freedom.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. To what extent is your institution engaged in internationalisation activities in support of disenfranchised or underprivileged students?

2. How is your institution leveraging the potential of learning technologies to reach groups of students who might not otherwise be served by higher education?

3. In what ways do you see innovative approaches to teaching and learning finding inspiration in longstanding pedagogical or student development traditions?

Connecting continents: Collaboration across the Global South

— *By Judy Peter, José Celso Freire Junior & Leolyn Jackson*

The centuries-long political agenda of colonialism – a process which "involves the domination of a society by settlers from a different society" (The Encyclopaedia of Global Studies, 2012) – has had a profoundly dehumanising effect on societies around the world. In the 21st century, these damaging effects persist, but important attention is being placed today on addressing and undoing this dehumanising legacy. However, colonial legacies still exist in the divide between the Global North and South, and these legacies filter down into the internationalisation space, visible in the power dynamics that play out in partnership collaborations. To address the challenges we face in the search for equity in these collaborations, it is useful and essential to explore both key concepts that frame this work and the lived experiences of partners seeking to implement equity-sensitive strategies for internationalisation in higher education.

This essay presents three strategies for the internationalisation of higher education in the Global South that have as a focal point an equity-sensitive approach. Insights from a thematic forum organised on 11 March 2022 at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)[1] and examples from the São Paulo State University (UNESP) in Brazil and the Central University of Technology (CUT) in South Africa form the basis for this essay. These examples address connections between continents of the Global South that have been colonised and need to deal with decoloniality.

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1. On 11 March 2022, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in South Africa hosted a thematic forum titled 'Equity-sensitive strategies of higher education in South Africa: Internationalization@Home in post-pandemic times'. At this forum, the presenters examined the idea of comprehensive internationalisation underpinning the National Framework for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa. The insights from this discussion and the perspectives of CPUT, as well as São Paulo State University (UNESP) in Brazil and the Central University of Technology (CUT) in South Africa, form the basis for this essay by referring to examples of connecting continents in the Global South that were both colonised and having to deal with decoloniality.

FROM POST-COLONIAL TO DECOLONIAL

The rejection of colonialism has been the subject of extensive academic activity and theoretical reflection, beginning with attention to 'post-colonialism' and then the consideration of 'decolonialism'. The shift from post-colonial to decolonial theories lies in the critical consideration of the gaps in post-colonial theories. A general understanding is that post-coloniality analyses the aftermath of colonial histories, whereas decoloniality advances these debates to include systemic changes needed to transform colonial legacies.

In this context of decolonisation, this essay presents various experiences of Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), São Paulo State University (UNESP) and the Central University of Technology (CUT) as higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Global South that face several challenges as they strive to deliver quality education, produce impactful research and contribute to national development. Like other HEIs in formerly colonised regions, they often face unique contextual factors that shape their institutional collaboration strategies. These factors include political instability, limited academic freedom, cultural and linguistic diversity, and post-colonial legacies. Moreover, these institutions often operate with limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, high levels of poverty and unemployment, and a widening gap between the haves and have-nots. As a result, they need more infrastructure and resources to attract and retain talented faculty and students, and often require more funding to support their internationalisation activities. Despite these challenges, CPUT, UNESP and CUT prioritise access and equity while pursuing academic excellence.

In doing so, these three HEIs recognise the importance of widening participation in higher education and strive to provide opportunities to historically marginalised populations, including women, indigenous communities and low-income students. These institutions often develop innovative admission policies and scholarship programmes to enhance access and promote social mobility. Another characteristic is their commitment to addressing local and regional challenges. They often prioritise research and academic programmes relevant to their community's needs, having, for example, a close look at topics associated with sustainable development, climate change, healthcare, poverty alleviation and social justice. Although also prevalent in the Global North, the emphasis on local relevance and community engagement responds to different priorities and research agendas.

THE PANDEMIC AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL DIVIDE

The recent global pandemic illustrated how many universities had to quickly adapt to remote learning and online teaching modalities to comply with social distancing measures and minimise the spread of COVID-19. This transition posed challenges for students and faculty, who had to adjust to new technologies and modes of instruction, while also exposing deep systemic injustices.

The technological divide between historically advantaged and disadvantaged HEIs presented divergent outcomes during the pandemic. At a 2023 conference involving participants from 25 countries around the world, CPUT, UNESP and CUT introduced the technological divide in evidence across the South African and Brazilian higher education systems as a condition hindering equitable strategies for emergency online

learning. Participants from the University of Tennessee, a Historically Black University (HBCU) in the USA, could identify and relate to the lack of resources compared to other universities without a history of predominantly serving communities of colour in that country. Historically advantaged and disadvantaged universities in South Africa display stratified levels of technology-enabled internationalisation. As opposed to the most under-resourced institutions, the top universities in South Africa, Brazil or the USA have many more resources to address concerns related to quality, affordability and accessibility. The economic rationale for the position of stratified societies and cultures was based on the agendas of colonial expansion and white privilege. Today, a systemic continuation of raced and gendered strategies and policies keeps advantaged HEIs affluent and centres of privilege.

