

# FORUM

MEMBER  
MAGAZINE

*Discussing international education*

## RESILIENCE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES



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OF RESILIENCE

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MARÍA JOSÉ FIGUERAS SALVAT

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## 09

“In times of crisis, we can still choose how to respond to a difficult situation so that we learn and grow from the experience”

**CHOOSING A CULTURE OF RESILIENCE**

## 23

“Our institutions are highly exposed to danger, yet we view our vulnerability as a source of strength”

**LIFE ON THE EDGE**



## 34

“People want things black and white, but at this moment what we have to learn is that things are changing every five minutes”

**IN CONVERSATION WITH MARÍA JOSÉ FIGUERAS SALVAT**

## 47

“We want a better world – and now is the time to think more systematically about how universities’ international actions can help to advance that”

**TWO PRIORITIES FOR THE REBUILD**



# EDITORIAL

There is much talk of resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, be it personal, professional or institutional. Indeed, many of us have been called upon to reflect on our own capacity to cope with change and uncertainty in a world turned upside down. But what does resilience mean in the context of international education, and is it a new concept? International education is certainly no stranger to external threats, and institutions, staff and students have shown themselves to be both resilient and resourceful, working collaboratively to identify new solutions and sharing best practices as they arise.

What lessons have we learned from the past, and how are these being applied in the face of the current pandemic? The contributions to this edition of *Forum* magazine draw on personal, programmatic and institutional examples to shine a spotlight on different understandings of resilience in the face of uncertainty.

I'm delighted that Professor María José Figueras Salvat, Rector of Universitat Rovira i Virgili in Spain and President of the Catalan Association of Universities, agreed to be interviewed for this edition. As a Professor of Microbiology, Professor Figueras has unique insights from her academic background, which has helped her to understand resilience as a *modus vivendi* or way of life, rather than as a short-term adaptation to a challenging environment. Professor Figueras also reflects on the collateral damages and collateral benefits of a crisis (the silver lining to the proverbial cloud).

Beyond the interview, this edition features a series of articles from authors in Europe and further afield who explore resilience from various perspectives. From a macro perspective, contributions by Ian

Rowlands (in Canada) and Sabine Klahr and Harvey Charles (in the USA) highlight the opportunities for leadership in a crisis and reflect on the resilience and flexibility which are inherent in internationalisation as a process of change.

A series of articles then looks at national context, drawing parallels with other tests of resilience. For example, María Eugenia Jiménez, Paulina Latorre and Lorena Vieli outline how recent civil unrest in Chile has affected institutional strategies for internationalisation. Similarly, Samia Chasi and Orla Quinlan discuss how societal inequalities in postcolonial South Africa have influenced institutional responses to the current crisis.

At the institutional level, Stephanie Doscher (in the USA) and Alex Rendón (in Ecuador) plot out a set of key steps which institutions can take to design a more resilient internationalisation in the face of increasing uncertainty. Meanwhile Laurence Dupont (in France) highlights how INSA Lyon has acted to ensure academic continuity in response to COVID-19.

Writing on a topic of growing interest to many international educators, Nawazish Azim (in Saudi Arabia) draws us back to the topic of the 2020 Spring *Forum* by encouraging us to consider how digital transformation serves to foster resilience in internationalisation. With blended learning and blended mobility on everyone's lips, this article sets the scene for a series of contributions which look at how programme delivery has responded to the current crisis. In this vein, Leslie Hitch (in the USA) describes how she moved programme delivery online for a group of MBA students in Poland, while Alexander Heinz and Nita Kapoor (in the UK and Norway) outline opportunities for experimentation and transformation in



summer school programming and pedagogy. Grazia Ceschi and Mathieu Crettenand then speak to how an academic integration programme in Switzerland has responded to COVID-19 in support of refugee students.

Turning to questions of individual resilience, Sancha Elevado, Andrew Horsfall, Sapna Thwaitte, Renee Welch and Kelly Richmond Yates (in the USA) highlight how they have continued to build cross-cultural dialogue following participation in a Fulbright Scholar programme in Germany. Meanwhile, Juan Rayón González, President of the Erasmus Student Network in Spain, offers a student perspective on mobility during a crisis, while Frank Haber and Jessica Price (in Germany) provide advice for all on how to build psychological resilience.

