

in 2015, probably due to low student enrollments. Another UK institution, Coventry University, was unsuccessful in sustaining its collaborative venture in Mauritius.

Although the number of international students tripled from 2010 to 2015 from around 500 to 1,500 students (with enrollments from Africa steadily growing), the critical mass of international students needed for Mauritius to establish itself as a knowledge hub was far from being reached. In addition, the regulations of the TEC, unchanged since 2007, were not revised to provide sufficient incentives for world-class universities to risk setting up branch campuses in Mauritius.

By the end of 2014, TEC was juggling many new challenges. Increasing the number of international students had created a demand for additional services beyond education. Several ministries had to revise their policies on health, labor, housing, and immigration to support internationalization, and had to make concerted efforts to resolve issues related to the arrival of new international students.

WHERE DO WE STAND NOW?

With the election of a new government in December 2014, the ministry of tertiary education was closed down and tertiary education was again integrated under the umbrella of the ministry of education. Since then, TEC has adopted a cautious stance in its quality assurance activities. The government of Mauritius is presently engaged in a process of consolidation of its legislation impacting the higher education sector.

Some lessons on implementing internationalization are evident from the case of Mauritius. First, internationalization has to be planned sustainably and include all stakeholders. Second, goals can be achieved with robust regulatory measures to encourage innovative ventures and to prevent abuse. Third, public universities need strong leadership that drives internationalization. Fourth, a tailored strategy has to be devised for private institutions, which have different agendas. Fifth, high-quality foreign universities need both a supportive infrastructure and appropriate incentives to be attracted to a new country. And sixth, cross-border higher education needs to be scaffolded by mutually beneficial interregulatory agreements.

These last years have been turbulent times but have offered a rich learning experience for the country to better plan and pursue the internationalization of its higher education ecosystem. Mauritius needs to leverage its unique contextual advantages and design a culturally informed regulatory framework, to align with its dynamic higher education sector.

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Higher Education Internationalization in Ukraine: Concerns and Hope

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As part of a wider effort to upgrade educational services to international standards of excellence, Ukrainian higher education institutions (HEIs) have recently undertaken an increasing number of international activities. After decades of isolation, Ukrainian HEIs have gradually embraced internationalization, particularly academic mobility initiatives and double degree programs, and by encouraging more faculty and students from other countries to set up ties with HEIs in Ukraine. From 2005 onward, the Bologna Declaration guidelines have gained increasing strategic importance, and internationalization of higher education has become a topical issue in Ukraine. It is important to note that while historically, national political motives have been the key driving force behind the implementation of reforms at the institutional level, the role of the central government in the reform process today is limited to issuing educational guidelines and supervising their implementation.

INTERNATIONALIZATION FROM THE INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Due to common social, academic, and historical context, international activities at Ukrainian HEIs have a certain degree of similarity. Currently, they rest mostly on three major pillars: the recruitment of foreign students; the organization of student and staff mobility; and participation in international projects.

To a large extent, internationalization occurs in a fragmented rather than systemic way and is not shaped by a given institution's mission, traditions, or current context. This could be attributed to a lack of leadership-level management skills across institutions in the higher education sector. However, the acknowledgement of the importance of internationalization by the senior leadership, at least in words, is an indication that the system is moving in the right direction.

In the majority of HEIs, the principal focus is on recruiting international students. Ukrainian HEIs seek to attract international students in order to earn income and gain recognition. Still, the main barriers to the admission of foreigners are language proficiency, visa requirements, bureaucracy, finding suitable accommodation, credit recog-

dition, and diploma validation problems. The integration of international students into host campuses remains a major area of concern. To overcome these challenges, a lobbying process is needed at the national level.

The level of involvement of the academic community in international education and research activities is at best average, if not limited. The inertia and lack of enthusiasm of students and staff hinder progress. Younger faculty are likely to be more supportive than many senior faculty, who are not comfortable with the changes brought by internationalization. The opponents of internationalization see it as a threat to national culture and security. Clearly, the main concerns nationwide include the brain drain of talented students and faculty, especially in the areas of science and engineering, who opt for study and academic work outside Ukraine.

In spite of the progress made in international student admissions, mobility is still out of reach for the majority of Ukrainian students. Most nonmobile young people can learn about cultural diversity through interaction with international students and scholars on campus. Here, educators with teaching and research involvement abroad can help mitigate the problem of the students' lack of international experience.

Another area of concern is the limited amount of research collaboration of Ukrainian scholars with international partners. Numerous reasons for this situation include poor research facilities of most HEIs, shortage of staff capable of performing international research tasks, lack of familiarity with international academic and research traditions, and a lack of advanced language proficiency, which results in a low level of publication in international journals. The few exceptional cases of existing research collaboration have been, as a rule, initiated by individual faculty members. Only a handful of universities, mostly technical, have managed to devise schemes to overcome these obstacles. A shift toward prioritizing international research collaboration is needed, as well as strategically coordinating all efforts at the national level.

International double degree programs are not common practice. Unclear national legislation is one of the main barriers for such initiatives. The current few double degree programs were introduced and financed by the Tempus program (Erasmus+ since 2014). Mechanisms to provide additional financing to joint programs must be elaborated.

Another financing issue can be identified at the institutional level: public institutions currently function with decreased state funding and increased operational costs. No substantial funds have been proposed or allocated by national authorities to stimulate internationalization in higher education.