DECOLONIAL STRATEGIES

In their respective universities, CPUT, UNESP and CUT use a decolonial strategy, whereby the core objective is transforming systemic raced and gendered practices to recover Black and Brown people's fragmented and colonised identities. Partnering transatlantically and with both historically disadvantaged and advantaged universities expands comparative narratives across the African diaspora. It also offers new and different ways to decolonise research partnerships, mobility and curricula. The likely outcome is the opportunity to foster remote and in-person international communities of practice in the African diasporas globally. Connecting and comparing experiences across the diaspora offers a way to expand on the reimagining of the decolonial internationalisation of higher education. Connecting along shared histories, identities and cultures opens the doors for innovative solutions to broader societal, pedagogical and global challenges.

AFRO-BRAZILIAN COLLABORATION

The Federal University of Vicosa in Brazil collaborates with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) from Ghana, having the TET Fund (Tertiary Education Trust Fund) from Nigeria as a financier with the primary objective of offering training in the agri-food area. This programme has recently increased its scope by opening to other Brazilian institutions, including UNESP. The Brazilian Association for International Education (FAUBAI) coordinates a national effort in this new phase. The programme's first call with the FAUBAI partnership, launched in 2023, generously offers 1200 vacancies for postdoctoral fellowships and candidates for Master's and doctoral degrees. It received approximately 770 applications from African candidates.

This programme could generate an enormous social impact when the participants return to their country and disseminate the knowledge and insight from their experiences in Brazil. At the same time, it also generates benefits for the Brazilian universities that host African candidates, mainly related to Internationalisation at Home activities. The Brazilian institutions are increasing the number of classes taught in English and, consequently, the possibility of attracting more international students. Additionally, Brazilian universities are interacting nationally and globally, sharing good practices, cross-offering virtual English-taught courses and expanding the opportunities for research partnerships. This programme is an excellent example of international education connecting continents to resolve challenges in the higher

education institutions in the Global South and meet the target of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).

EXEMPLARY PARTNERSHIPS

Another example to be mentioned, also touching on the issue of inequality, is an exchange programme developed by UNESP with Wayne State University and Temple University in the USA, with the University of Victoria in Canada, the University of Southern Queensland in Australia, and the University of Birmingham in the UK. The attitudes demonstrated by the partners involved in this programme could be helpful in improving other HEIs' willingness to engage in symmetrical bilateral collaboration. It shows how partners can work together to reduce the impact of the financial costs involved (tuition waivers from HEI in the North combined with funds for participation in international programmes, such as airfare, lodging, health insurance, food *etc* from HEIs in the South) in a student exchange programme by developing partnerships that focus specifically on individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds or countries.

CONNECTING FOR EQUITY

Recognising and addressing systemic structural inequalities is essential in higher education institutions and for navigating the transforming internationalisation space. This involves identifying and dismantling barriers that prevent equitable access to international opportunities, such as financial constraints, cultural biases, inequitable institutional policies, systemic challenges and governance barriers. The three universities examined in this essay are actively working towards creating inclusive policies, procedures and practices that support underrepresented groups, including low-income students, students claiming new identities and orientations, and individuals with disabilities.

An equity-sensitive approach to internationalisation also involves redefining the concept of mobility. It goes beyond traditional student exchange programmes and acknowledges the diverse forms of mobility, such as blended virtual exchanges, collaborative learning and teaching, research projects and internships. This widens the opportunities for students facing financial resources or physical mobility limitations. Finally, this work ultimately involves approaching the internationalisation of the curricula through an equity lens. This means incorporating diverse perspectives, global issues and intercultural competencies into the curriculum. Such a curriculum should promote critical thinking, cross-cultural understanding, and empathy among students and faculty.