With thanks to my colleagues on the EAIE Publications Committee for their expert support in reviewing submissions for this edition of *Forum*. We hope that this selection of articles on the topic of resilience will support and guide you in your work, as well as in your day-to-day life in these uncertain times.

— DOUGLAS PROCTOR, EDITOR  
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# CONTRIBUTORS

## *Sabine Klabr*

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With a background in sciences and outdoor education, Sabine has translated her personal journey into a career in international education.

## *Harvey Charles*

Professor of International Education, University at Albany, SUNY, USA

As a campus and curriculum internationalisation professional, Harvey is on the frontline in supporting students.

## *Frank Haber*

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Frank is specialised in providing psychological and cross-cultural services to international students and staff.

## *Jessica Price*

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Jessica uses her personal experience and psychological knowledge to help create enriching exchange experiences.

## *Juan Rayón González*

President, Erasmus Student Network Spain

Juan joined the Erasmus Student Network after an exchange in Turkey. He has also studied in Spain and the UK, in addition to volunteering in Italy through the European Solidarity Corps.

## *Sancha Elevado*

Former Associate Director for study abroad & global engagement, the Seattle Colleges, USA

After returning from her exchange in London, Sancha changed her career path from accounting to higher education.

## *Andrew S. Horsfall*

Assistant Dean of International Programs, Syracuse University College of Law, USA

Having studied in various European countries, Andrew enjoys creating opportunities offered by international education.

## *Sapna V. Thwaite*

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Sapna researches the experiences of first and second generation adolescent immigrants to the USA.

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Having studied in Germany, Renee participated in Fulbright's International Education Administrators Seminar.

## *Kelly Richmond Yates*

Associate Director, Halle Institute for Global Research, Emory University, USA

Kelly developed a personal and professional passion for cross-cultural experiences as an American exchange student in London.

## *Laurence Dupont*

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Laurence teaches chemistry and thermodynamics, and in the weekends enjoys hiking in the Alps with family and friends.

## *Grazia Ceschi*

Senior lecturer, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Science, University of Geneva, Geneva Switzerland

Specialising in post-traumatic mental health, Grazia believes that education not only helps refugees build back their lives, but also promotes their resilience and well-being.

## *Mathieu Crettenand*

Head of Academic Horizon program, University of Geneva, Switzerland

As a migration and integration expert, Mathieu built up Academic Horizon, a programme aimed at facilitating academic and social integration of refugees.

## *Stephanie Doscher*

Director of Global Learning Initiatives, Florida International University, USA

Stephanie believes in the power of Internationalisation at Home to be as transformative as physical exchange.

## *Alex Rendón*

Director of Operations, Office of International Programs, Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ, Ecuador

Alex's passion for international education is fuelled by his study abroad experiences in the USA, UK and France.

## *María Eugenia Jiménez*

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Maria's mission to promote international education comes from her exchange years in the Netherlands.

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Lorena specialises in international research collaboration and working in intercultural contexts.

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Director of International Affairs, Universidad Católica de Temuco, Chile

Paulina explains her passion for intercultural experiences with growing up as a "cultural hybrid" who has studied in five countries.

## *Samia Chasi*

Strategic Advisor, International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA), Germany

Samia has 20 years of experience working on internationalisation in the field.

## *Orla Quinlan*

President, IEASA, South Africa

Orla moved to South Africa to combine and pursue her many passions in international higher education.

## *Nawazish Azim*

International Affairs Coordinator, King Abdulah University of Science and Technology, Saudi Arabia

Nawazish speaks four languages, has a PhD in English literature and has worked as an assistant professor at many universities.

## *Leslie P. Hitch*

Adjunct Faculty, Clark University and William James College, USA

Leslie has had the life-changing experience of teaching in international classrooms in Australia, Vietnam and Hong Kong.

## *Alexander Heinz*

Director of Research & Innovation - Summer Programmes, King's College London, UK

Alexander is specialised in short courses and international collaboration. He speaks four languages including Latin and has a PhD in history.

## *Nita Kapoor*

Director, The International Summer School - University of Oslo, Norway

Nita's current focus is on reinventing her university's summer programme in digital format.

## *Ian H. Rowlands*

Professor, University of Waterloo, Canada

Growing up in the Canadian capital and having studied in the UK, Ian has had a lifelong interest in the wider world.

