

FORUM

MEMBER
MAGAZINE

Discussing international education



THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VOICE

06 A FALSE DICHOTOMY: CROSSING THE DOMESTIC—INTERNATIONAL DIVIDE

12 STUDENT VOICES IN AGREEMENT

16 IN CONVERSATION WITH JUAN RAYÓN GONZÁLEZ

26 BEWARE, THEY ARE EDUCATED!

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CONTENTS

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04 EDITORIAL

05 CONTRIBUTORS

06 A FALSE DICHOTOMY: CROSSING THE DOMESTIC- INTERNATIONAL DIVIDE

Who is 'the international student' – or do they even exist?

09 INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS

Offering internationals a seat at the table

12 STUDENT VOICES IN AGREEMENT

Domestic and international students on the same side of the debate

16 IN CONVERSATION WITH JUAN RAYÓN GONZÁLEZ

From Erasmus student, to ESN President, to working for a university alliance

20 PARTNERING FOR RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL MINDS

How one Erasmus+ partnership gives its students a voice

23 ENGAGING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN LATIN AMERICAN HEIs

Internationalisation has a different flavour in Latin America

26 BEWARE, THEY ARE EDUCATED!

Integrating community engagement in the curriculum

29 THE MANY VOICES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

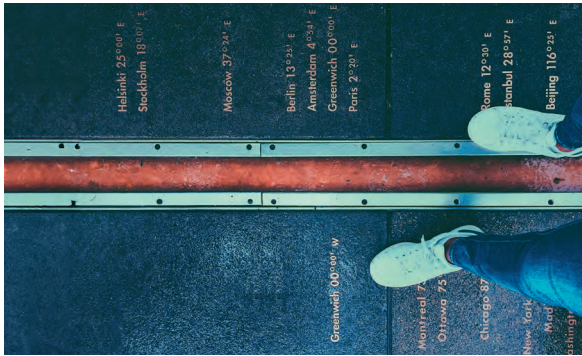
Refining our thinking about 'the student voice'

33 EAIE BLOG SPOT

34 EXPLORING LA VILLE ROSE AND OCCITANIA AT #EAIE2024

How to enjoy France's 'pink city' at this year's conference

39 CALENDAR OF EVENTS



06

“Can we truly talk of ‘the international student voice’ given the range of countries and backgrounds of our students?”

A FALSE DICHOTOMY: CROSSING THE DOMESTIC-INTERNATIONAL DIVIDE

12

“Only 7.7% of students at universities of applied sciences such as mine were international. It would be a shame to reduce it even further”

STUDENT VOICES IN AGREEMENT



16

“To be able to have a voice, students need to feel that people care about them and that they are appreciated in their host institutions”

IN CONVERSATION WITH JUAN RAYÓN GONZÁLEZ

26

“What is an authoritarian leader’s biggest fear? A young, critical and brave student activist”

BEWARE, THEY ARE EDUCATED!



EDITORIAL

When we talk of the student voice, we necessarily reference both the act of speaking and listening, and this Spring 2024 edition of *Forum* seeks to unpack the different ways in which international student voices are expressed and heard in higher education.

Conscious that students today are demanding more agency from the institutions where they study, we were keen to use this edition to explore the formal involvement of international students in the lives of their institutions, be that through direct participation in governance bodies or indeed through protest and activism. We also wanted to learn more about who listens to the international student voice and how. Pursuing an international education is generally intended to support students to think critically and engage meaningfully with global society, so is anybody listening?

I am delighted that we have been able to directly include a number of international student voices in this edition, bringing first-hand accounts of the lived experience of international students in Ireland, Norway and the Netherlands.

Similarly our interviewee – Juan Rayón González – brings unique student and staff perspectives, as a former Erasmus exchange student in Istanbul, as immediate past president of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), and now as strategic manager of the INGENIUM

European Universities alliance (with ten members in ten European countries). In this interview, Juan reflects on the importance of international students developing both a sense of belonging and agency, or in other words, finding their voice and then learning to using it.

In addition to student perspectives, it is important to note that this topic is of key interest to the international education research community, and I'm pleased that we've been able to include articles from both an established and a next-generation researcher.

Dr Jenna Mittelmeier (University of Manchester, UK) encourages us to recognise the nuance and plurality in international students' voices and representations, drawing on a recent publication to outline a series of problematic assumptions in how international students are talked about.

Similarly, Emerita Prof Elspeth Jones (Leeds Beckett University, UK) – who has had long involvement with the EAIE and won the EAIE's Tony Adams Award for Excellence in Research in 2014 – queries the false dichotomy between domestic and international students. How can we understand the international student voice, if we continue to oversimplify the diverse backgrounds and requirements of the student population as a whole?

While questions remain as to how institutions formally incorporate in-



ternational students into their governance frameworks, and whether this representation is framed as part of – or separate to – the broader representation of all students, I hope that this edition of *Forum* provides new insights into this key issue. With thanks to the authors and to Lucia Brajkovic on the EAIE Publications Committee who joined me in reviewing submissions.

I hope that you enjoy reading this edition of *Forum*.

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Helsinki 25°00' E
Stockholm 18°07' E

Moscow 37°24' E

Berlin 13°25' E
Amsterdam 4°54' E
Greenwich 00°00' E
Paris 2°20' E

Rome 12°30' E
Istanbul 28°57' E

A FALSE DICHOTOMY

CROSSING THE DOMESTIC— INTERNATIONAL DIVIDE

Greenwich 00°00' W

Montreal 73°37' W

Ottawa 75°46' W

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In considering how higher education institutions can listen to and amplify the international student voice, perhaps the first question to ask is who ‘the international student’ is – or whether they exist at all. One’s visa status may be relevant in the admissions office, but its use as a marker of identity or signifier of student experience is complicated at best.

As an increasing number of students pursue their education in countries beyond their own, and others take part in international mobility programmes, it is incumbent on receiving institutions to address the needs of these students.¹ There are many challenges faced by students moving to new countries for their studies, not only in academic but also in more personal terms, and there is now greater awareness that international students may require different services and academic and linguistic support, as well as the opportunity to acclimatise to new academic and social cultures.

However, this can also lead to oversimplifying the situation. Although the term ‘international student’ is widely used, overgeneralisation is both

reinforce stereotypical perspectives and hinder a more nuanced understanding of context and needs.

Socio-cultural issues for students from different countries may certainly affect the experience and thus the ‘voice’ of these students. Yet it should not be assumed that all those from a certain country will experience a new learning and living environment in the same way. Highlighting ‘common characteristics’ of international students or the traits of different nationalities runs the risk of assuming that they are a homogeneous rather than an extremely diverse group, just as is the case for all students.

Overgeneralisation not only perpetuates stereotypes but can also lead to ‘deficit’ thinking, implying that international students need to adapt to host country norms. They are criticised for lack of critical thinking, poor language competence, failure to integrate and a tendency to plagiarise, yet all of these normalise standards expected in the host country, usually from an Anglo-Western academic and potentially elitist perspective. Instead, we need to think about how the institution might adapt to become a more welcoming environment for students from diverse contexts, whether international or domestic.

Can we truly talk of ‘the international student voice’ given the range of countries and backgrounds of our students?

common and problematic – can we truly talk of ‘the international student voice’ given the range of countries and backgrounds of our students? Yet there continues to be a tendency to consider nationality or even students’ broader regional context when we talk about international students, masking both population diversity within those countries and individual characteristics and backgrounds. Large-scale surveys of ‘international’ student experience can reinforce this way of thinking, with students often categorised by national origin. Simplifying complexity in this way can inadvertently

A FALSE DICHOTOMY

The traditional binary classification of students as domestic or international oversimplifies the diverse backgrounds and requirements of the student population. While we may pay insufficient attention to heterogeneity among international students, we can also fail to recognise commonalities between the backgrounds and needs of some international and domestic students. For example, just as we should not assume all international students are studying in a foreign language, neither should we imagine that all domestic students are native speakers. Some international

Beijing 116°25' E

New York
Mad
Vashinot

students will have greater familiarity with the host country and language than others, while students technically classified as domestic may have similar needs to students identified as international by passport or visa status. Domestic students may be recent migrants, speak another

in academic writing might be of equal benefit to many native speakers as it is to some international students.

It seems self-evident, therefore, that not all and not only international students have the same academic or pastoral support needs, and that their

students and can no longer access the support offered to international students. Yet their needs, either academic or pastoral, may not have changed. Although certain matters are exclusive to international students, such as visa issues or police registration, many are not.