When all is said and done, an equity-sensitive approach to internationalisation encourages the inclusion of marginalised voices, Indigenous knowledge, and local contexts in the curriculum, fostering a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.
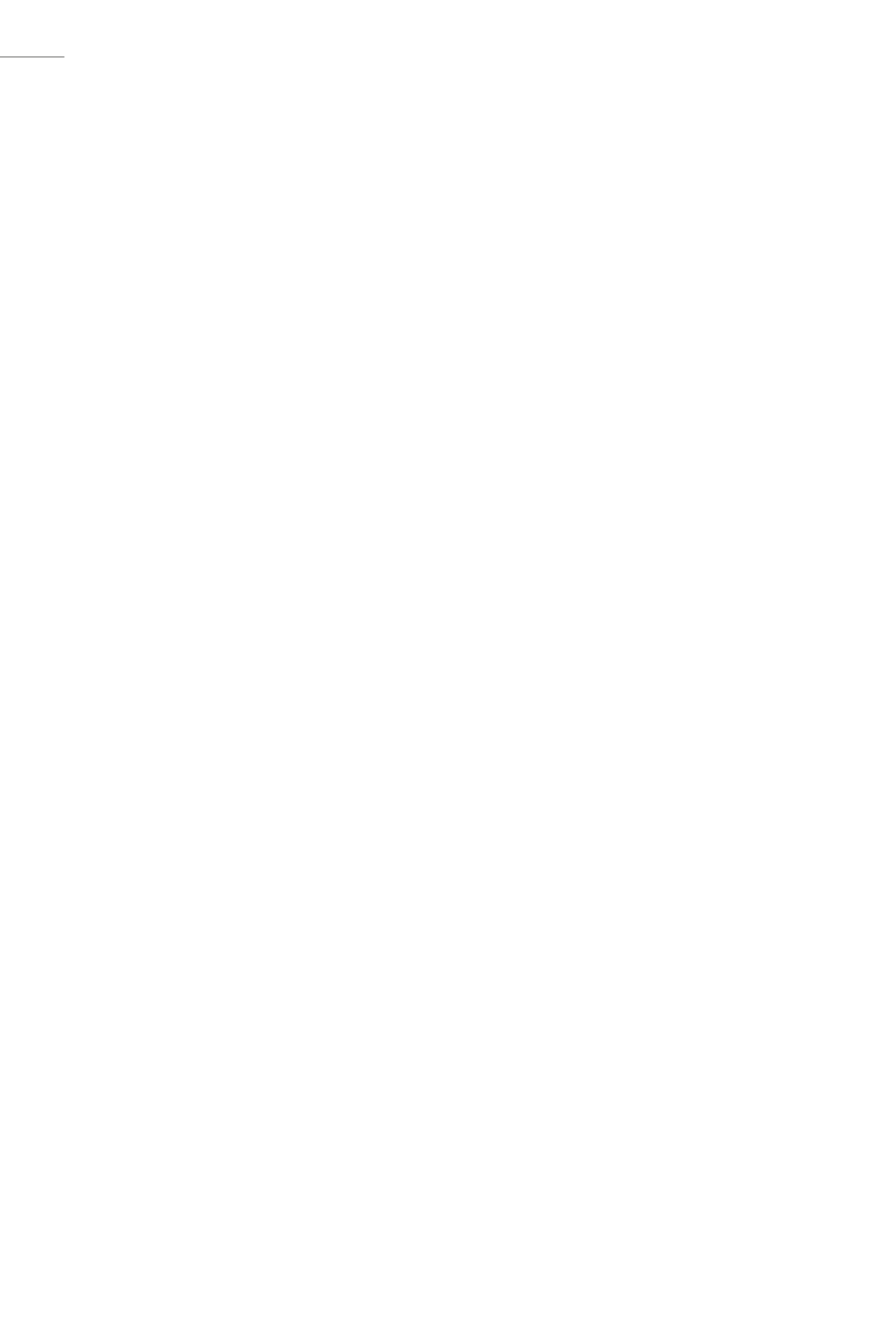
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How important are the issues of equity, diversity and inclusion in your institution's internationalisation agenda?

2. What are some specific examples of programmes, policies or practices at your institution that are helping to widen participation in international learning experiences among underrepresented populations?

3. What does equitable collaboration in international higher education look like to you?

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Currents of change: small island states, internationalisation, and climate action

— *By Ariane de Gayardon, Daniela Craciun & Edel Cassar*

With more than 30 years of global research, informed practice, dedicated conferences and peer-learning events, we know a lot about higher education internationalisation (Craciun & de Gayardon, 2021). Yet, most of that knowledge comes from the so-called academic centres of the world, *ie* institutions in networked global cities and developed economies. In 'Connecting currents' at this year's EAIE Conference, we are encouraged to resist mainstream currents and connect with the 'unusual suspects' of internationalisation. This article proposes some insights into what this effort to widen the scope and meaning of internationalisation research and practice could look like, by exploring the internationalisation of universities in small island states (SIS). It highlights the importance of the 'glocal', connecting global and local currents (Goddar *et al*, 2016) to internationalisation in SIS universities, using the example of a locally relevant global challenge: climate change.

SMALL ISLAND STATES: INSULARITY AND INTERNATIONALISATION

SIS, like Malta in Europe or Mauritius in Africa, are unique ecosystems characterised by geographical isolation, vulnerability to natural events and limited resources. As such, SIS face additional obstacles to being part of a globalised world, most importantly perhaps their perceived disconnection from the world, spatially represented by the water surrounding them. Yet, SIS might be the epitome of the *glocal* nexus, successfully merging a strong sense of *locality* through their geography, culture and history, with efforts to develop *externality* by connecting beyond and through the sea to the world (Baldacchino, 2004).

The connections of the global and local scales within SIS have important implications for universities. Their missions of education, research and community engagement are shaped by these connections, as is their internationalisation. In a case study of five public

universities in SIS, based on interviews and document analysis, we explored how these universities internationalise by focusing on both local and global opportunities despite challenges on all scales (Craciun & de Gayardon, in press).