# LIFE ON THE EDGE

Preparing for disasters is second nature to universities in areas affected by hurricanes and earthquakes. The principles guiding sturdy construction in these areas can be applied to resilient internationalisation in the time of COVID-19: risk assessment, flexible design and using the right methods and materials can all help to rebuild international initiatives in the wake of the pandemic. ▶



As we write, Hurricane Isaias is churning away in the Caribbean. Florida International University in Miami is located in the ‘cone of uncertainty’, meaning it is threatened by damaging wind, rain and storm surge. Meanwhile, in Ecuador, the Ring of Fire along the Pacific

assessment and planning. The time for this is when seas are calm, because stress and anxiety suppress logical reasoning. Still, people will always find it easier to analyse and prepare for imminent, visible threats than for rare, abstract scenarios. While there are tools that can help us

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## Our institutions are highly exposed to danger, yet we view our vulnerability as a source of strength

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Rim is seemingly peacefully asleep – though faculty, staff and students at Universidad San Francisco de Quito frequently lie awake at night recalling trembles of earthquakes past and wondering: Are we ready for the next big one?

As internationalisation leaders at these universities, our perspective on resilience is informed by our shared experience of living under the constant threat of disaster. We know that our institutions are highly exposed to danger, yet we view our vulnerability as a source of strength. Safe shelter is our top priority. At home and at work, we build – and rebuild – for survival. We find that the principles guiding sturdy construction in areas affected by hurricanes and earthquakes apply to prudent internationalisation leadership as well. Accordingly, here are some of our recommended rules of thumb for designing resilient internationalisation in an age of increasing threats and uncertainty.

### ASSUME YOU ARE VULNERABLE

While the precise nature, timing and magnitude of the threats we face may be unpredictable, we can engage in risk

avoid different categories of risk – such as legal, operational and technological hazards – some unknowns will remain unknown until the clouds burst, the earth moves or a novel zoonotic virus spreads.

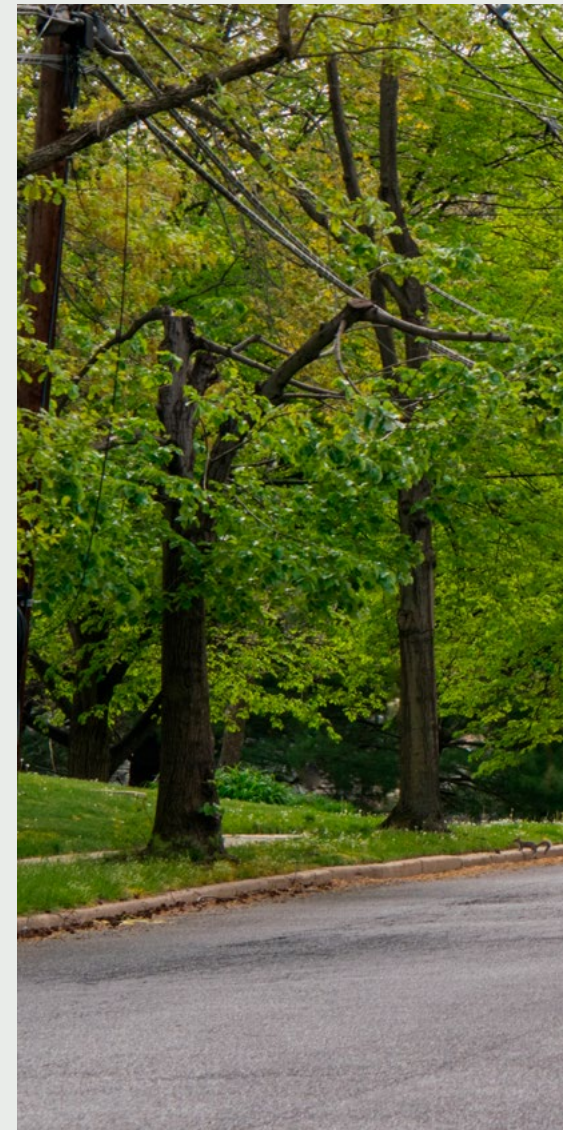
One of the biggest unknowns is how people will react when the unthinkable happens and they realise just how vulnerable they always were. The only solution may be to call out for help. COVID-19 has taught us that survivors don’t try to go it alone. Before disaster strikes, build your support network. Start diversifying your

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## Assume that eventually you and your team are going to need help, and know who to call when disaster strikes

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office’s relationships with units inside and outside your institution. Work with local embassies to streamline response criteria and protocols. Pool resources with gap year organisations, the Peace Corps and the tourism industry. Engage in capacity-building training with other offices in your institution, valued international



partners and neighbouring institutions. Assume that eventually you and your team are going to need help, and know who to call when disaster strikes.

