

# MEMBER MAGAZINE

Discussing international education

# BUILDING BACK BETTER?

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06

"University of the Arts London is devising more accessible modes of education, learning from our experience of teaching creative disciplines during pandemic lockdowns."

TIME FOR A RESET: POST-PANDEMIC INTERNATIONALISATION IN THE UK

13

"The primary aim of critical internationalisation is to challenge inherent hierarchies in global politics that manifest in international education and to denaturalise these hierarchies."

'I AM BECAUSE OF YOU': CREATING MUTUALLY
BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS





20

"Our university is at the heart of international cooperation. From here we are telling people that the heart of Mariupol is still beating here in Mariupol University in Kyiv."

IN CONVERSATION WITH MYKOLA TROFYMENKO

**25** 

"Institutions must focus on developing intercultural competence that contributes to peacebuilding and addressing shared challenges."

POST-PANDEMIC VIRTUALISATION: IS IT HERE TO STAY?



### **EDITORIAL**

he post-COVID-19 era has brought renewed energy not only to physical mobility but also to build on the pandemic-driven shift to digital classrooms. This is the case for a cohort of teachers for whom online learning is an accepted reality and with students for whom the virtual world is a regular part of their lives.

But what does 'building back better' really mean for international education? The emphasis is on the word 'better'; it invites higher education institutions to rethink internationalisation through the lenses of ethics, inclusivity and sustainability. It calls for more equitable partnerships and encourages reflection on the environmental impact of mobility programmes. In my opinion, this issue of Forum provides a truly global perspective with thought-provoking and stimulating contributions targeted at educators who want to innovate their thinking and their classrooms and build back better.

Several contributions highlight the innovative potential of virtual learning practices, including virtual internships that foster cultural awareness and diverse perspectives. Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) is a key strategy for providing students with meaningful international experiences without requiring travel. Examples include Inholland University of Applied Sciences' 'Intercultural SDG Game' for finance students, which blends UN Sustainable Development Goals with intercultural learning, and Kwantlen Polytechnic University's virtual programmes

that connect students globally through blended mentorships.

The pandemic diversified the land-scape of international education and Gen Z students now demand more personalised, inclusive and flexible study-abroad experiences. Åsa Foster and Andréa Tarlé Borgström provide practical strategies for international offices to tailor support for students from diverse backgrounds. A mentoring programme at the University of Siegen offers insights into supporting international students' academic success. However, acknowledging its role in supporting students, Luz Pacas Castro reminds us that mentoring must also extend to academics.

Many universities are now prioritising social justice and inclusivity by collaborating with local communities. An inspiring example is St. Cloud State University, which has developed programmes that support all students, including refugee students, students from a migrant background and students of colour.

Financial challenges are ever present. This is evident from a case study from the University of the Arts London, which exemplifies the strategic balancing act between maintaining high rankings, generating income and pursuing global social responsibility.

In this edition's interview, 'building back better' takes on a profound meaning for Mariupol State University, whose Rector, Professor Mykola Trofymenko, shares the compelling story of rebuilding the institution in Kyiv after the original campus' destruction. This story raises an essential question: How can the international community offer meaningful support?



In sum, this issue reflects the dynamic evolution of international education, balancing innovation with the need for equity, sustainability and social responsibility. 'Building back better' is not just a recovery strategy — it is a call to reimagine the future of education in a more inclusive, collaborative and meaningful way.

I'd like to extend my thanks to each of the authors included in this edition as well as Ragnhild Solvi Berg and Queenie Lam of the EAIE Publications Committee, who joined me in reviewing and selecting submissions. I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Forum.

-EVA JANEBOVÁ, EDITOR publications@eaie.org

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support and development and works to enhance education abroad opportunities for both domestic and international students. An avid traveller, Shahzad has visited over 50 countries.