There would seem to be value in making more interdisciplinary connections, learning from research and practice on the transition to higher education, while at the same time drawing parallels between diversity in the domestic student population and heterogeneity among international students.

At a practical level, rethinking the student experience as a whole may require us to reconsider the way our universities are structured and organised. The general tendency towards vertical institutional organisation may limit our thinking and cause the international–domestic dichotomy to be maintained. Reorganisation for integrated service delivery may be impractical for some universities, but recognising these issues and encouraging staff and faculty to work across structural boundaries could be a useful starting point. Thinking and operating laterally rather than vertically could result in a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to internationalisation, diversity and social and cultural inclusion, which would better reflect the individual differences presented by our students and more effectively serve the student population as a whole, regardless of provenance.

—ELSPETH JONES

Just as we should not assume all international students are studying in a foreign language, neither should we imagine that all domestic students are native speakers

language at home or be unfamiliar with the academic traditions or education systems of the ‘home’ country.

Equally, in times of mass participation in higher education, the academic, cultural and social capital previously assumed to exist for those classed as domestic students may no longer hold true. As numbers expand, so does diversity, including mature students, first in family to go to university, those with an indigenous heritage and so on. Domestic students from black and ethnic minority or working-class backgrounds, as well as students with disabilities, have been found to face similar issues to international students on entering higher education. Even students from a rural location who move to study in a large city may face major cultural issues. Such concerns are often the remit of offices responsible for equality and diversity or access and widening participation, and there can be limited interaction with those responsible for working with international students. In the difficult transition from secondary to tertiary education, training

country of birth does not define those needs. In this increasingly complex higher education environment, what do we really mean by ‘the international student voice’? Continuing to accept the traditional domestic–international student divide could be working against more effective solutions.

CROSSING BOUNDARIES

In institutional terms, domestic and international students are often handled separately, with many universities having an international office dedicated to recruiting, admitting and advising international students, while a separate office advises domestic students on international mobility experiences and others take care of students from ‘non-traditional’ backgrounds. There may be additional language support or academic writing workshops targeted at international students, which are unavailable to domestic students who have a similar need for such services. For example, in some countries, once asylum seekers are formally accepted as refugees, they are classified as domestic

1. This article is adapted from Jones, E. (2017). Problematising and reimagining the notion of ‘international student experience’. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(5), 933–943. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1293880>



INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS

Representation is a crucial part of creating inclusive institutions. So why aren't more international students represented in key decision-making bodies in higher education? Currently, a number of logistical and cultural challenges stand in the way – but higher education institutions can help. ►

All hearts beat to the same rhythm of humanity – and in the symphony of life, everyone deserves a harmonious melody of equality. The international students of today are advocates for diversity and inclusion, supporting and proposing policies that ensure a welcoming and supportive environment for all students, regardless of their origin. International students' global perspectives, experience and varied approaches to day-to-day life bring a valuable and dynamic dimension to higher education institutions. The voice of international students calls upon institutions to

country. Challenges include prolonged and strenuous immigration procedures, the exorbitant cost of residence permit cards (€300 in Ireland) and the limited likelihood of acquiring extensive qualifications and years of work experience while staying in expensive accommodation and paying high international fees. Then there are restrictions on visa extensions, varying across countries.

These limitations play a role in deterring international individuals from remaining in the country if they are unable to secure employment within a specified timeframe after graduation. Additionally,

and fail to influence institutional policies. While some institutions provide limited support through scholarships and grants, these measures are not universally applicable and do not address all the difficulties caused by the high costs of international education.

International students enrolled in short programmes have limited time and opportunity to raise concerns about aspects they find unsatisfactory. The Students' Union at University College Dublin has, though, campaigned for improved stipends for PhD students and affordable student accommodation. Non-European international students face significant challenges in securing funded PhD opportunities and living on low wages.

In some European countries, including Ireland, non-European international students cannot run for a full-time position as a student representative due to visa restrictions. The participation of international students in unions and governance bodies is often confined to voluntary roles assumed by motivated individuals. However, in general, most international students are grappling with the challenges of adapting to a new environment, navigating cultural differences and managing their finances, resulting in limited contributions to such roles.

There is a notably low percentage of positions held by international individuals in institutions' higher decision-making committees

enhance accessibility and promote fairness in education for everyone, which will play a crucial role in shaping future global citizens who appreciate diversity and work towards equality and inclusion.

Most higher education institutions in Europe are currently falling short of these expectations. It's disheartening, for example, to acknowledge the notably low percentage of positions held by international individuals in institutions' higher decision-making committees. The origin of this poor representation can be traced back to the difficult situation for international students and particularly non-EU citizens when they relocate to a new

if they are non-European, they have to secure a job that sponsors their work visa. The cumulative impact of these myriad issues results in low levels of international involvement and employment among higher education staff and the country's population. This contributes to a lack of diversity and hinders efforts towards achieving equality and inclusion.

LIMITING FACTORS

International students consistently advocate for the reduction of international fees and more affordable accommodation. Unfortunately, these endeavours garner limited attention from the media

PATHS FORWARD

The pursuit of equality, diversity and inclusion within higher education institutions through international engagement is a lengthy and arduous journey. Nevertheless, there are viable strategies to

navigate this challenge successfully. One approach involves providing increased assistance to international students, including by providing emergency grants, raising awareness about diverse entry pathways and aiding in job placement through university careers departments. Additionally, fostering inclusive spaces on campuses and enforcing a department and space in each institution accountable for supporting international students can contribute to building a more robust and equitable global future.

Advocating for fair immigration and visa policies is another crucial step, along with aiming to eliminate any obstacles that may hinder non-EU students from seeking candidacy for full-time student representative positions.

Establishment of international student societies in each country can be another effective approach. The committee of the society should ideally consist of student representatives from different higher education institutions from all across their respective country, with a preference for international students. These societies can serve as platforms for discussing and addressing common challenges and finding solutions.

Policies can also be integrated into the constitutions of nationwide student unions to specifically address equitable education for international students and the promotion of diversity. Moreover, reserving spots for international individuals in decision-making administrative committees within institutions, and creating roles in student unions that campaign for

internationalism, equality, diversity and inclusion on campus, are vital initiatives.

Actions to boost internationalism and intercultural understanding can include virtual and traditional exchange programmes. While virtual exchange programmes such as the NICE programme, Erasmus+ and Universitas 21 are already active, there is still scope for the promotion and integration of virtual exchange initiatives in institutions across Europe. Moreover, providing exchange grants to students and expanding partnerships with non-European universities can further contribute to enhancing intercontinental comprehension and cooperation.

Finally, addressing the longstanding issue of high international fees for non-European students involves instituting more scholarships and monetary aid programmes to alleviate the financial burden. This will facilitate increased accessibility to education and thereby greater diversity.

While the challenge of embracing diversity through internationalism is vast, the array of solutions underscores the opportunity for both staff and students to cultivate a sense of belonging. This involves recognising the importance of intercultural communication, interfaith understanding, diverse events, visual culture and global citizenship. In doing so, higher education institutions can create environments that celebrate, support and actively campaign for internationalism and the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.

—SIMRAN KHATRI

STUDENT VOICES IN AGREEMENT



As societal discussions around housing and immigration continue to heat up in the Netherlands, internationalisation has found itself caught in the crossfire. Against a backdrop of changing policies and public sentiment, Simone Hackett of The Hague University of Applied Sciences invited one domestic student and one international student to add their voices to the debate.

In the past, the Dutch government's vision on internationalisation was that all students in the Netherlands should obtain intercultural competencies.¹ However, with rising concerns over immigration and the number of international students enrolled at Dutch universities, the government has changed its outlook and is now aiming to restrict numbers and limit internationalisation activities in higher education. These restrictions directly affect international and Dutch students.

Last year, a public consultation was set up by the Dutch government that allowed people to openly share their opinions on the proposed restrictions.²

other students face if they are to be deprived of the opportunity to follow internationally oriented courses or interact with international students.

VINCE PADOS: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Coming from Hungary and having grown up in Germany, I have always been drawn towards international environments. I decided to study in the Netherlands for several reasons. First, the programme I study – international sports management at The Hague University of Applied Sciences – with its strong international orientation and fast-track duration of three years, is one of the few English-taught

Only 7.7% of students at universities of applied sciences such as mine were international. It would be a shame to reduce it even further

University boards and academics responded, but there were few reactions from students. However, Vince Pados, an international student, and Marijn Rijk, a Dutch student, who are both studying in the Netherlands, were the first students to react to the consultation and oppose the restrictions.

