

FORUM

MEMBER
MAGAZINE

Discussing international education

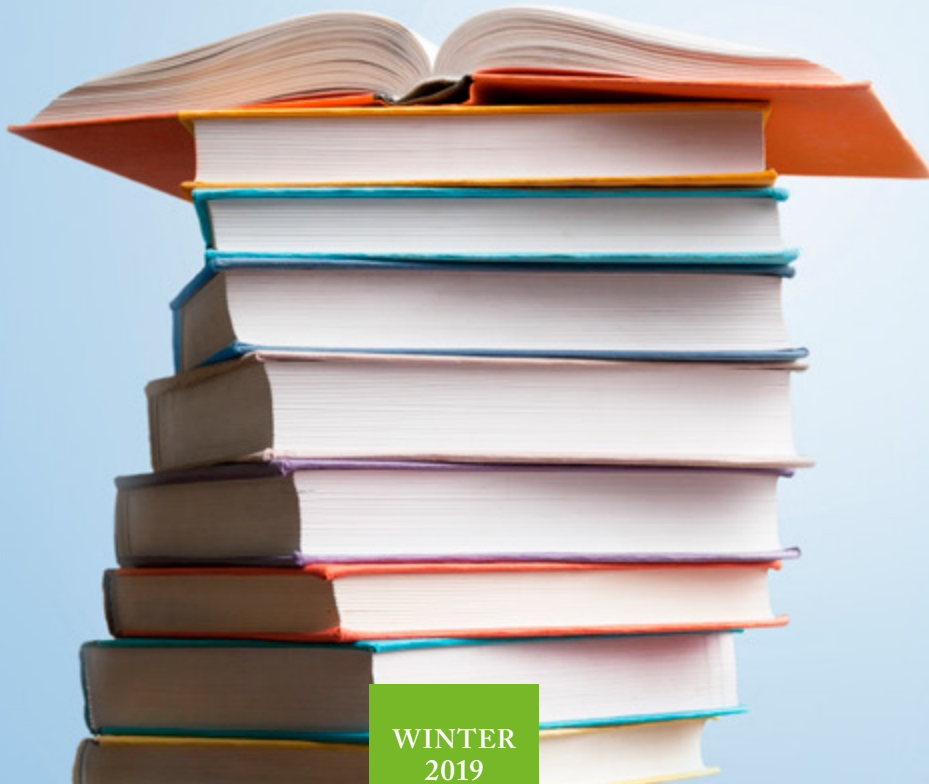
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WINTER
2019

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09

“Both local communities and students can gain from activities designed with an explicit focus on mutual benefit”

INTERNATIONALISATION FOR SOCIETY

22

“I think the gap in internationalisation research is the ‘so-what’ of it all”

IN CONVERSATION WITH ROBERTA BASSETT



29

“Students in the growing number of study programmes in international education represent the next generation of scholar-practitioners”

CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS IN THE THIRD SPACE

38

“Research on internationalisation is popular among students, but there is a generation gap between those students and the most active scholars today”

THE LONG ROAD AHEAD



EDITORIAL

How does research on the internationalisation of higher education shape the work that you do? What has research on internationalisation revealed? And how does this research relate to enhanced practice? This edition of *Forum* is aimed at exploring why research matters and how it is used, as well as looking to future trends and new avenues of enquiry.

Internationalisation, of course, is a complex term, laden with different meanings and subject to multiple interpretations. Moreover, it is not always a term which those working in international education associate directly with their work. However, as the subject of research in its own right, ‘internationalisation’ is examined by scholars, policymakers, consultants and practitioners. In their own way, each of these groups is seeking to ensure a better understanding of the phenomenon of ‘internationalisation’. This edition of *Forum* is intended to highlight some of the contours of this field of enquiry, as well as to highlight how research informs and guides practice (and *vice versa*).