THE LOCAL

SIS universities face exceptional local challenges. SIS are particularly vulnerable to crises: economic because of their reliance on imports/exports, social because of their secluded population, and environmental because of their geographies. The multiplicity of crises, to a certain extent, impedes SIS universities' ability to internationalise, when local needs must be prioritised, such as infrastructural reconstructions or meeting students' basic needs. Moreover, the small size of SIS means universities must deal with shortages in spatial, human, and financial resources affecting their ability to sustain internationalisation efforts. With small departments and academic staff numbers, individual perceptions of internationalisation are also prevalent. SIS universities face challenges where the culture and values of academics and students conflict with the institutional internationalisation strategy, jeopardising its implementation.

Yet, locality is also a strength for the internationalisation of universities located in small island states. Notably, the often welcoming cultures of island peoples, the touristic environment, and the use of the English language all contribute to making these universities desirable partners and destinations. Additionally, the small size of the state means these universities have unparalleled access to their government and can influence higher education and foreign affairs policies to support their own internationalisation. Similarly, they have direct lines to embassies and consulates in their country, facilitating relationships with partners abroad. The small size of the state also provides SIS universities with a unique national platform to work with local stakeholders to maximise available resources towards a common objective. These local experiences develop SIS universities into team players and creative problem solvers, preparing them for work with international partners.

THE GLOBAL

The main challenge for the internationalisation of SIS universities is their remoteness and associated access difficulties. While virtual connections have blossomed in higher education, physical connections remain the norm for partnerships and mobility, a difficult reality for these inaccessible universities. Their visibility – not only on the map, but in the global academic landscape – is also an issue, as they are often overlooked to the benefit of more high-profile institutions. In this context, personal academic connections and relationships take a more central role in developing successful institutional partnerships. Island-based academics must challenge themselves to take on an informal 'ambassadorial' role to shine a light on their SIS and the expertise of their universities, and to network on a global level.

However, SIS universities also see their location as an opportunity on the global stage, and the sea as a connector. SIS have many neighbours, often on different continents, effectively being bridges between regions of the world. This geography, and historical and cultural ties due to former colonisation, are leveraged in partnership strategies of

SIS universities. Moreover, SIS universities have developed niche research expertise leveraging their natural environment, such as marine science, natural hazards or tourism. They place themselves at the forefront of knowledge exchange and collaboration on these topics, promoting their distinctive size, needs, location and experience. Additionally, SIS universities' unique local positioning in small states can be used for piloting international research projects, when supported by an open policy towards research. In recent years, Malta piloted the deployment of blockchain in education (Grech & Camilleri, 2017) and the first mandatory continuing professional development programme for dentists in the EU (Attard *et al.*, 2021).

FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL: THE EXAMPLE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The real strength of SIS universities, when it comes to internationalisation, derives from their ability to connect their local 'currents' to global ones, through the twofold responsibility they feel to address local and global challenges. Finding a common ground between service to their community and global issues, and turning it into a niche area of expertise, is an essential internationalisation strategy for these universities. By establishing meaningful partnerships on locally relevant global issues, they can both increase their capacity to tackle local challenges and become visible on the global stage, while making efficient and effective use of their resources.

One such area of common ground, which is a key part of internationalisation in many SIS universities, is climate change. Described as the "biggest existential threat" by one of our interviewees, climate change is paramount for island communities in part because they are the most at risk from rising sea levels. Crises linked to climate change – including drinking water shortages, hurricanes and tsunamis – have also become more frequent, devastating islands physically and economically.

Consequently, SIS universities have been very active on the topic of climate change worldwide. They recognise that they can share unique expertise and experience on the topic. The University of the West Indies, for instance, leads the International Association of Universities' cluster on SDG 13 on climate action. Alliances, international PhD scholarships and startup accelerators dedicated to climate change all have the same aim: uniting researchers and educators internationally to find and disseminate innovative solutions to a global threat that is particularly urgent for SIS. The importance of climate change is also visible in the educational offering of SIS universities. They seek international partnerships to develop comprehensive curricula on the topic, to both provide local students with skills that will be needed in their community and attract international students. The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, for instance, leads the international Waterline project intended to create an alliance focusing on developing the partners' research, educational, and entrepreneurship capacities on water-related issues.

Climate change, with its importance to SIS and their universities' internationalisation efforts, should be an example for institutional internationalisation strategies globally. Institutions should not aim to join just *any* global current but focus on the *glocal:* global topics that are locally relevant to their community and to which they could bring a unique and much-needed perspective.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What makes your institution's geographical location unique?

2. In your institution's context, what local challenge is reflected on the global scale (for instance as part of the SDGs)?

3. How can this challenge be used as a starting point for connecting to local and international partners?

4. Does your institution reach out to less visible institutions for internationalisation purposes?

5. How can digitalisation be used more productively to connect and work with less accessible and less visible institutions?

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Water flows, water connects

— By Charlotte de Fraiture

Water is a precious resource that knows no boundaries, flowing freely and connecting landscapes, ecosystems and communities around the world. As the global population grows and the impacts of climate change intensify, water challenges are becoming increasingly complex and interconnected. Addressing these challenges requires connections on several levels: across academic disciplines, experiences, practitioners, research and interests. This essay explores how water education creates such connections, drawing on experiences at the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education in the Netherlands.