Given this, I decided it would be valuable to invite both Vince and Marijn to contribute to this article, providing an international student voice and a home student voice. Below, both Vince and Marijn discuss the value of internationalisation and the importance of the international classroom and collaboration between Dutch and international students. They also discuss the fears and setbacks that they and

programmes of its kind in the EU. In addition, the Netherlands has an inclusive and multicultural reputation and The Hague, known as the city of peace and justice and for its international character, appealed to me greatly.

Recently, there have been claims that Dutch taxpayers' money is being used to fund international students' education, and that international students are taking advantage of the Dutch education system. I find these claims surprising for several reasons.

First of all, 25.1% of the total student population registered at Dutch research universities in 2022–2023 was international; however, this figure was only 7.7% at universities of applied sciences such

as mine.³ This is not a big percentage and it would be a shame to reduce it even further. In Germany, there are a lot more international students and they are seen as an asset to society. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) has recommended that the German government put a plan in place to double the retention of international students by 2030.

Second, according to recent research, international students generate around €1.5 billion for the Dutch economy each year.⁴ This significant contribution is not just because of the quintupled tuition fees that non-EU students pay but also because many international students live, work and pay taxes here. I am lucky enough to work as a basketball coach at an international school in The Hague; many international students are rejected for the jobs they want because of language or cultural barriers, therefore taking whatever jobs they can get, including low-skilled roles that Dutch people are reluctant to take on, such as restaurant kitchen jobs, cleaning jobs or food delivery. Even so, the income that is generated by international students brings economic development, increased employment and societal diversity to both sparsely and densely populated locations throughout the Netherlands. More and more international students decide to stay and work in the Netherlands, securing jobs and again showing their contribution to Dutch society by filling labour shortages and paying taxes. According to recent statistics, 32% of the international students who graduated in 2018–2019 were working in the Netherlands one year later.⁵

As an EU student, like a regular Dutch student, I am entitled to subsidised tuition fees. In Germany, tuition fees are minimal, approximately €600 a year, while Austrian tuition fees can be as low as €20 per semester. I still chose to study in the Netherlands, where I pay a subsidised tuition fee of approximately €2220

become more open-minded and to build up my knowledge while also learning new content, new perspectives and different approaches to solving problems.

During my studies, I have built networks and made friends with both Dutch and international students. The experience has helped me develop not only my

I look forward to finishing my studies in the Netherlands and building more international connections to make this country and the world a better place

per year. This excludes housing costs, food and bills and I do not receive any additional grants. For non-EU students, the tuition fee is much higher.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Netherlands is a country that has been known globally for its inclusivity and multiculturalism. This multiculturalism provides opportunities for learning not only between international and Dutch students in higher education but also outside the classroom in everyday life. My university puts a strong emphasis on helping students develop the skills they need to become global citizens and taps into this cultural diversity by designing courses that have intercultural and international learning outcomes. I get the opportunity to take part in collaborative learning projects with Dutch and international students, in which we work with Dutch and international organisations and businesses. These opportunities have helped me to

academic skills and knowledge but also my intercultural and collaborative skills, which will enable me to find better jobs. Overall, I am extremely grateful to be able to study in the Netherlands. Without this opportunity, I would not have made the friends I have, nor would I have had the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills that will help me in my future career. I look forward to finishing my studies in the Netherlands and building more international connections to make this country and the world a better place.

MARIJN RIJK: DUTCH STUDENT

At 18 years old, I moved from a rural area in the south of the Netherlands to the political capital of the Netherlands: The Hague. With this move, a new world opened up to me and I had the choice to study my preferred degree, a Bachelor's in international public policy and leadership, in either Dutch, my mother

tongue, or English, my second language. It was logical for me to go for English, an international working language, as I chose to study in The Hague, which is renowned as the international city of peace and justice. In addition, studying in English would broaden my horizons, help me develop my communication skills and networks and provide me with international career prospects.

I am in the third year of my programme and I am thoroughly satisfied with my choice of studies and language. Studying in a classroom with a mix of

living expenses and the difficulty of finding accommodation and jobs – I also understand some of the government's concerns. The housing crisis is a societal problem that needs urgent attention, and it has been claimed that international students take up housing opportunities and pressure the market. As a student, I am experiencing this crisis first-hand and have also had difficulty finding accommodation. However, international students did not cause the housing crisis in the Netherlands. Restricting the number of international students coming to the

internationalisation seems to move away from these values as it seeks measures to limit the flow of international students and attempts to limit English-taught education, which I personally find a shame. Without these international opportunities, I would have been deprived of the intercultural experiences I have had during my studies, which have helped me develop. Looking to the future, I see a Europe that needs more understanding, along with international solidarity to solve the problems it is facing in harmony with its citizens. It is only through internationalisation that we can hope to achieve this.

— VINCE PADOS, MARIJN RIJK

& SIMONE HACKETT

International students did not cause the housing crisis; restricting their number will not solve the problems we are facing

students from the EU and beyond has been such an enriching experience. It has expanded my horizons to Bangladesh, Brazil and the United States, providing me with different perspectives and approaches, and it has pushed me to think critically about societal and global issues and developments.

However, when the Dutch government last year proposed restrictions on internationalisation, it raised a lot of questions within me. International students have been the focus of many heated discussions around some of the problems the Netherlands is facing, such as the housing crisis. Although I personally see the struggle that international students experience – high tuition fees,

Netherlands and taking away an international student's opportunity to study here, with the goal of increasing the quality of a Dutch student's experience, will not solve the problems we are facing.

Internationalisation brings fundamental value to the world. The opportunity for young individuals to be exposed to a foreign culture, allowing them to develop an understanding and empathy towards classmates from all around the world, is something that I believe only brings good to our world. Such values are also essential to the European spirit, with the European Union cherishing values such as equality, freedom and the right of citizens to move and reside freely within its borders. The government's proposal on

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2. Government of the Netherlands. (2023, July). *Online consultation starts on proposed legislation concerning internationalisation of higher education*. <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2023/07/14/online-consultation-starts-on-proposed-legislation-concerning-internationalisation-of-higher-education>

3. Nuffic, the Dutch Organisation for Internationalisation in Education. (2023). *Fact sheet on international students*. <https://www.nuffic.nl/sites/default/files/2023-08/2023%20NUF%20factsheet%20international%20students%20EN%20mei%202023.pdf>

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5. Statistics Netherlands. (2023, September). *A third of international graduates working in the Netherlands*. <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2023/37/a-third-of-international-graduates-working-in-the-netherlands>

IN CONVERSATION WITH

JUAN RAYÓN GONZÁLEZ

JACOB GIBBONS
EAIE

From his first mobility experience as a student to his current role at one of the European University alliances, Juan Rayón González has experienced many different facets of internationalisation. As a student he visited Turkey and learned first-hand about internationalisation and its potential, later serving as president of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN). Now, as strategic manager of the INGENIUM alliance, he occupies an interesting vantage point from which to reflect on the recent history and near future of international higher education.

What do you see as the key barriers to international students having a voice in their institutions?

JRG: This question makes me reflect on what we mean by “having a voice” and how it relates to the international student experience, and I think we can break this down into two main components. The first one is belonging; to be able to have a voice, students need to feel that people care about them

To be able to have a voice, students need to feel that people care about them and that they are appreciated in their host institutions

and that they are appreciated in their host institutions. The second one is probably the most important one: agency. For students to have a voice, they need to feel that they can make an impact, that they have a role to play.

So we need to ask ourselves, how can we facilitate students developing that sense of belonging and agency? This is important because, as we work to organise any kind of international experience, removing all those potential barriers and showing

students how their universities care about them is something that can only be done effectively if we work at different levels involving all bodies with a role to play in international education. This endeavour is mainly about making sure there is a channel and that students know what that channel is, they know whom to contact, they know what they can do. It also means ensuring students feel they are capable of changing the status quo somehow. This can be about showing students how they can create a business in the country, or how they can initiate a volunteering project in the university, or how they can create a new student club, because those are also ways of having a voice.

You have been closely involved with both the Spanish chapter of the ESN and the Europe-wide network, serving in senior leadership roles in both. Drawing from this experience, can you point to any examples of best practice in international students shaping higher education policy or practice in their institutions or more broadly?