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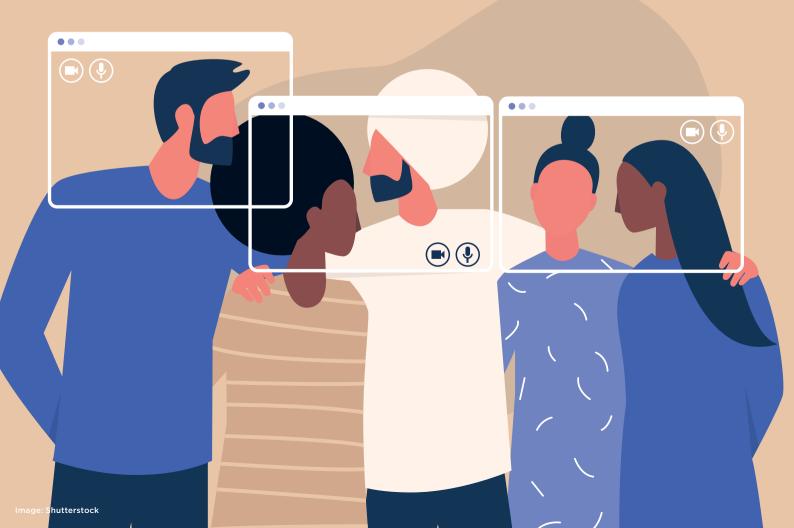
Dean, University Extension, University of California, Riverside An Andean archaeologist, international work has underscored Kevin's entire career. As Dean, he strives to bring the University of California's world-class research to learners of all ages. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his wife, two daughters, their dog and a dozen chickens.

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# RIGHT TIME, RIGHT FORMAT

SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN THE DIGITAL ERA



Acknowledging the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Åsa Foster and Andréa Tarlé Borgström outline a revised approach to communicating with incoming exchange students. Understanding the shift in stakeholder expectations and the need for new approaches, the authors describe how their institution made use of mid-pandemic innovations to develop a new communication strategy fit for today's circumstances.

he COVID-19 pandemic created many challenges for higher education. Universities had to rethink and redesign their offerings to adapt to the situation. In-person teaching became difficult or impossible and cross-border mobility was put on hold.

But the pandemic also brought possibilities for development. The necessity of finding alternative solutions and frameworks created an environment for digitalisation to thrive. Online meetings, chat groups and virtual learning platforms became part of our daily work.

# Student mobility is on the rise again, but interactions have changed. Communication has changed.

COVID-19 no longer affects societies as it did during that period, but it has left a significant legacy. Student mobility is on the rise again, but interactions have changed. Communication has changed. Digitalisation is making it possible to reach people in Asia, Australia, Latin America and everywhere else in the world. It can be used as a resource to connect people and support learning.

In this context, the international office of the engineering faculty at Lund University in Sweden decided to rethink how we could give the right support to incoming exchange students.

### **CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME**

The process of becoming an exchange student is a long one. Finding a suitable mobility destination and completing a competitive application to be selected for an exchange by the home university is just the first step.

Once selected, students need to keep track of administrative tasks, paperwork and practical matters: for example, applying to the host university, requesting and submitting all the correct documents, sorting out financial matters and scholarships, finding transferable courses, looking for housing, arranging travel and visas – all while managing their studies at home.

Students may find it difficult to navigate through all of this. Even with support from the mobility office, it can be overwhelming.

In addition, and in a shift that started well before the pandemic, student expectations and needs have changed. Students expect to find relevant and detailed information as soon as they have a question, and their patience with scrolling through long documents or searching extensive webpages has decreased.

They assume that information will be specific to their personal needs, but how do we, as international education professionals, provide such personalised information to students from diverse backgrounds?

### TARGET GROUPS

To be able to meet the expectations of incoming exchange students, we decided that a new communication strategy was required, one that incorporated lessons learned during the pandemic. The goal was to create a sense of belonging early in the process – at the application stage – by connecting and establishing a supportive network for the students. For that, it was important to identify what information was relevant to students, and when and how that information should be provided.

First, we defined the target groups. We did this based on where students are in the mobility process: prospective students are those interested in exchange studies but still searching for a study destination; applicants are those who have been selected by the home university and are in the process of applying to the host university; and accepted students are those who have been accepted for exchange studies by the host university.