Last year some 1300 midcareer water professionals participated in MSc and PhD programmes, short courses and other training opportunities at IHE Delft. Based in the Netherlands, the Institute builds on a long tradition of water management – the Dutch know how to keep water at bay. The Institute's expertise has evolved over its 65 years, and today, it helps tackle a new, climate change-induced water reality that often involves water shortages and declining water quality.

IHE Delft students are truly diverse: they come from different backgrounds and countries, mainly outside Europe. They bring years of work experience and insights on their home regions' water challenges. This mix facilitates peer-to-peer learning, critical reflection and new perspectives on existing and emerging water challenges in a changing world.

Our international students have taught us about crucial connections in water education.

CONNECTING DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES

Water problems are inherently inter- and multidisciplinary. Water professionals work in a wide range of jobs and environments, from coastal saltwater ecosystems to inland freshwater lakes, from engineering to social science, and from large international river basins to community water systems. Water education needs to reflect this diversity and offer students flexible disciplines and choices, as is done for example at IHE Delft, where students shape their own learning path to fit their individual career and learning goals.

Tackling water challenges requires combining different approaches from several fields of study. Water education should emphasise collaboration in interdisciplinary teams, encouraging students from different backgrounds to interact, cooperate and share ideas. In addition to gaining up-to-date knowledge in their chosen academic discipline, students need to practice their practical abilities, including leadership and presentation skills. This works best in 'real-world' settings. For example, during project-based fieldwork in France, students worked on real projects in the Camargue and Montpellier. As noted by a Rwandan student with a civil engineering background, part of a group of students also including an agricultural engineer and social and environmental scientists: interdisciplinarity is key to a holistic view of the links between urban vegetation and hydrology. An ability to cooperate across fields is key for a sustainable result.

CONNECTING EXPERIENCES FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND CULTURES

Water challenges and ways to tackle them vary across countries and cultural settings. While water can lead to conflicts and political tension, it can also form the basis for enhanced collaboration. By promoting active engagement and peer-to-peer learning, education can foster a sense of global citizenship among students. An example is the Young Water Diplomats Programme, a 6-month programme at IHE Delft, which brings early-career diplomats from different countries together in Delft. The connections they make and the skills they develop will benefit them throughout their careers. Another example of valuing different perspectives and South–North collaboration is the work of one of our PhD students from Bangladesh who critically assessed the transfer of policies based on Dutch water knowledge to Deltas in Vietnam and Bangladesh as part of development cooperation. She recommends moving away from a one-way transfer in which Dutch water expertise is simply exported (with limited result) and instead focusing on co-developing water policy in an equal partnership. Such insights build on connections across different backgrounds and cultures.

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT INTERESTS

Rivers often cross multiple borders, and groundwater resources are often shared between countries. As the demand for water increases, so does the risk for conflicts about its allocation. Take Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam, a large hydropower dam in the Blue Nile River, which is surrounded by conflicting interests. While Ethiopia emphasises the need for electricity for its growing population, downstream Egypt worries about its water security and agricultural production and is reluctant to change established agreements on water sharing. Water diplomacy, with the aim of finding cooperative solutions among stakeholders with different interests, is vital. Constructive negotiations and building bridges between different groups and interests contribute to fair water resource management.

For example, the initiative Nile Pop brought together a diverse group of stakeholders in a setting in which they learned from each other despite their different political, economic and environmental interests. The researchers and musicians taking part in the event illustrated how the Nile has inspired popular culture. Egyptian, Sudanese and Ethiopian

IHE Delft students recited poems from their home regions, showing their attachment to the Nile River. The performers and the audience connected over their shared appreciation of poetry and their shared, albeit contested, river. This initiative shows how science and art can be connected to promote mutual understanding over a disputed resource. Water education, therefore, needs to help students learn how to make connections across interests to promote peaceful solutions.

CONNECTING PROFESSIONALS AT DIFFERENT CAREER STAGES

Water challenges require continuous learning and adaptation throughout a professional career. Learning doesn't end after graduation but continues throughout life. Alumni networks play a vital role in connecting education and practice. They contribute to the curriculum and participate in ongoing research and capacity development projects. At IHE Delft, alumni coordinators create active groups of alumni in their countries that share information about training and job opportunities as well as projects. They share information with prospective students, and they connect our academic staff to local and regional education and research centres. The alumni networks connect fresh graduates with those with more experience.

Every year, we honour alumni who have made a particularly remarkable impact in a water-related field and who are role models for water professionals with an award. The winner is invited to speak at the opening ceremony of the new academic year, to inspire students to become water leaders of the future.

Lifelong learning is key not only for alumni, but also for teaching staff. By equipping individuals with the necessary tools to enhance their professional growth, we create a community of lifelong learners committed to advancing the field of water.

CONNECTING DOTS AND PEOPLE

Making connections is a key part of water education. This is not always easy. Teachers need to develop different methods based on multi-disciplinarity, mutual learning and two-way partnerships. Students need to work in multi-disciplinary groups and learn to value different perspectives beyond their own discipline. By bringing together different disciplines, experiences, professionals, research, and perspectives, we help students develop the skills they need to tackle complex water challenges and contribute to sustainable water management.