JRG: One great example of community engagement and active learning is in the University of Franche-Comte in Besançon, where the local ESN association works with international students to create a semester course¹ in which every year, several incoming international students volunteer with a large

number of local social organisations. It can be taking care of the elderly, supporting schools, working with marginalised communities *etc.* Importantly, besides having a unique experience of community engaged learning, students also get ECTS for it, because of the students together with ESN and different academics from the university having advocated for this. So this is a great example of how when students organise and work together, involve alumni and staff, and have a clear strategy, they can totally shape and change educational practices.

Another example relates to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Until the very last day before the invasion, ESN's local associations in Ukraine were still helping international students who were there, doing welcome activities in Kiev for example. As soon as the war started, they didn't stop for a second, and they started to organise different ways to help Ukrainians abroad who were fleeing the country because of the invasion. This led to the creation of a sort of buddy system that was used by a number of students across Europe to try to find contacts. At the same time, the advocacy work done by ESN Ukraine and other organisations also contributed to changes in the Erasmus+ implementation that allowed more Ukrainian students to access Erasmus+ funds. So here we have two different practices that are completely different in terms of scope, but I think that they both show how a sense of agency and an understanding of the role of students can enable the student voice to take different shapes and have an impact.

What is the perceived value of international student participation in Spain? Do you think this differs in other European countries and, if so, how?

JRG: Spain has record numbers in Erasmus+ every year; students from all over Europe want to come to Spain. But when it comes to degree-seeking mobility, numbers are not as high as in other countries, even though they have been increasing in the last few years, due in particular to students from Latin America and from Europe who come on an exchange and then come back to pursue a Master's or a PhD, or maybe do another degree, *etc.* So I think Spaniards, Spanish society and the Spanish higher education sector really value internationalisation and how hosting international students is a positive thing.

I would say that the challenge in Spain is that, when it comes to how to channel all that potential brought in by international students, policy measures are not yet fully developed. There is still untapped potential to attract more students at the bachelor level and to build on the potential of the European Universities Initiative. Besides that, the national agency responsible for Erasmus+ does not have such a broad mandate in terms of internationalisation policy compared to similar agencies in other countries, which often have an overarching strategy to work in all things internationalisation. So I think that our priority area for the Spanish higher education sector can be to be more strategic in the way that we use all that human talent, so that more and more international students want to stay and take an active part in their communities.

Can you give some examples of successful campaigns of activism by international students? Or is it perhaps the case that student activism is most effective when it has a broader basis of support (i.e. by all students) in a given institution or country?

JRG: One important ongoing discussion in our sector is whether it is better to just have a greater number of grants which are at a lower amount but reach more students, or if it's more important to make sure that the grants awarded provide quality support that allows any student to benefit from mobility. In the international education sector, of course, we all want more students to go abroad, but there are different moments that create different needs and should therefore lead to different policy choices. In thinking about this question, in a focus group session at an event that Erasmus Student Network sections organise every year called Erasmus Generation Meeting, most of the participants there agreed that at this point in time, the important thing was to prioritise increasing the amount of the Erasmus+ grant. This confirmed the trends we had been seeing in our large-scale data collection efforts of the last few years. After a lot of advocacy towards the European Commission and other actors, this year the programme has brought one of the highest increases in Erasmus+ grants in the last few years, responding to the affordability crisis that young Europeans have been experiencing in the last few years. So basically, from next year Erasmus students will get extra travel support with a special focus on green travel, which will

increase grants by likely between 10% and 20% for most students.

This is a very material and specific change in the experience of thousands of students, and it was only possible because of the discussions and the contributions of not only a whole network of organisations, but also students on the ground who wanted to share their perspectives with us and reached us by email, social media or casual conversations. This is accompanied by many changes at the local level with universities that decide to change the way they give their grants

Whenever we want to create real change, we should always try to act as a network in all ways possible

or decide to look for some spare funds to improve the amount of the grant. It really shows the importance of multi-level advocacy: not thinking that “I have a problem that only affects me”, but really trying to establish connections with other organisations and other students, to see what problems we have in common and how we can create a common front. Whenever we want to create real change, we should always try to act as a network in all ways possible.

In your current role with INGENIUM, how does this European Universities alliance ensure that it is listening to international student voices? Are there

formal mechanisms for this in the governance of the alliance? Or perhaps less formal mechanisms within the individual member institutions? What importance does input from international and/or mobile students have?

JRG: European University alliances are able to do and to test things that, hopefully, can then be transferred to the whole higher education sector. That’s also true for student involvement and student engagement: the alliances provide us with an opportunity to create a European student body. The INGENIUM alliance recently established its student board, which will have an advisory role, but will also be represented in the two key decision-making bodies: an alliance council with the leaders of the universities, and a steering committee which deals with day-to-day issues. In the future, the alliance will incorporate students in all the key bodies, such as an academic committee that decides on the joint academic offer, an innovation committee, and quality assurance bodies. The idea – which I believe should be the blueprint for all alliances – is to have students represented across all the different bodies and different processes of the alliance. But even more important than that is to work on the engagement part of this equation, because having students represented in the decision-making process is key, but it is not enough. You will never be able to reach all students by simply having a couple of seats reserved to them in particular places. Beyond that, what is important is to also make sure that all students in the university see the alliance as a space for co-creation, dialogue and learning – as a platform where they can

propose new ideas. I think that both for my alliance, and for all alliances, the main priority is that all students and all members of the academic community see the alliance as a space that they’re also part of, where they belong and where they can have an impact, which circles back to the first question of the interview.

In the end, what we need is a combination of strong top-down leadership – in the sense that the leadership of the university should be committed to creating the conditions for participation and engagement – and bottom-up processes that are clearly defined. And I hope that the INGENIUM alliance will be able to provide a great example for the whole sector.

1. <https://besancon.esnfrance.org/projets-dengagement-social-et-citoyen/>

PARTNERING FOR RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL MINDS



Part of giving students a voice means offering meaningful ways to give input towards making decisions that affect them. This is exactly what the Erasmus+ collaborative partnership IBE-ReGloMi aims to do as it undertakes to cultivate responsible global minds among tomorrow's business leaders.

Let's start this piece with a small poll. What is internationalisation to you? Some may say it's a process, it's about quality, it needs to be meaningful. Others may say it's hard work, it's fun. And yes, it is about students, too. About students?

In our Erasmus+ collaborative partnership called Innovating Business Education for Responsible Global Minds, in short IBE-ReGloMi, we try to engage students as full partners with ownership of what we aim to achieve. Students have a say and an equal seat at the table when we develop our ideas and design our project activities. IBE-ReGloMi students participate in roundtables with local businesses, they participate in or even conduct focus groups with peers, and some join the transnational project meetings. When you think about it, of course they need to have their say in this project. After all, it is their minds we aspire to change. The question is: Are we succeeding?

SHATTERING PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS

In our project, we work to include sustainability and social innovation in the business curriculum and align these areas with its ethical, international, intercultural and global dimensions. Recently, halfway into the project, we reflected on the impact of the voice of students. We asked participating students and academics about their lessons learned and what they had been surprised by. What came across loud and clear is that students felt their engagement mattered. The following quote illustrates the students' voice: "What surprised me most when I collaborated with lecturers in our project is the genuine interest and openness of the lecturers to our ideas. I was surprised by their willingness to consider and integrate our perspectives. It shattered



Image: Shutterstock

What came across loud and clear is that students felt their engagement mattered

any preconceived notions I had about a traditional lecturer–student dynamic.”

It was not only the students who learned something new. One of the partners said: “What surprised me most about the student contributions is their genuine enthusiasm and insightful perspectives. It made me realise the transformative power of student input.”

‘PRACTISING FOR REAL LIFE’

Participation provided students with an internationalised professional experience. “Now I understand why working in diverse project groups is important. Today, I learned how complex a

transnational meeting is and how to ensure that all feel part of it. We are practising for real life,” one of the students remarked. The student learning extended beyond knowledge and skills. Participating in the project supported the development of their professional identity, or as another student contributed: “Most importantly, it has inspired me to begin my journey of self-discovery as a young business professional.”

Surprisingly (or not), the inclusion of students also affected at a deep level how the academics perceived their own role as educators: “In the project, students weren’t just contributors; they were architects of their educational future. Their passion and feedback resonated, affirming that by empowering students, we empower the very essence of education.”