Setting the scene for this edition, Professor Hilary Kahn asks us to think critically about the terms we use to describe research that transcends borders, and in so doing makes a case for pursuing research that is both global in reach and transformative in effect. Continuing in the vein of real-world impact, Uwe Brandenburg, Elspeth Jones and Betty Leask explore a current research project which is seeking to draw connections between internationalisation and social engagement. Hans de Wit later goes on

to trace the broad historical outline of research into internationalisation in higher education, rounding off this volume with a glance to what the future might hold.

Another series of articles in this edition highlights specific fields of enquiry where research is making a difference, for example, in relation to climate change and how international educators are responding to climate action initiatives (Pii-Tuulia Nikula), or to guide new thinking about virtual student mobility (Ana Beaven and Robert O’Dowd). Adinda van Gaalen advocates for an integrated approach to research on internationalisation in all education sectors, seeking to bridge a research gap between secondary education and higher education.

We are delighted that Roberta Bassett, Lead for the Global Solutions Group on Tertiary Education at the World Bank, agreed to be interviewed for this issue. With a PhD in international higher education, Roberta offers some fascinating insights into how a global organisation such as the World Bank draws on research to guide its work. She also highlights the paucity of research into those countries and regions which are traditionally less-analysed. Another perspective on research in practice is offered by Maria Stergiou, who reports on Switzerland’s internationalisation research agenda.

A final set of contributions focuses on the connection between scholarship and practice, specifically as lived and experienced by international educators who have knowledge of both. Much has been written about scholar-practitioners in internationalisation, and we are pleased to



feature a series of case studies highlighting the experience of those who have sought to bring research into their work, such as Courtney Hartzell and Tanja Reiffenrath from Germany and Visnja Schampers-Car from Croatia, who has recently completed her PhD under the supervision of Fiona Hunter (former President of the EAIE) at the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy).

I am very grateful to my colleagues on the EAIE Publications Committee for their expert support and guidance in reviewing submissions for this edition of *Forum*.

Each of the members of the Publications Committee finds themselves somewhere on the practitioner-scholar continuum, having undertaken research degrees or projects in the field, or by way of our current work and research interests. We hope that this edition provides food for thought for scholars and practitioners alike!

— DOUGLAS PROCTOR, EDITOR
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IN CONVERSATION WITH

**ROBERTA
BASSETT**

LAURA E. RUMBLEY
EAIE

As Lead for the Global Solutions Group on Tertiary Education for the World Bank, Roberta Bassett relies on solid applied research to advise client countries looking to reform their higher education sectors. She sat down with us to discuss the importance of policy-focused research and addressing the ‘so-what’ of internationalisation.

You earned a PhD in international higher education in the US and worked as an academic in the UK before joining the World Bank. How have your views of the importance of internationalisation research changed over your working life?

RB: I think that research is terrifically important, but perhaps not any more or less than it used to be. The world is changing in terms of its focus on nationalism and the rise of populism, so potentially the space for internationalisation is also changing in terms of how we talk about it on a national and local basis – can we maintain the same conversations? Can we repurpose what we know is important about internationalisation but in language that actually appeals to those in a more nationalist or populist dialogue space? I think the presentation of the research and how we talk about it need to be adapted for the current situation, and I don’t know that anyone is doing that particularly well right now.

How does the Global Solutions Group on Tertiary Education at the World Bank draw on research in its work? Does it commission policy-focused research? Which sources of research output are the most valuable?

RB: I like this question a lot because we actually get this question from recent graduates or people who are interested in working at the World Bank. We do commission some research. The way the World Bank works in terms of specific analytical areas is that it’s mostly client-driven. So, say, for example, the Tanzanian government comes to us and says

they’d like higher education reform in a particular area. We would then commission somebody to work with the Bank’s technical team to do research driven by the client needs. We do that regularly – it’s very much client question-driven. Occasionally we will have flagship products, but they’re either asked for by our Chief Economist’s office, or maybe some funds have been given to the education team to ask a really pointed question. In that case, we would drive that work ourselves, potentially with some consulting support, but mostly with World Bank leadership and then with consultants we hire as research assistants.