#### HOW TO REACH THEM

The next step was to identify how to connect and share information with these target groups.

Prospective students seeking information about studies and student life at the host university typically search the internet and then email the mobility office in case of questions. By analysing the emails and student questions, it was possible to adjust the website for prospective students to attend to this target group's needs.

Applicants are at the next step of the process. They have decided on their study destination and need guidance through the host university's application process. We were already adapting our webpages and sending targeted emails to this group, but our systematic review showed that for some

students that was not enough. They still needed an extra hand during the process.

By looking at the questions asked in emails, the responses to surveys and how students submitted their exchange applications, we concluded that the inclusion of virtual Q&A drop-in sessions during the application period could be the right approach. Staff from the mobility group would be available to students to discuss any doubts or questions. For applicants, this provided an opportunity to receive personal guidance and reassurance. From a staff perspective, the accumulated time spent in virtual meetings was much lower than the time that would have been spent answering emails.

Accepted students are in the final stage of preparation for the mobility experience, but they still have a lot on their minds in terms of studies, travel planning and arrival. For this target group, two virtual meetings were scheduled: one after they had received their formal acceptance and one prior to their arrival.

One of the goals with the virtual meetings was to provide relevant information and to create a forum where questions could be answered. No less important was to provide an opportunity to meet other future exchange students, creating a sense of interconnectedness and community before the mobility experience.

### **CAREFUL COMMUNICATION**

This approach was very successful for both students and staff. Staff noticed that the number of emails sent by students diminished and the enquiries received were of a more qualitative nature, while comments fed back to us in a survey sent to students after their exchange showed that we were on the right track.

One student wrote: "Every piece of communication given by the faculty seemed to be carefully thought [through] for the understanding of people that had not previously been in contact with faculty matters. They were really helpful, and I [had] little to no difficulties regarding my registration."

We live in a society where information is created, processed, stored and communicated to a greater extent than ever before. With the transformations that took place due to the pandemic, new tools for communicating with prospective exchange students all over the world became available. This created possibilities for the development of new strategies that are beneficial for both students and staff.

Making students feel in control of their process by presenting information at the right time, in the right format, while also being available to answer questions at given times, has helped us reduce the number of emails to staff and errors in exchange applications.

For small offices handling large numbers of students, finding the time to further develop our mobility programmes is always a challenge – but with the right communication strategy, it is possible to both raise quality and make student services more efficient.

–ÅSA FOSTER & ANDRÉA TARLÉ BORG-STRÖM



For this edition of Forum we interviewed Professor Mykola Trofymenko, Rector of Mariupol State University. The concept of building back better has a vivid, tangible meaning for Professor Trofymenko as Mariupol State University's physical infrastructure was destroyed in 2022 during the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. In this interview, Professor Trofymenko discusses the losses faced by the university community, shares details about the university's efforts to rebuild their community in Kyiv and explains their future internationalisation plans.

It must be an incredibly difficult and overwhelming task to relocate and rebuild an entire institution. What have been the major stages in a project like this and how has it played out?

MT: To build back better has been our main principle for the last two years. You know the story of Mariupol city and of the University: It was totally destroyed during the first months of the full-scale invasion. I think the tragedy of Mariupol is one of the biggest tragedies; of 550,000 total inhabitants, at least 120,000 civilians were killed. That's every fourth inhabitant, at least. Within Mariupol University, we also had a lot of losses among our students and staff. And, of course, our physical infrastructure was destroyed. We didn't have any evacuations or green corridors. We were without phone connection, internet, electricity, any means to talk to the outside world. People evacuated in every possible way, by car or on foot.

In the first moments after registering a Telegram channel, we gathered together with all our staff, and we tried to help people to find places to shelter. We also fundraised money for our colleagues that were brought to Donetsk or other Russian occupied territories, many of whom were wounded. We transferred these funds to their bank cards in hopes they would be able to receive treatment or buy medicine.