Some academics stated that this project made them reflect on the role of students. It made them “realise the dynamic synergy that emerges when students actively participate in shaping

their future. Their contributions illuminated the need for a collaborative and student-centric approach.” Moreover, they shared the insight that a student-centred approach may only be successful if it actually is a two-way street. “Beyond just learning, students crave active involvement, making them true partners in the educational journey.”

DEVELOPING GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

The focus of IBE-ReGloMI lies in the development of graduate attributes in students, which companies need to transform towards more sustainable and just ways of operating. These attributes include critical thinking, adaptability, global awareness and being tech-savvy in a business context. Our focus naturally led to engaged discussions on the impact on society and international businesses of issues such as global and geopolitical challenges, climate change, increasing inequality, technological advancements and the artificial intelligence revolution. Even though

some students said they did not believe they could change anything, it surprised academics “how deeply involved and interested they are with our topics of social innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainability on a global scale”. Other academics

and how their intentional inclusion adds value for all participants in our project: both students and academics. Maybe the question of whether we are changing students’ minds is not the most critical one. Isn’t the point more that when we

Isn’t the point more that when we talk about achieving responsible global minds, we as educators should also be open to having our minds changed?

stated that they experienced the student voice as inspiring. Referring to students’ fresh outlooks, they felt that the “suggested creative solutions and approaches added tremendous value to the project”.

Crucially, students themselves started to realise the importance of these attributes: “The majority of the students not only acknowledged but also deeply resonated with the key graduate attributes identified through the initial interviews conducted with both students and companies.” It is promising to observe how, for students, sustainability and social innovation naturally link to international, intercultural or global dimensions. “It was great to find out how everyone cares about the transformational change and how similar the points of view of people who notice the current issues are, even though they observe the whole situation from very different perspectives.”

The reflections that were shared all highlight the relevance of student voices

talk about achieving responsible global minds, we as educators should also be open to having our minds changed? It could well be that the student voice in our project is already starting to achieve this. We leave you with a final quote from one of our students: “If the change is needed, detect it first within. One voice equals a proposal, a few combined equals a call to action. Many points of view, one united goal. Together, towards change.”

With thanks to Kuba Adameke (Kozminski University), Cynthia Mudamburi, (Zuyd International Business School) Luz Lemos (Zuyd International Business School), Smaranda Cosma (Babes Bolyai University), Svetlana Gudkova (Kozminski University), Stefanie Halwas (TH Koln), Kai Thürbach (TH Koln) and all students and academics who are engaging in the IBE-ReGloMi project.

—JEANINE GREGERSEN-HERMANS

ENGAGING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

IN LATIN AMERICAN HEIs

Many aspects of internationalisation play out differently in Latin American higher education institutions. The region's history of progressive student movements, combined with the often hierarchical power relations and overall orientation towards the Global North, add up to an environment in which international students can struggle to make their voices heard. ►

In a vibrant Latin American city, a diverse group of international students is congregating at a local university, bringing unique perspectives that challenge the norm and enrich academic and decision-making discourse. Their presence prompts crucial questions: Why is it important for Latin American higher education institutions to involve international students in the university ecosystem? And how can institutions actively engage with students' diverse perspectives to fuel innovation and societal advancement?

First, let's deal with the 'why'. Universities play a core role in nurturing innovation and entrepreneurship through novel curricula, research and policies. International students and staff bring different perspectives and question local cultural norms and behaviours when trying to understand what is different and uncommon to them. This questioning and contrasting from the perspective of 'otherness' helps us all to reflect on our own behaviour and on why we do what we do. Exchanging and listening to such reflections facilitates a better understanding of issues, boosts problem-solving and embeds fresh ideas into the curriculum and university activities. Involving international students in an open dialogue where their voices are taken seriously can help them to open up to the new cultural otherness that they are trying to understand. Engaging international students in an exchange that offers mutual learning for all students, staff and local stakeholders can therefore be enriching in building commitment to innovative solutions for social and global challenges.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

How well university staff listen to and accept international students' perspectives often depends on their organisational culture and governance structure. In many Latin American institutions, hierarchical structures and epistemological approaches fail to fully appreciate the diverse perspectives international students may offer. For example, Hofstede's Power Distance Index shows high scores for Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, indicating deep-rooted hierarchical norms that may hinder students' participation and influence. Such environments can significantly limit international students' ability to contribute effectively to shaping policies, educational reforms and curriculum and research development.

International students represent about 1% of total enrolments in Latin America,¹ making them almost invisible and curtailing their participation in policy-making and student activism on campus. Moreover, displaced and refugee students are often underrepresented and receive inadequate support from international offices; these students therefore lack formal mechanisms to integrate into university life and collaborate with local peers.

An additional challenge is the predominant Western-centric focus of many Latin American institutions, which often results in partnering with institutions in the Global North while ignoring the opportunities that regional collaboration can offer. This approach fails to harness the varied perspectives of international students from the region on shared regional challenges and underestimates the rich local knowledge in neighbouring countries. Latin American students, familiar with

local challenges, are more likely to actively engage with their peers in addressing regional social, economic, environmental and political issues. This shared context can help students create commitment and social responsibility, leading to greater involvement compared to other international students, for whom these challenges may not resonate personally.

It is essential to recognise and address these challenges to create a more inclusive educational environment: one that values and incorporates the voices of international and refugee students, particularly those from within Latin America.

BENEFITS FOR ALL: A COLOMBIAN CASE STUDY

Student movements in Latin America have historically propelled social progress. However, more students juggle work and studies today due to economic constraints, limiting their participation in university governance and even campus life. This is particularly pronounced among students displaced from rural to urban areas due to poverty or conflict, as they encounter difficulties in adapting to unfamiliar cultural and social environments in major cities.

Simultaneously, while internationalisation hasn't been a primary focus for many Latin American institutions, they continue to prioritise student mobility. In recent years, these institutions have grappled with attracting international students amid growing political, social and security instability in the region. They are launching initiatives aimed not only at integrating the perspectives of international students but also at amplifying the voices of underrepresented groups within the local social fabric. These

programmes mark a trend towards more inclusive and diverse internationalisation practices in the region, aiming to create a more balanced and culturally sensitive educational landscape.

For example, we can highlight programmes in Colombia, where the peace process has allowed higher education institutions to attract a modest number of international students. Many international offices in Colombia involve students in internationalisation strategies and take responsibility for promoting student leadership. At the Universidad Antonio Nariño, a multi-campus Colombian university, the international office engages both national and international students through various strategies such as its Intercultural Club and 'glocal' engagement projects.

The Intercultural Club, created to integrate students coming from outside Bogotá, links and engages professors and students from different faculties and campuses. Indigenous, Afro-Colombian and other students from different regions in Colombia can experience a more intense culture shock than international students, who often come from cosmopolitan cities. The club, which is open to all students and staff, supports cultural exchanges, tours and face-to-face and virtual dialogues, involving students and staff from Argentina, Brazil, India, Mexico and Malaysia. It addresses the importance of listening to the needs of all students and giving them the opportunity to share mutual experiences and grow together.

'Glocal' engagement projects, meanwhile, link students to cooperation efforts implemented by the university. Carolina Rodríguez, a Colombian student who has participated in online mobility, a research

stay in Canada and glocal engagement projects such as Youth for Action and Environmental Classrooms, says: "The best thing about the international experiences is that I gained new academic knowledge that enriches my professional life and gives me a plus for my studies. I also shared my culture, dialect and customs with my foreign classmates, which enriches my personality."

Green Practice is a strategic initiative that Sara, a Colombian architecture student, is starting with the support of the international office. During her exchange at Sarvajani University in India, Sara participated in that institution's Green Practice Programme, which was one of the best experiences of her stay. The possibility of building with a sustainable perspective, using recyclable materials, and developing environmental awareness mixed with cultural diversity is something she wants to push forward.

Through these international strategic projects, the Universidad Antonio Nariño's international office supports its diverse student population in integrating better into the university as well as developing their student leadership and helping to find solutions for local communities facing global challenges.

ENGAGING WITH PURPOSE

As Latin America's Generation Z, representing 24.5% of the region's population,² steps into higher education, their status as digital natives and their values centred on diversity, equity, inclusion and social-environmental causes present a unique opportunity. To capitalise on this, higher education institutions, while grappling with hierarchical structures and

diversity challenges, can actively involve Gen Z students in driving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), leveraging their enthusiasm for social good and stimulating a shared understanding of regional challenges.