An additional ailment that many Ukrainian universi-

ties have to deal with is corruption of all kinds: favoritism, plagiarism, nepotism, and other unproductive practices including bribing for university entry, for exam marks, and for grading theses. International activities are not spared by corruption. In some cases, participation in international projects or exchange programs among students and academic staff has turned into rigid incentive schemes whereby "favorites" may supplement their modest salaries, compromising the access, quality, and equity of international activities.

Lately, Ukrainian universities have seen their reputation diminished among several Arab countries, where governments refuse to recognize diplomas of graduates from Ukraine. Numerous cases of international students paying bribes to get their diplomas have become a significant concern for the ministry of education and science of Ukraine. However, the media do indeed keep the public openly informed about recent developments in higher education, including issues of quality of educational programs and corruption.

Internationalization occurs in a fragmented rather than systemic way and is not shaped by a given institution's mission, traditions, or current context.

Nevertheless, there are positive signs regarding the internationalization of higher education in Ukraine. Today, most Ukrainian HEIs show a positive shift toward increasing student mobility abroad, and faculty are increasingly willing to engage in activities that promote internationalization. More efforts are made to reinforce the international culture on campus by attracting foreign students and lecturers. The participation of Ukrainian academics in joint international projects has increased significantly. Thus, despite many obstacles and the socioeconomic reality, Ukrainian universities expect that their internationalization efforts will soon pay off.

CONCLUSION

Ukrainian HEIs face a number of challenges in their attempts to internationalize. Their efforts are restricted by a lack of funding and a lack of strategic vision from the government. In most cases, the process is driven by individuals participating in international activities. Moving forward, education programs set up as a result of international partnerships will need consolidation and innovation.

The internationalization of Ukrainian HEIs has been triggered by a number of national reforms, but the responsibility for implementation and quality assurance rests with the institutions. In order to adapt to changing local and global needs and strengthen the quality of research and teaching, Ukrainian universities must make a robust effort to promote internationalization.

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Free Higher Education: Mistaking Equality and Equity

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The free-tuition movement has been spreading around the world: from the Chilean student movement of 2013, to the South African #FeesMustFall movement of 2016, and the 2017 decision to abolish tuition fees in the Philippines. The general population, particularly demonstrating students and their families, seems to believe that eliminating tuition fees would improve access to higher education, including (and more specifically) for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. However, there is no evidence that free-tuition higher education leads to improved access and success for students, or to better equity.

UNEQUAL FREE-TUITION SYSTEMS

Close to 40 percent of higher education systems in the world today consider themselves “free.” However, the realities hidden behind the label “free higher education” are very diverse, and few countries provide a degree that is free of charge to all who enter. Indeed, even countries that are considered fully “free” restrict subsidized education to the public sector. In these countries, any student graduating from high school is guaranteed a place in the free public higher education sector. Such countries include Argentina, Cuba, Finland, and Norway. Others, namely Denmark and Sweden, added a restriction by recently introducing tuition fees for international students.

Other countries have increased nominal fees, which are supposed to cover administrative costs, while keeping tuition fees at zero. This is the case in Ireland, where current nominal fees are higher than the tuition fees that were

abolished nearly ten years ago.

However, the most common way, globally, to reduce the public economic burden while keeping higher education free has been to limit the number of places subsidized by the government. These measures are particularly important, because they go against the very reasoning behind the call for free higher education: they restrict access, often penalizing the most disadvantaged groups. Some countries, like Brazil and Ecuador, have established standardized entrance exams for access to public institutions. Others, mostly ex-Soviet countries and nations in East Africa, implement dual-track systems, where the government only finances a certain number of places in the public sector, while other places can be accessed by paying tuition fees. Effectively, these two systems, where individuals accessing the free places are chosen on merit, create the same kind of inequity, by favoring students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

Overall, the concept of free-tuition higher education is a complex one that includes many realities. How free a country’s higher education system really is depends on many factors but rarely guarantees universal access.

ACCESS AND SUCCESS: A LATIN AMERICAN CASE STUDY

To illustrate the link between access and tuition fee policies, particularly free-tuition policies, this article looks at a specific set of countries in Latin America. Argentina and Brazil both have free public higher education, although the Argentinean public system is open to all, while the Brazilian one is restricted in size through a standardized entry exam. Before 2016, Chile had expensive tuition fees in the public and private sectors, making it one of the world’s most expensive systems when adjusted for GDP per capita. Comparing these three countries is an edifying exercise, as their approach to financing higher education is radically different despite shared historical, geographical, and cultural circumstances.

In 2013, the gross enrollment ratios (GER) for these countries were 84 percent in Chile, 80 percent in Argentina, and 46 percent in Brazil. Chile had the highest GER and outperformed Brazil by nearly 40 percentage points. Thus, tuition fee policies in themselves do not necessarily deter participation, and close to universal access can be achieved in systems that have tuition fees.

But enrollment is not a good enough measure for higher education access. Success has recently become an integral part of the research on access in higher education, and a system’s access performance has to include graduation rates. In 2015, graduation rates were estimated at 60 percent for Chile, 31 percent for Argentina, and 51 percent for Brazil. On this measure also, Chile ranked first among the three countries, with a graduation rate twice as high as