We decided that we should evacuate our university to Kyiv. Our colleagues at Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture provided us with an almost 100-year-old building. It was in awful condition, but nevertheless we are grateful for it. In the beginning, the university was me with my computer. After several weeks, there were three of us, after several more weeks, we were seven. Now, we have reconstructed a very beautiful, modern office of Mariupol University in Kyiv - where I'm sitting now, at last. I was waiting until all my departments and instructors could have their offices. And I, as the rector, was the last to receive my office. It was actually the Secretary of State of the United States who helped me to receive it faster (Due to his visit to the university and planned meetings with students at the Rector's Office, builders accelerated the reconstruction). He visited our university in May, and he helped to make sure I received it quickly.

We have this principle, to build back better, in everything we are doing because, we decided not to rebuild the university, but to build up a new one, with a new philosophy. In fact, looking towards the future after our victory, we're anticipating what Ukraine will need to rebuild, to reconstruct and to recover from these awful tragedies.

You've previously indicated your aim to rebuild Mariupol State University "into a modern institution with a new philosophy, while preserving its identity". Could you briefly expand on these aims and explore what this might look like? MT: We proved to the world that a university is not the walls, it's the people. The university is much more than an educational research institution. We are, in a lot of cases and senses, the only

the opportunities afforded to European Union residents.

I don't know if these people will come back. The university, therefore, tries to connect and to preserve links with Ukraine. For example, using our strong cooperation with Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, we opened the Mariupol University centre in Kaunas to work with refugees and Ukrainian citizens. Here, we invite them to enrol in

Square. During this disaster, it flew to Kyiv and temporarily organised its nest here, waiting to return home. This bird holds a lot of symbolism. It's a symbol of peace, and it holds the memories of our colleagues who have been killed. We have identified 18 representatives of our academic staff and students who have been killed, and we have 250 students whose fate is unknown.

It's this bird that is flying very high that shows the world what resistance means. The desire to build back better, to build the university of the future.

# It's this bird that is flying very high that shows the world what resistance means. The desire to build back better, to build the university of the future.

link between Mariupol and Ukraine for both the inhabitants of Mariupol and the Donetsk region, and the 200,000 residents who live now all over the world. We consider our internationalisation and our cooperations with foreign universities as key to our core goal: to preserve the identity of our city, of our region.

While these Ukrainians in diaspora are in, for example, Lithuania, they fall under the status of refugee. They attend language courses; they start to speak Lithuanian, and they send their children to Lithuanian-speaking kindergartens or schools. Older children attend the local universities and start making use of all

Ukrainian universities in distance learning mode so that they don't forget where they are from.

We are also investing in this idea of a Civic University as a base of our strategy. We identified ourselves as a national leader among Ukrainian Civic Universities. These institutions are very important for communities, for refugees and for addressing identity issues within these groups.

This is embodied by the new symbol of Mariupol University. We rebranded our university after the relocation. The bird in the new university symbol represents the dove from Mariupol's Liberty

Could you speak more about how the community role of the university has changed? How has this impacted daily academic life or student and staff engagement with their community?

MT: First of all, of course, it's an emotional connection with our people. We are rebuilding and reconstructing this building in hopes that when the people of Mariupol will come to our premises, they will feel at home. When you've lost everything, it's vital to have somewhere you can feel like yourself. We are also reconstructing our staff dormitory. We have 100% of our staff working today physically from this building. This is both a huge challenge and a huge achievement.

We have students in our classes, in our, laboratories. It's a huge achievement. It's a huge victory. It's impossible

to describe and to explain what we are feeling because two years ago, it was something that we considered unachievable.

We are also trying to show to the Ukrainian communities and to the world, what Mariupol actually was, what the city was before the invasion. It was the symbol of modernisation, of technological development, of reconstruction, of services for the inhabitants on a European level.

For example, we have just finished a project with MHP, a huge empire of agricultural companies. They asked us to work with 30 communities from all over

people, they wanted to come, they wanted to talk to us, they wanted to tell us their pain. Through our activity as a civic centre they received help from the university. We're still now proceeding with this help but in a different way. After two years, people don't need food, for example, they need psychological help.