International educators can foster regional partnerships, using the SDGs as a platform for collaborative and impactful projects. These initiatives should involve international and domestic students in meaningful ways, ensuring their voices contribute to a collective dialogue and regional, national and institutional advancements. It is therefore essential to intentionally cultivate and develop forums and groups for students to engage in policymaking and address campus or SDG-related challenges. In doing so, it is critical to foster internal leadership to guide and nurture these groups.

By nurturing engaged students into committed alumni, universities can establish lasting networks, turning students into ambassadors who can continue to contribute their professional knowledge and research skills. This holistic engagement strategy promises a transformative impact at Latin American institutions, aligning with student values and driving sustainable projects.

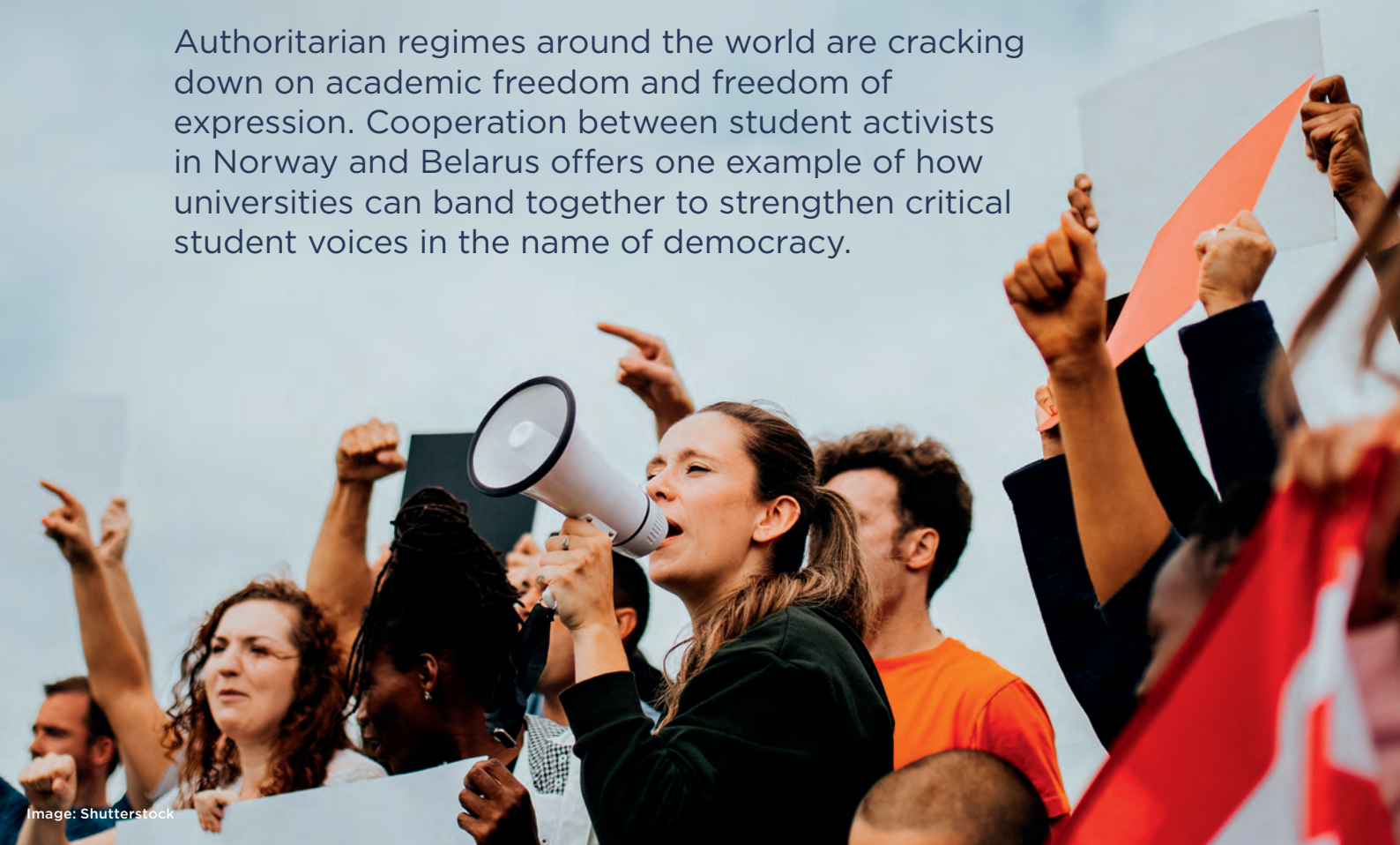
— PATRICIA CÉSPEDES SÁNCHEZ, SANDRA GUARÍN TARQUINO & SANDRA RINCÓN

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BEWARE THEY ARE EDUCATED!

Authoritarian regimes around the world are cracking down on academic freedom and freedom of expression. Cooperation between student activists in Norway and Belarus offers one example of how universities can band together to strengthen critical student voices in the name of democracy.



Time and time again, we see students being brutally silenced, expelled, imprisoned and tortured. Their crime? Asking critical questions, challenging government policies, engaging in peaceful protests and just speaking their minds. In Norway, a programme has provided shelter for more than 125 student activists facing political persecution globally.

What is an authoritarian leader's biggest fear? A young, critical and brave student activist. Throughout history and still today, students have been among the first to take to the streets when justice, democracy and human rights are threatened. We saw this

What is an authoritarian leader's biggest fear? A young, critical and brave student activist

during the protests in Tiananmen Square in China in the 1980s, the #FeesMustFall movement in South Africa in 2015 and the recent protests in Iran following the death of Mahsa Amini. Student activism is an integral part of both a vibrant university campus and broader society.

The university is a space where new knowledge and innovative research are developed. Knowledge that we need to progress democratic societies, sustain important institutions and solve the biggest challenges we're facing today. It's also a space where young students get together to exchange pioneering and sometimes revolutionary ideas, and to discuss and develop critical thoughts, fostering values of active citizenship and conscious civic sense. Cracking down on students and the wider academic community is therefore a great way to hinder critical thinking and an effective tool for authoritarian state leaders who want more power.

UNDER ATTACK

In light of this, it is not surprising that the 2023 Free to Think report published by Scholars at Risk finds that of the 409 attacks

on higher education communities in 66 countries between summer 2022 and summer 2023, attacks on student activism and expression were the most prevalent single type, accounting for approximately 47% of the incidents reported.¹ Another 2023 report, *Activism Under Attack* from the Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund (SAIH), says that physical repression of student activism is only "the tip of the iceberg". It identifies that repression of student activism occurs across contexts, from open to closed societies.²

The case of Belarus offers a good example of how students are seen as a threat. Repression of students continues to be widespread under President Lukashenko: since 2020, several thousand students have left Belarus because of political pressure and repression. According to the Belarusian Students' Association, there were at least 538 politically motivated detentions, 246 politically motivated expulsions and 52 politically motivated criminal cases against students in Belarus in 2020–2021. For participating in protests, speaking out on social media or other forms of peaceful activism, students are forced to record repentance videos, expelled from dormitories and deprived of scholarships. This line is popular among expellees: "The university received a letter from the KGB to expel me for political activity." Some universities specifically conduct show trials of students and most have security forces working within the administration.

A SAFE HAVEN

For the same reason that students and universities are desirable targets for authoritarian leaders, it should be in our collective interest to protect them. A strong, free and dynamic academic community not only fosters informed political participation that can call out and challenge undemocratic tendencies, but it also contributes to more openness, pluralism and inclusion in society.

However, protection mechanisms for student activists are limited and insufficient. When available, their protection is often based on their role as members of civil society, as human rights defenders or as members of the academic community, and not adapted to the specific needs of a student activist. A vital part of protecting student activists is ensuring their right

to continue their studies. Creating shelters and protection mechanisms within the higher education sector is therefore crucial.

In 2012, SAIH, a solidarity organisation that has been working with student activists and movements across the world for over 60 years, together with the National Union of Students in Norway, advocated for such mechanisms to be set up. The result was the Norwegian Students at Risk (StAR) programme, which serves student activists who are at risk of being formally or *de facto* denied educational or other rights in their home country.

Through StAR, accepted students get the opportunity to finish their studies in a safe environment in Norway. For many of these students, it's important to continue their activism and support colleagues at home while studying in Norway. For others, the programme offers breathing space and an opportunity to gather strength. These activists are also a valuable addition to the Norwegian higher education institutions that host them, bringing with them diverse and important experiences, ideas and perspectives.