### DESIGN FOR FLEXIBILITY

When shaken, resilient structures can bend without breaking; when damaged, they have features that can be adapted to new purposes. Disasters such as COVID-19 disrupt our traditional patterns of movement and behaviour, but to what extent can we adjust to achieve valued



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objectives through different means? The key is to establish meaningful goals that can survive shocks to our systems. If our goals are shallow – *eg* if we are mainly interested in increasing revenue by admitting more international students who pay full fees – we’ll drown when the first wave of change crashes on our shores. But if we internationalise for a deeper purpose – such as to increase the efficacy and relevance of teaching, learning and research – we have room to explore multiple ways of achieving our aims.

Make sure your activities serve multiple purposes. Design exchange agreements that also foster international research. Host faculty-led study abroad programmes on campus and connect them to curriculum internationalisation efforts at home.

But remember, multipurpose programme design requires multiskilled staff and faculty. After COVID-19, in addition to using technology for communication and

tution outside our traditional sphere of influence. For example, many internationalisation leaders are rushing to establish technology-enabled initiatives

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## Flexible design involves tying internationalisation efforts to other components of the strategic plan

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business operations, internationalisation professionals will need to help faculty and students use online tools and methods for teaching, learning and research across borders.

Flexible design also involves tying internationalisation efforts to other components of the strategic plan, and this demands knowledge of the insti-

such as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and virtual internship programmes. These can be designed to positively influence academic departments’ disciplinary learning and career success objectives if staff are well informed and are connected to colleagues in other units. Designing for flexibility involves establishing multidimensional



goals and programmes – and cultivating new knowledge and connections to support them.

#### USE THE RIGHT METHODS AND MATERIALS

Resilient buildings are built for strength rather than novelty. Strength is better achieved by innovating with local resources than by importing methods and

#### ANCHOR YOUR FOUNDATION

A structure is only as strong as its weakest link. Crises expose weaknesses, but they also reveal how these can be strengthened to stabilise the overall structure. Colleges and universities exist to serve students, yet comparatively few students are served by internationalisation. Most students never participate in

to all. Outfitting our rebuilt internationalisation structure with features that enable all students to have meaningful encounters, starting with those traditionally underserved and disconnected, will challenge organisational culture, operational capacity and resources in the short term but strengthen the institution in the long term. Increased internationalisation at home will bolster your office's morale, benefit more people and provide new routes to mobility.

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## Increased internationalisation at home will bolster your office's morale, benefit more people and provide new routes to mobility

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materials that work elsewhere but are ill suited for your context. Each institution has a unique toolkit. You may be particularly adept at facilitating student mobility because you have a solid team of advisers who understand how to match student learning needs and interests with faculty specialties and offerings. These advisers may be just the people you need to recruit more faculty to internationalise curricula at home by participating in existing virtual exchange programmes such as Soliya or X-Culture.

But if your institution does not already have a robust culture and support system for online teaching and learning, it may not be wise to launch a new COIL programme in response to COVID-19. While great leaders can always embrace and conquer new, ambitious challenges, make sure you identify and build on your strengths before following the hottest trends.

a study, internship, research or service experience intentionally designed to expand their global awareness, develop intercultural communication and teamwork skills and connect them to a wider network of career opportunities. Mobility is the central pillar holding up the structure housing these opportunities; removing that pillar reveals just how many students have always been left out in the cold. Now we must rebuild by anchoring our structure to the foundation of all students' learning.

We need other tools for this task: we can move minds without moving bodies. In addition to virtual methods, we can facilitate campus-based intergroup dialogues, foreign language learning, and community-based change-making and social entrepreneurship associated with the Sustainable Development Goals. We must adhere to building codes that require structures to be made accessible

#### STAY POSITIVE

Right now, while we are still discovering the destructive impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, it's hard to envision how we'll be able to rebuild and restructure internationalisation in the future. But as people who have experienced what it is like to lose nearly everything and come back stronger than before, we assure you: you will recover. Stick to the tried and true principles of resilient construction and you will be OK. Safety first.

—STEPHANIE DOSCHER & ALEX RENDÓN



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