While some water professionals tend to emphasise the importance of in-depth knowledge of a particular discipline in water education, our experiences show that other skills are just as important. To make an impact, students need to be able to work in interdisciplinary groups, to be able to see water problems from different angles, to reflect critically and to learn from others across the globe. The role of educators, therefore, is to help students learn to connect the dots and people.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what ways do the management and preservation of natural resources like water underscore the many 'connecting currents' of international education? What might this suggest about the role of international education in addressing the global climate crisis?

2. How does your institution connect students and researchers across different disciplines to address global challenges?

3. Does your institution have any interesting examples of lifelong learning (for example, specific involvement of alumni) taking a central role in the solving of real-world problems?

Connecting generations to shape the future of higher education

— By Felix Rüdiger, Frauke Kops & Maximilian Pfestorff

The current era is marked by disruption and interconnected challenges such as the climate crisis, the emergence of generative AI and demographic transitions. These factors contribute to an ever-increasing speed of environmental, technological and societal change. Higher education institutions face the daunting task of preparing students for a world that will substantially differ from the one we currently inhabit.

Positions of leadership and the authority to make strategic decisions – in higher education and elsewhere – tend to be held by those with the greatest experience. This makes sense in a world where we expect the future to be more or less a continuation of the past and present. But in a world of fast and disruptive change, the mental models and knowledge of the past can only serve as an orientation for what lies ahead to a minimal extent. Young researchers and students have less to lose by overturning mental models underpinning past achievements. They also have more to gain from accelerated, future-oriented institutional change, as they have many more years of work and life ahead of them, and their future will be shaped by decisions taken today.

Therefore, we think it's necessary to cultivate greater cross-generational dialogue and leadership in higher education, striking a new balance between experience and aspiration, hindsight and foresight, pragmatism and courage. Ever since five students from the University of St. Gallen founded the St. Gallen Symposium in 1969, in a period of protracted youth protests around the world, the Symposium has grappled with the question of how to strike such a balance. Through year-round initiatives and our annual main gathering at the university, we foster responsible, long-term leadership through cross-generational dialogue by bringing together current decision-makers and the leaders of tomorrow. In our experience, engaging multiple generations and sharing leadership responsibilities can facilitate the development of innovative solutions and perspectives that bridge the gap between the past and the future.

TOWARDS A NEW GENERATIONAL CONTRACT

Beyond dominant technical framings of the difficulty of thinking long-term in a short-term world and taking bold steps in a path-dependent, rigid institutional environment, the Symposium aims to highlight the human dimension of such challenges. In fact, those with the most power to enact change may neither be the ones most motivated to nor most capable of moving forward.

Greater engagement and shared leadership across generations can be a way to leverage and combine the expertise and experience of the older generation, and the forward-thinking enthusiasm of the youth. We also live this idea within the organisation of the Symposium, which results from the combined efforts of a foundation of professionals and a team of around 25 students working side by side towards realising our vision. The current essay is thus also written collaboratively by authors across the intergenerational setup of our institution.

This past May, at the 52nd St. Gallen Symposium, the challenge of thinking and acting long-term in a short-term, crisis-ridden world dominated formal and informal discussions across panels, workshops and co-creation sessions. As a result, the Symposium and the Club of Rome – a platform of diverse thought leaders who identify holistic solutions and promote policy initiatives and action for complex global issues – have launched a global initiative for 'A New Generational Contract'. Involving stakeholders across sectors, regions and generations over the coming years, the initiative seeks to foster collaboration and mutual learning across generations as a critical pathway for long-term thinking and systems transformation.

A key goal of the initiative is to identify and foster tangible ways to cultivate and practice cross-generational dialogue and leadership in specific sectors and communities. To spark such conversations within higher education, we'd like to suggest .three specific pathways for change: rethinking organisational setup and structure, co-creating methods and content of learning and teaching, and empowering students to be institutional entrepreneurs.

RETHINKING ORGANISATIONAL SETUP AND STRUCTURE

To facilitate cross-generational leadership and decision-making, higher education institutions must reevaluate their organisational setup and structure. Traditional hierarchical structures often hinder the exchange of ideas and collaboration across different generations. Instead, institutions can explore alternative models that promote inclusivity and shared decision-making. Examples of cross-generational structures include the following:

1. **Co-leadership:** Implementing co-leadership models, where two individuals from different generations jointly hold leadership positions, can bring diverse perspectives and enhance decision-making. This approach fosters collaboration, encourages knowledge-sharing and creates an environment of mutual learning. This could include joint structures of chairs, wherein experienced senior professors work in tandem with younger faculty members, which can promote cross-generational collaboration and ensure a seamless transfer of knowledge and expertise. This model allows for the integration of fresh ideas and encourages mentorship.

2. **Reverse mentoring and mutual learning:** Creating mentoring programmes that pair senior administrators with junior staff members or students can facilitate the transfer of institutional wisdom and nurture talent. Additionally, establishing platforms for mutual learning and knowledge exchange can break down generational barriers and encourage the co-creation of solutions.