DIASPORIC ACTIVISM

StAR has played a significant role in laying the foundation for students as agents of change in their home country during or after their stay in Norway.³ An inspiring example of this is Solibel, or Solidarity with Belarus, a Norwegian member organisation that has supported the Belarusian freedom struggle since 2021. It has become a place for StAR students from Belarus to maintain their

activism and develop capabilities, hold leadership positions and at the same time be united with like-minded people standing for democratic change in Belarus. Solibel has helped to build a network, to gain support and most importantly to maintain the exchange of opinions and knowledge about the Belarusian situation in Norwegian society.

This is just one example of how students can continue to contribute to change but also strengthen their engagement, abilities and knowledge with the opportunity to continue their studies in a safe environment. Many of the StAR students choose to go back to their home country after finishing their studies in Norway. The capacity-building that happens in Norway through the programme therefore also helps build a strong opposition that can contribute to democratic change in their own countries.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

This year, we will celebrate 10 years since the StAR programme became a reality. Every year, we see a growing need for such work not only in Norway but also globally. In 2023, SAIH nominated a record-high number of students and Norway also accepted the biggest student group so far, with 35 in total.

The world keeps moving in a more authoritarian direction. Democracy and the space for civil society are under increased pressure. Showing solidarity with the students on the frontline should be seen not only as an act of goodwill but as an important act for our collective present

and future. Universities play an important role in our societies, giving space to raise difficult and critical questions without the fear of reprisals. Student activism is a vital part of one's learning journey, which must be nurtured and not suppressed.

An attack on academia and students in one place is an attack on all of us

An attack on academia and students in one place is an attack on all of us. As higher education institutions and members of the higher education community in open and democratic countries, we should see it as our responsibility and duty to strengthen, facilitate and protect student activism and the fight for human rights globally.

—SELMA BRATBERG
& ALIAKSANDRA HAURUSIK

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THE MANY VOICES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Perhaps the best way to promote the international student voice – or rather, the many distinct international student voices – is through talking *with* them, rather than *about* them. A recently published book offers some practices for involving international students in the research conducted in their name. ►



In speaking of and with international students, the language and concepts we use matter. By reflecting on how international students are *talked about*, a wide range of problematic assumptions can be identified. This is the focus of a

international students, after all, have a wide range of backgrounds and identities. There is no single, shared cultural or social identity that is ‘international student’, although there may be some commonalities through shared experiences as

one another (such as in the wide range of research about international versus home students’ experiences), assuming them opposites or in opposition.

While these categories have practical uses in terms of student visa sponsorship and compliance, on a social and cultural level they are not so cleanly divisible. Personal migration histories often transcend visa categories, after all, with our lived realities at times being messier than our passport designations. The ways that people’s lives intersect with or connect to ‘international’ are multiple. In attempting to draw lines around who is or is not international, there is frequently a need to make exceptions. Take, for example, students who are asylum seekers (often not categorised as international students but nonetheless likely to be new to their country of study) or undocumented students (often categorised as international students despite potentially living most of

There is no single, shared cultural or social identity that is ‘international student’, although there may be some commonalities through shared experiences as migrants

recently published book: *Research with International Students: Critical Conceptual and Methodological Considerations*.¹ Across 26 chapters written by 49 global authors, we made a collective critique of how research with and about international students has tended to exacerbate biases that are frequently present across practice.

Related to this issue’s theme of ‘the’ student voice, I will focus in this article on three key threads from our book: the tendency to homogenise voice; the tendency to categorise voice into false dichotomies; and nationality as a problematic marker of voice.

HOMOGENISATION

There is a tendency for international students to be spoken about as a collective group. This is often signalled through language about ‘the’ student voice or the use of ‘voice’ as a singular noun or phrase (for example, *international student voice* rather than *international students’ voices*).

In using this language, there is a lack of recognition of how voices are plural, multidimensional and multivariate;

migrants. Yet, how other facets of their identity intersect with this migrant label (including race, ethnicity, religion, gender, dis/ability and sexual orientation, among others) is frequently ignored. Examples of this in practice include the tendency for a lack of overlap between internationalisation and equality and diversity strategies,

Personal migration histories often transcend visa categories, with our lived realities at times being messier than our passport designation

or limited understanding of intersectional experiences in research. A starting point, though, is in recognising that there is no singular ‘international student voice’.

DICHOTOMY

Dichotomisation occurs when student populations are divided into opposing categories such as ‘international’ and ‘home’ or ‘domestic’ student. The language used here often pits these categories against

their lives in their country of study). The number of exceptions renders these categories problematic and raises questions around who gets to represent international student voice(s) in the first place.

NATIONALITY

In attempting to recognise more nuance, one common technique in research and practice is to use nationality as a marker of difference. Using national labels is often

thought to provide avenues for differentiating experiences between different groups of international students. Frequently, it relies on similar assumptions about homogeneity, seen through language such as ‘the Chinese student voice’ or ‘Indian student experiences’.

Yet, while nationality is one marker of identity, it is often a poor one. Nationality on paper does not always align with life experiences. The drawing of lines around geographic borders also fails to recognise the *intranational* diversity in nearly all

While nationality is one marker of identity, it is often a poor one

countries. Countries are rarely culturally singular: regional, ethnic or linguistic differences can be as pronounced within a country’s borders as they are between countries. This leaves considerations of ‘voice’ often lacking nuance and complexity, presenting national identity as one-dimensional and further homogenising students’ backgrounds in a circular attempt to avoid homogenisation.

WITH, NOT ABOUT

It is important to recognise that the concept of ‘voice’ – or preferably ‘voices’ – is political. The language used gives insights into who we consider has a voice and what characteristics these voices are expected to have. Questions are raised around: Who is an international student in the first place? Who is provided a platform for their voice(s)? How are the complexities

of intersecting identities valued through the presentation of voice(s)? In considering these ideas, there is a need to reflect on voice not as singular and static but as containing multitudes and plurality.

Throughout *Research with International Students*, we critique existing approaches in research (and practice) that exacerbate uncritical approaches to understanding of experiences and voices. We have purposefully used the phrase ‘*with* international students’ to signify this, attempting to move away from extractive approaches such as *about* or *on*. This language, we feel, encourages avenues towards working in partnership with students to co-create understandings of how they would like to platform their voices. In doing so, we recognise that all students already have a voice, and our contribution is to use the privileges connected to our roles to amplify, platform or spotlight them.

With these considerations in mind, there is ongoing need to reflect on how international students may be stereotyped through assumptions we may hold or perpetuate through the language used about their identities and voices. Related to this issue’s theme, I argue that we should consider: How can we move away from problematic assumptions of ‘the international student voice’ and move towards co-constructed and nuanced understandings ‘international students’ voices’?

—JENNA MITTELMEIER

1. Mittelmeier, J., Lomer, S., & Unkule, K. (Eds.). (2024). *Research with international students: Critical conceptual and methodological considerations*. Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Research-with-International-Students-Critical-Conceptual-and-Methodological/Mittelmeier-Lomer-Unkule/p/book/9781032269832>



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5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Commitment amidst change
2. Shared responsibility for internationalisation
3. Shifting stakeholder influence
4. Pressure to demonstrate impact
5. Demands on multiple fronts

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23
JAN

Collaborative learning: Let's not reinvent the wheel

Collaborative learning isn't new, but its applications in the international classroom can be.

ow.ly/PloP50QRrQ1



30
JAN

International graduate employability: whose job is it anyway?

Most HEIs can do more to ensure international graduates' success after graduation.

ow.ly/qyuo50QRrSg



20
FEB

8 aspects of responsible rankings

Are rankings still relevant? One university ranker weighs in on subjectivity, responsibility, and the path forward.

ow.ly/BgJ950QRrU9

EAIE PODCAST



17
JAN

Jim Hetherton: Goal setting for the new year

Jim Hetherton joins the EAIE podcast to discuss tackling resolutions, mastering life skills and unlocking productivity secrets.

ow.ly/OHhZ50QRrXx



31
JAN

Cynthia Alby, Sandra Slotte, Jeroen Ouburg: A chat with real people about AI

Explore AI's practical uses and future, including ChatGPT, in this podcast. Get insights, beginner tips, and AI trends for educators.

ow.ly/KfpF50QRrYM



16
FEB

Hilary Lappin-Scott: Inspiring women to learn and lead

Hilary Lappin-Scott discusses overcoming obstacles and celebrating female contributions to science.