We definitely look to the work that comes out of major centres of higher education research around the world. We also get a lot of consultants who used to work for global organisations like OECD or UNESCO or former World Bank staff, so they’re familiar with this sort of client-driven work, which can be harder for academics to grapple with.

I have spoken to many academics and many academic groups who lament the fact that big organisations like the World Bank don’t use all of the research that’s coming out, but so much of that research is not relevant for applied policy. If you’re not answering a question that’s of immediate relevance, I can’t use your research, no matter how good it is. And if you’re asking these grand questions that are not solvable, they’re really important for knowledge and truth and all of the things that I believe in, but it’s not something we can apply to our work with clients. The most applied research, using up-to-date data and asking questions that are really

related to on-the-ground, implementable ideas, we use that a lot. The OECD does a lot of great analytical research, and we use it a lot because it's data-driven. The more academics do applied research with an outcome orientation, the more likely it is that we'll use it.

Research into the internationalisation of higher education is undertaken across disciplines and geographic boundaries. In your role as Lead for the Global Solutions Group on Tertiary Education, how do you ensure that a diversity of perspectives is considered?

RB: Again, it's about what our clients are asking for. I would love to see new work on less-analysed regions. We look to see if anyone's done research on Nepal, for example, or if there's regional assessments of the Southern Cone, or anything about higher education in less-analysed areas. We don't need to know much more about Western Europe because it's very easy for us to find research on Western Europe. But we

examples and data and structures that have worked in a similar context to their own. But there's not as much of that, so I would love to encourage internationalisation research across the less-analysed spaces of the world.

You are co-editor of a 2009 book entitled *International organisations and higher education policy: Thinking globally, acting locally?* In the ten years since that book was published, do you see changes in the way that organisations such as the World Bank approach their work?

RB: I think there are some key things that maybe we weren't thinking about as much back in 2009; for instance, this pivot from learning to skills and employment outcomes. The OECD has this massive initiative now on skills and jobs as relates to tertiary education, for instance, and it has emerged from the massive global narrative. But, I'm not so convinced that we are looking at this fully enough. One of the big questions in my head is, how much



I think the gap in internationalisation research is the 'so-what' of it all

don't get a lot of interdisciplinary, inter-regional, cross-cultural research from the less-analysed spaces of the world.

If I'm providing policy advice to a lower-income country, I would like to see research on something that worked in countries with similar economic conditions or history. We would look for research that's analysing much more South-South comparison spaces, so that we can actually offer our clients

should we be holding tertiary education responsible for employment outcomes? This is a new dynamic in international higher education different from 10 or 15 years ago. At that time, we weren't blaming higher education as a whole for unemployed graduates, but now, as a global community, we are asking: If these graduates are overeducated and underemployed, then what's wrong with higher education? I'm not sure that's

the right question. I believe there is a complexity about the ecosystem into which graduates emerge from their institutions that needs to be assessed more critically, and it's easy to blame higher education institutions.

What gaps do you see in the internationalisation research landscape? Are there particular areas where an organisation such as the World Bank would like to see more research being undertaken?

RB: I think the gap in internationalisation research is the 'so-what' part of it all. Why does it matter? Researchers are



asking valid, thought-provoking questions – but so what? Why should anyone outside the academy care? Is it something that can be addressed through policy,

can we use your research in a way that changes something? I think the gap in internationalisation research is asking questions that have applied outcome ori-

a roadmap of relevance that we can then bring to a client country and say, “this work is super relevant to you, and if you follow these steps they provide, then you may be able to achieve the outcomes you’re looking for, as was the experience in the countries they studied,” then, yay! *Voila*.

So, the gaps really are in how we make it work for somebody. If you’re asking a question, please make it a question that people can use to make something better. If the research is relevant, it has a place here and in the global tertiary education reform space.