3. **Horizon boards for universities:** In an audacious move to harness the potential of their most vital stakeholders, higher education institutions may embark on a novel experiment: forming a Horizon Board composed exclusively of students and young researchers. In this way, universities would follow numerous examples of organisations that have set up Horizon Boards (or 'shadow boards') to leverage the perspectives and foresight of their younger members. Members of Horizon Boards can regularly consult organisational leadership on strategic issues and devise and implement their own strategic initiatives, *eg* on learning methods, curricula or more inclusive student experiences. Setting up such visionary bodies can thus be a key mechanism to be aware of emerging trends early and meaningfully involve voices from across the institution.

To drive innovation and encourage deep thinking on the future of higher education, universities should provide spaces for experimentation and reflection. This may involve creating dedicated forums, such as innovation labs or research centres, where stakeholders from different generations can collaborate on exploring new approaches and shaping the future of education. Additionally, fostering a culture that values and rewards critical thinking and intellectual curiosity allows for the development of visionary leaders.

CO-CREATING METHODS AND CONTENT OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

Traditionally, the student–teacher relationship has been characterised by a hierarchical dichotomy, where educators impart knowledge to passive learners. However, this approach is no longer sufficient to motivate and involve future generations in the learning process. By embracing student perspectives, higher education institutions can develop a more relevant and engaging curriculum that aligns with students' aspirations and interests. Furthermore, involving students in decision-making processes regarding teaching methodologies can foster a sense of community, ownership and dedication within the academic environment on both sides of the coin.

Essential aspects of a new approach towards involving learners include:

1. **Allowing students to decide on curriculum and teaching methods:** While we must not disregard the experience and knowledge that educators contribute, students can – and in many cases, would love to – offer unique insights into emerging fields and topics. By embracing their perspectives, higher education institutions can create a relevant and engaging curriculum that aligns with students' aspirations. Involving learners not just as recipients but also as active participants in teaching, such as through student-led seminars or guest lectures from young voices, fosters deeper engagement with the subject matter.

2. **Re-defining the framework of university education:** The COVID-19 pandemic exposed inefficiencies and inequalities in various sectors, including higher education. While education experienced digital innovation during lockdowns, that progress seems to have stagnated as our lives have returned to normal. In most institutions, those decisions were made from high up – without asking the students, whose day-to-day existence was impacted. To advance, higher education should request and incorporate students' desires and inputs – whether in relation to digital teaching methods, blended learning approaches, or innovative in-person techniques – to enhance content absorption and inclusivity, ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities to thrive.

The question must be raised whether we are actually doing all we can to support the most important stakeholders of higher education in deciding their own path and prospering in it. Students seem most often subject to decisions made for them, rather than involved in cooperating on the development of the decisions affecting them. Creating cross-generational debate forums that actively prompt questioning of the status quo of education is sure to lead to advancement in teaching that stems from both experience and innovation.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO BE INSTITUTIONAL ENTREPRENEURS

Within the ecosystem of our university, the St. Gallen Symposium is not the only long-standing institution initiated and sustained through the initiative and creativity of students. Oikos International was founded here in 1987 to elevate the role of environmental sustainability in higher education teaching and learning and to enable students to be part of the solutions early on. Additionally, START Global was established in 1996 as a non-profit student initiative focused on empowering emerging entrepreneurs. Organised by students, their most recent annual summit brought together more than 6000 participants.

The examples of the St. Gallen Symposium, Oikos and START show what can happen when students are empowered to build big things. When student initiatives are given space for experimentation (quite literally 'space', as the Symposium still takes place annually for three days in the university's main buildings), their passion and dedication also help advance the institutional development and profile of universities as a whole. Today, cross-generational engagement, regenerative business models and entrepreneurship are core pillars of the University of St. Gallen's profile in teaching and research – which has evolved in close dialogue with student-driven initiatives that have moved early and quickly into uncharted terrain.

CONCLUSION

In the face of disruptive times and the need for future-oriented thinking and change, higher education institutions must prioritise cross-generational dialogue, leadership and decision-making structures. By rethinking organisational setups, embracing innovative systems, enabling experimentation and fostering sense-making, institutions can create an inclusive and dynamic environment that drives excellence in education. Connecting currents across generations empowers higher education institutions to navigate challenges, adapt to evolving needs, and prepare students for the future.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How can we effectively leverage cross-generational dialogue and leadership in (international) higher education to accelerate future-oriented thinking and change in universities?

2. In what ways does your institution actively involve students in strategic planning, institutional innovation activities or project development?

3. What roles do students play when it comes to envisioning and moving toward the future of internationalisation at your institution?

About the authors

Peter Balleis, SJ has over 30 years of international and intercultural experience working in all parts of the world, in particular in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, spending longer periods in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Brazil, Italy and Switzerland. In his over 20 years in leadership positions as director of projects of the Society of Jesus at regional and global levels, all positions required a pioneering spirit, either to develop a new Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) region in Southern Africa, or to enhance the JRS at the international level. More recently, Fr Balleis pioneered the work of Jesuit Worldwide Learning, providing high-quality higher education to marginalised communities, growing from two to over 70 learning centres across more than 20 countries worldwide.