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Rue Merlane © Rémi Délégeon

EXPLORING
*La Ville Rose
& Occitania*
AT #EAIE2024

Set against its distinctive pink-brick backdrop and shaped by over 2000 years of history, Toulouse is a city steeped in beauty and culture. Here and in the wider region of Occitania, grand monuments and industry harmoniously coexist, giving way to inspiring sites, from the Mediterranean beaches to the Pyrenees mountains. Abundant sunshine, a festive spirit, and an overall high quality of life complete the picture. Among a lifetime of delights and pleasures offered by the region, here are some of the ones we think are unmissable during your visit this September.

PREPARE TO BE AMAZED

France's 'Pink City' (La Ville Rose) and the Occitania region possess a rich heritage, spanning from ancient Roman structures to medieval castles, including UNESCO World Heritage Sites and Renaissance townhouses.

Known for its pink bricks and medieval streets, Toulouse surprises visitors with its Italian charm and Spanish temperament. Whether aboard a tourist train, a hop-on-hop-off bus, or simply on foot, a visit to the Pink City would be incomplete without a stop at its central square, the famous Capitole, housing the city's town hall. Admire the neoclassical architecture, visit the Salle des Illustres, and immerse yourself in the lively atmosphere. As you continue, be sure to visit the Basilique Saint-Sernin, an outstanding example of Romanesque architecture, and don't miss a visit to the Jacobins Convent and its charming cloister. Your journey will likely include an early morning stroll along the Garonne river, a focal point of Toulouse's life, running all the way to the amazing sunset and buzzing evening at one of the pop-up summer guinguettes.

Toulouse's strategic location in the heart of the Occitania region provides easy access to many exceptional sites to explore both in hotter and colder months. Discover a collection of historic towns and locations such as Albi, Carcassonne, Gavarnie, the Pont du Gard aqueduct, the Canal du Midi, Lourdes and visit exceptional museums (Toulouse-Lautrec in Albi, Pierre Soulages in Rodez, Ingres Bourdelle in Montauban, Narbonne in Narbonne).

AN INNOVATIVE AND GREEN FUTURE

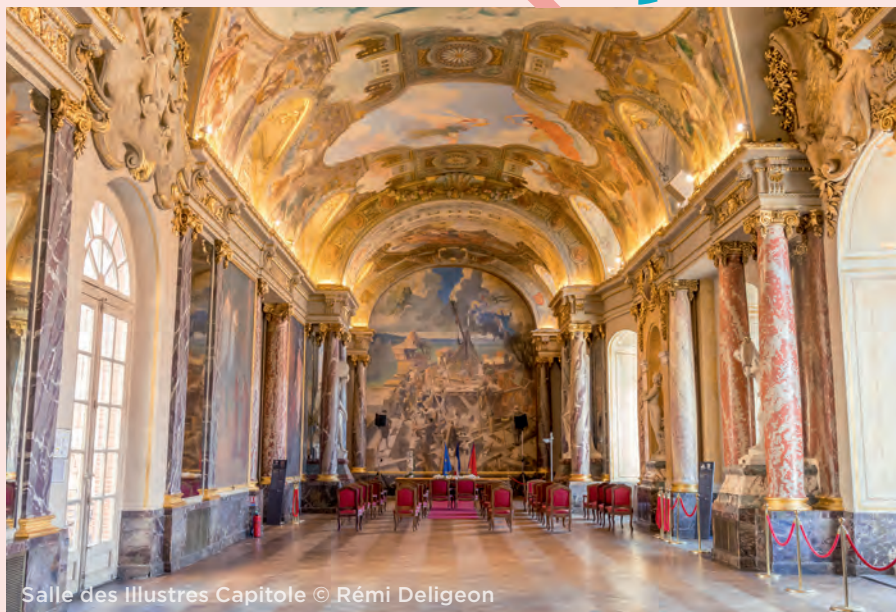
Against a picturesque backdrop, industries have thrived in Toulouse and in surrounding Occitania, ranging from aeronautics and space to mechatronics and renewable energies.

These industries have significantly shaped Toulouse, offering many exciting and unique experiences to the public that reflect their influence.

Explore the wonders of space and aviation at Cité de l'Espace. This interactive museum features full-scale replicas of space shuttles, a planetarium, and exhibits on space exploration. Discover Toulouse's aviation history by visiting L'Envol des pionniers or the Aeroscopia Museum. Take a guided tour to witness the production of giant aircraft at the Airbus Factory.



Basilique Saint Sernin © Rémi Deligeon



Finish your day by witnessing another mythical giant, Astérix: the Minotaur of the Halle de La Machine and the other mechanical creatures on the site are sure to surprise you.

Toulouse is increasingly embracing sustainable initiatives, promoting cycling (716 km of cycling infrastructure in the metropolis), developing pedestrian-friendly zones, and investing in renewable energy. While in Toulouse, why not hop on an electric tuk-tuk to explore the medieval streets, cruise, or ride a rental bike along the scenic Canal du Midi? A stroll along the city's gardens is also a must to fully enjoy the vibrant atmosphere and the various outdoor activities that the city has to offer.

In Occitania, opt for a 100% eco-friendly way of travel. With the train, the Occitania region is committed to facilitating low-carbon travel, with many offers such as €1 tickets for regional trains and the Occitania Rail Tour for unlimited travels.

FEEL THE PULSE OF TOULOUSE

Toulouse is renowned for its festive atmosphere and quality of life. Here, the Toulouse accent harmonizes with the clinking of glasses. To savour the mildness of Toulouse in Southwest France means to embrace a leisurely pace of life – wandering vibrant streets for a shopping spree, meandering through markets, or unwinding at a café terrace.

Visit Toulouse's top spots such as Saint-Georges, Trinité, Saint-Pierre, and Capitole, which all come to life from the aperitif hour to late night as the squares' terraces fill up.

The city hosts no fewer than three bustling covered markets, a brand new food court called Les Halles de La Cartoucherie and over 1000 restaurants that reflect the essence of the Southern spirit: genuine and warm-hearted.

EXPERIENCE THE MARVEL OF OCCITANIA

If Toulouse knows how to celebrate life, it equally excels in hospitality, often

centred around a generous table to savour the products of the region: foie gras, duck breast or magret, cassoulet, Toulouse sausage, cheeses (Roquefort, Rocamadour, Tomme des Pyrénées), high-quality fruits and vegetables, and delightful violet-flavoured treats!

As France's largest wine region, Occitania has become the new Eldorado for wine enthusiasts, ranging from Fronton to Gaillac, Languedoc to Armagnac, all waiting to be discovered in the surrounding vineyards or at the numerous wine bars.

After a good meal, while rugby lovers will be electrified by Toulouse, the sportiest will be able to practice their favourite outdoor activities in breathtaking natural landscapes, from the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean, from the Dordogne valley to the Tarn gorges. These locations serve as backdrops for events which bring together athletes from all over the world (the Templar Festival Trail Run on the Larzac, the FISE International Extreme Sports Festival in Montpellier, the World Wind Championships in Leucate, the Natural Games in Millau). Ready, set, go... en Route to Toulouse, Occitania!

Article and photos courtesy of Agence d'attractivité de Toulouse Métropole Région Occitanie



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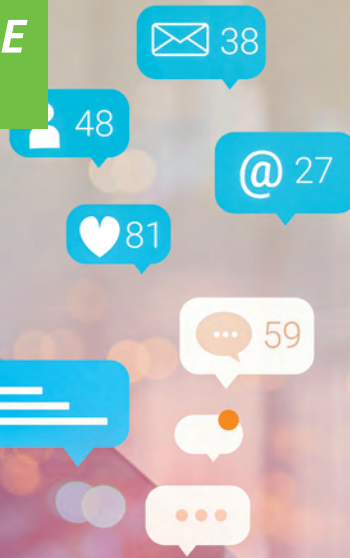
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The poster features a scenic view of the Toulouse skyline at dusk, with the illuminated dome of the Basilica of Saint-Étienne in the background and the Garonne river in the foreground. A bridge is visible in the middle ground. Overlaid on the image are stylized dashed lines in blue and orange, with a white arrow pointing towards the center. The text 'EAIE 2024' is in bold white, 'Toulouse' is in a white script font, and '17-20 SEPTEMBER' is in white sans-serif. The phrase 'EN ROUTE!' is written in white along a dashed arc. At the bottom, the text 'See you there!' is in a white script font, followed by 'Europe's leading international higher education conference & exhibition' in white sans-serif, and the website 'www.eaie.org/toulouse' in orange sans-serif.

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