If you’re asking a question, please make it a question that people can use to make something better

through different forms of engagement or with different sectors of society? Can you see roadmaps to resolving different questions that are being asked? How

entations and then providing a roadmap that gets us there. Giving people a clear answer as to why it matters and what can be done. If research can provide us with

EAIE BLOG SPOT

In between *Forum* issues, visit the EAIE blog for news, views and insights, anywhere and at your fingertips. Just grab yourself a comfy seat and start browsing!



06
AUG

Myths and realities about global citizenship

Many of our conversations about educating students to become 'global citizens' are predicated upon the same myths.

<http://ow.ly/SqC650x8DFY>



14
AUG

7 challenges to becoming data-driven

As more and more data becomes available, learning how to use that data to guide our decisions becomes crucial.

<http://ow.ly/LvET50x8E3H>



12
SEP

A tool with global potential: Qualifications Passport for Refugees

From its beginnings as a Norwegian initiative, the Qualifications Passport for Refugees is rapidly growing in relevance and use.

<http://ow.ly/fNLL50x8E9f>

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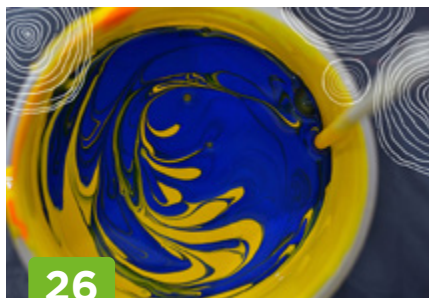


25
SEP

Simon Anholt's call for a "good generation"

At the EAIE Helsinki 2019 Opening Plenary, Simon Anholt, founder of the Good Country Index, asked us to unite across borders to educate a "good generation" to tackle global problems.

<http://ow.ly/xkCd50x8Eeb>



26
SEP

Mixing many forms of excellence: the European Universities Initiative

How can the 'Macron initiative' balance academic excellence with geographic and intellectual inclusiveness? Some would argue that excellence and inclusiveness go hand in hand.

<http://ow.ly/Q4La50x8Ekd>



27
SEP

Expanding the story to encompass all voices

The Closing Plenary of the 31st Annual EAIE Conference and Exhibition called upon all in attendance to shift our cultural narratives to truly encompass all voices.

<http://ow.ly/8gab50x8EoT>



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CALENDAR

**16–19
FEBRUARY**

2020 AIEA Annual Conference
Rethinking Comprehensive
Internationalization for a Global
Generation

www.aieaworld.org/2020-annual-conference-

**19–21
FEBRUARY**

**EURIE - Eurasian Higher
Education Summit**

www.eurieeducationsummit.com

**22–26
MARCH**

**APAIE 2020 Conference &
Exhibition**

Bridging Oceans - Internationalization and Higher Education in the Asia Pacific

www.apaie2020.org

**25–27
MARCH**

**The Forum on Education
Abroad's 16th Annual Conference**

Education Abroad at a
Crossroads: Actions for a
Sustainable Future

<https://forumea.org/training-events/annual-conference/general-info-2>

**25–28
MARCH**

**Scholars at Risk Network 2020
Global Congress**

Truth, Power & Society: The
Promise of Higher Education in
Challenging Times

www.scholarsatrisk.org/event/2020GlobalCongress

**05–08
APRIL**

**AACRAO's 106th Annual
Meeting**

www.aacrao.org/events-training/meetings/future-meetings

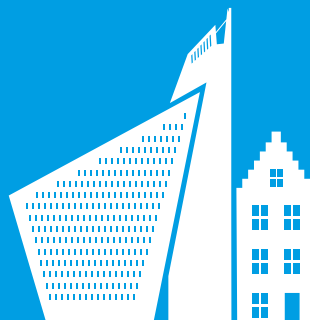


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