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Charlotte de Fraiture joined IHE Delft (Netherlands) as Professor of Land and Water Development, leading the group on Water and Agriculture. She is also affiliated to the Water Resources Management group at Wageningen University and Research (Netherlands). Since 2018 Charlotte has been a member of the Rectorate as Vice Rector Academic & Student Affairs of IHE Delft, leading the effort of developing new MSc programmes on Water and Sustainable Development. With a background in irrigation engineering and economics, her broad research and education interests include agricultural water management and food security, small-scale and farmer-led irrigation development, irrigation performance assessment, irrigation water management, and ecosystem services and water pricing. She holds a PhD in Civil Engineering (specialisation Water Resources Management) and an MA in Economics from the University of Colorado Boulder (USA), and an MSc in Irrigation Water Engineering from Wageningen University.

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Frauke Kops is Head of Operations & Marketing of the St. Gallen Symposium, where she is responsible for the Marketing and Communication Department, leads several strategic projects and fosters the organisation's digitalisation. With hands-on roles as a Consultant at the Institute of Retail Management of the University of St. Gallen and several start-ups, she honed cross-channel strategies, drove competitive analysis and established robust systems. She studied Business, Economics and Law in Germany and Switzerland and holds a PhD in Marketing on B2B conflict management.

Maximilian Pefestorff was part of the 52nd International Students' Committee (ISC), the team of students at the University of St. Gallen that shaped and organised the 2023 St. Gallen Symposium. For the ISC, he was responsible for communication, helped organise the Global Leadership Challenge together with the University of Oxford, and contributed to shaping the Symposium's joint initiative for 'A New Generational Contract' with the Club of Rome. He is currently pursuing a degree in Law & Economics at the University of St. Gallen. On the side, he is actively involved in promoting youth culture on a municipal level in his hometown of St. Gallen.

Judy Peter is Director (Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships) at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (South Africa) and is responsible for internationalisation and research uptake. Judy has a multi-disciplinary career in visual art history, jewellery design and manufacture, research, and curatorial practice. Her research areas include decolonising higher education in visual art histories and internationalisation. She is engaged in collaborative research projects in Croatia, Slovakia, Romania and Peru. Judy has developed and facilitated faculty-led short learning programmes for students in Zagreb in 2014 and New York from 2015–2016, and has compiled a programme called 'Internationalisation in Higher Education: Global Leadership' in collaboration with Stellenbosch University, endorsed by THENSA, IEASA and USAf. She has presented and chaired panels at IEASA, AIEA, EAIE, APAIE, CAA and ASA. Judy holds a Master's in Public Development and Management from the University of the Witwatersrand and a DPhil (Visual Studies) from the University of Pretoria.

Felix Rüdiger is Head of Content & Research of the St. Gallen Symposium, where he shapes the development of dialogue initiatives, research publications and impact projects. This includes the symposium's joint initiative with the Club of Rome for 'A New Generational Contract'. He regularly publishes on issues related to organisational strategy and intergenerational equity. Felix is also a doctoral student in Organization Studies and Cultural Theory at the University of St. Gallen. Previously, he worked for ETH Zurich and the UN International Labour Organization, and has studied economics and international relations in Münster, Berlin and Princeton.

Jhuliane Evelyn da Silva is Assistant Professor of Language and Educational Studies at Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto (Brazil). She is also the co-chair of the Critical Internationalization Studies Network. She holds a PhD in Linguistic Studies from the Federal University of Paraná, a Master´s degree in Language and Teaching from Federal University of Campina Grande and a major in English and Literature from Universidade do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, all in Brazil. Jhuliane identifies as a non-white female Latin American scholar and educator whose research analyses the complex and contradictory

roles which education and language education are called to serve in neoliberal times. Informed by critical and decolonial scholarship that do not separate modernity and coloniality and sees the latter as the condition of possibility of the former, she has been gesturing towards ways of researching, thinking, relating and being otherwise inside and outside academia. As far as internationalisation is concerned, she is currently working with the role of English in internationalisation processes, projects to inhabit academia otherwise, translanguaging, embodied ethics, relationality and emotions.

Sharon Stein is Associate Professor of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia (Canada). She is founder of the Critical Internationalization Studies Network, and a founding member of the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective. Sharon is a white settler scholar whose research asks how education can prepare people to respond to complex social and ecological problems in relevant, responsible and reparative ways. As a scholar and educator, she is committed to developing frames of inquiry and pedagogical practices that can support people to unlearn harmful and unsustainable habits of knowing and being, interrupt ethnocentric imaginaries of justice and change, and learn to cultivate deeper forms of self-reflexivity and relational rigour. Her current work is focused on the complexities of efforts to confront colonialism in different fields of study and practice, and rethinking climate education to prioritise the development of individual and collective capacities for justice-oriented coordination.