We have established the special laboratory for children with disabilities; a lot of children are experiencing post-traumatic stress. The university is helping these children, and we are facilitating specialist assistance for their teachers.

The university played this magnetic role for people, they wanted to come, they wanted to talk to us, they wanted to tell us their pain. Through our activity as a civic centre they received help from the university.

Ukraine and teach them how to write applications for different grant projects, how to make a case, how to develop projects, how to present, *etc.* Effective community is one of the ways to champion Ukraine's success.

In the first days following the displacement, we established the university as a humanitarian hub. We gathered all kinds of help from all over the world. The university played this magnetic role for We also have special programs for veterans who would like to start businesses. Following their service, many have collected some sums of money, and they want to learn how to invest this. Therefore, we have started a veterans' business school.

How has the internationalisation strategy of the university changed? How are you currently reinforcing international collaborations?

мт: Mariupol University now has unbelievably large attention from all institutions across the world. We are trying to make use of this window of opportunity. We are very much active in the European University Alliance, Transform4Europe. I think this is one of our greatest achievements over the last two and a half years. I'm soon travelling to Poland to visit The University of Silesia in Katowice, another member of Transform4Europe, to open a Mariupol University centre on their campus to support Ukrainian refugees in Poland. This unique expertise proves that Ukrainian universities play a huge role as public diplomacy institutions, supporting Ukrainian narratives and our government's activities abroad.

As Ukraine is not a member of the European Union, we cannot be full partners of Transform4Europe. However, it's very encouraging that our fellow members consider us not as an associate partner, but rather as a full partner. We participate in every activity, in every action and, of course, reap the benefits. We understand that we should prepare for life after the victory, and we should integrate into the European University Alliances because we will also be a European university.

We also have a strong cooperation with the UK, where we are twinned partners with the University of Hull. It was fate to collaborate with them. Kingston upon Hull was destroyed during World

War Two; 97% of the city was destroyed during The Blitz. Mariupol has a similar story. After the War, the British government paid special attention to addressing the mental health of Hull's population. This is what we need now. We have several projects with the University of Hull, and we will continue to deepen this cooperation.

Furthermore, universities in the United States are inviting Ukrainian universities to sign agreements and to start collaborations. Next week, we are signing such an agreement with the University of New Haven.

Tomorrow, we will start to realise one of our main goals and begin thinking about the campus of the future. We received a unique present from the minister of education of Ukraine: Four hectares and 13,000 square meters of premises in the centre of Kyiv. Through the project Educational Space for Students and Community, we received €1,300,000 for the reconstruction of this building. I consider this an exciting aspect of our international collaboration. A relocated university that started from nothing is now able to reconstruct its campus with the help of a European Union grant.

So, our university is at the heart of international cooperation. From here we are telling people that the heart of Mariupol is still beating here in Mariupol University in Kyiv.

Finally, what personally keeps you going to drive the internationalisation of Mariupol State University?

MT: I graduated from Mariupol University's international relations bachelor programme. My first job was head of the International Cooperation Office of Mariupol University. I worked for 10 years as a vice rector for international cooperation of Mariupol University. Finally, in December 2020, I was elected rector and appointed by the minister. Furthermore, in May of this year, I defended my thesis for Doctor of Sciences degree in political science [a post-doctoral degree, similar to the habilitation degree awarded by some Western European institutions].

I have been researching issues of public diplomacy for 13 years. In my doctoral thesis, I have a chapter where I

### I'm so proud of my team, of my students and of their achievements. This is what I find inspiring.

discuss universities as public diplomacy institutions. We have huge possibilities to support national battles, including on the information front.

I do believe that we are important. I do believe that we preserved Mariupol University. I do believe that through these reconstruction efforts we are also making our small input into the future victory of Ukraine. Everything is important and I'm so proud of my team, of my students and of their achievements. This is what I find inspiring.



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# FORUM THROUGH A JOURNEY OF INSIGHTS AN

For over two decades. Forum has been the cornerstone of conversations in international higher education, addressing the most pressing issues faced by professionals in the field. From its humble beginnings to a magazine that shapes discourse around global issues, Forum has continually grown alongside the EAIE community. Take a journey through the key milestones that have marked Forum's growth and discover how it has reflected the dynamic changes in international education over the past 25 years.



1989
EAIE founded,
first conference in
Amsterdam



1999
First edition of Forum magazine published



2009
Celebrated 10 years



Forum explored how IHE can contribute to the SDGs





Introduction of first edition related to a theme

**2011**EAIE Publications
Committee established

# THE YEARS D CONVERSATIONS



2019 \*\*(Celebrated 20 years of Forum



2020

Forum made available to all in response to the pandemic



Forum focused on student well-being and mobility challenges

**2025** FORUM GOES

FORUM GOES
FULLY DIGITAL











SERVE THE SECTOR



GENERATE CONVERSATION



RAISE AWARENESS

### ► FORUM MAGAZINE (DIGITAL)

Upcoming themes for 2025 include International Student Accommodation (Spring) and European University Alliances (Summer).

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Facilitate the international mobility of LGBTQ+ students in a safe and supportive manner.

https://ow.ly/3V2550SROVB



### How to make your blended staff trainings a success

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https://ow.ly/ny8C50TzLFT



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### Britta Piel, Richard Delahaye, Ceren Genc, Sabine Sainte-Rose, Kimmo Kuortti: Learning from failure, leveraging community

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### **Group membership:**

Enjoy membership benefits at a reduced rate when joining in groups of 10, 15, 20 or 35. Available November-March.

### Young professional membership:

A reduced rate for under-30s who are new to the EAIE. Available for a limited time.

### **BECOME A MEMBER**

www.eaie.org/membership

# **CALENDAR**

### 12 & 14 FEBRUARY 2025

**EAIE Academy Online** 

Succeeding in international student recruitment with content marketing

www.eaie.org/training

# MARCH 2025

Meet the expert webinar

EAIE member exclusive

www.eaie.org/training

# 10 & 12 MARCH 2025

**EAIE Academy Online** 

Launching virtual exchange at your institution

www.eaie.org/training

### 24 & 26 MARCH 2025

**EAIE Academy Online** 

Implementing virtual exchange in the curriculum

www.eaie.org/training

# 24-28 MARCH 2025

**APAIE 2025** 

Cultivating Global Citizens for the Future: The Higher Education Imperative in the Asia Pacific and Beyond.

www.apaieconference.net

# 24-25 APRIL 2025

**EAIE Academy Classroom** 

Building a toolkit for addressing international student mental health

www.eaie.org/training

### 15—16 MAY 2025

**EAIE Academy Classroom** 

Nurturing strategic international partnerships and alliances

www.eaie.org/training

# 27-30 MAY 2025

NAFSA 2025 Annual Conference and Expo

Purpose, Place, and Partnership

www.nafsa.org/conferences/ nafsa-2025-annual-conferenceexpo

### 09-12 SEPTEMBER 2025

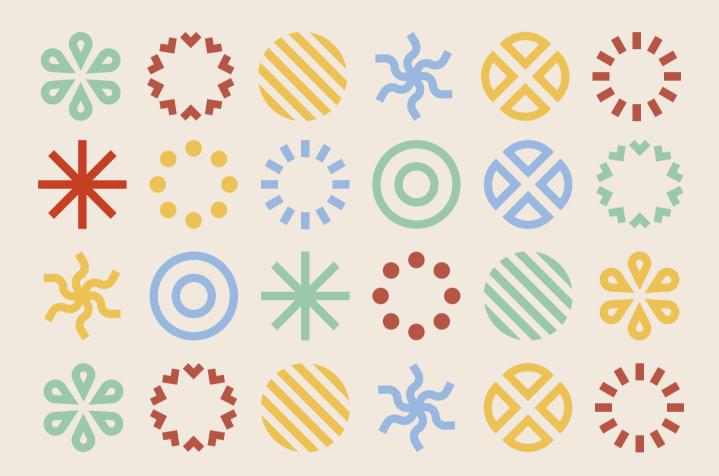
35th Annual EAIE Conference and Exhibition in Gothenburg

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