

# FORUM

MEMBER  
MAGAZINE

*Discussing international education*

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# LOOKING BACK AT 15 INTERNATIONALISATION

Originally coined in 1999, the term 'Internationalisation at Home' continues to have value today. In 2013, Jane Knight called the introduction of the term, "a significant development in the conceptualisation of internationalisation". Initially intended to focus attention beyond mobility in an era when European policy and practice favoured in- and outbound mobility, Internationalisation at Home is currently included in the educational policies of the European Union.

## PRESENT

The *Internationalisation at Home* Expert Community is a thriving group, with several sessions now dedicated to the theme at each Annual Conference

## 2007

*EAIE Toolkit 2: Implementing Internationalisation at Home*, edited by Jos Beelen is published

## 2000

The group has its first meeting in Malmö, resulting in the publication of *Internationalisation at Home: A Position Paper*. The publication is later presented at the 12th Annual EAIE Conference in Leipzig

## 1999

The term is coined in *Spring Forum* by Bengt Nilsson

A Special Interest Group is formed within the EAIE and formally recognised by the EAIE Board at the 11th Annual EAIE Conference in Maastricht



# YEARS OF N AT HOME



Internationalisation at Home (IaH) first gained traction in European countries with less widely-spoken languages; *ie* the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Finland and also Flanders. Take-up in the larger European countries and Eastern Europe has been slower. The concept of IaH originated in the context of a newly-established university which did not yet have international partners for study abroad programmes. The local environment of the university was used to offer international and intercultural perspectives to all students. This struck a chord with many universities where, although they had international partners, only a small minority of students took part in mobility activities. IaH aims to make the benefits of internationalisation available to all students, not just the mobile minority.

In its early days, the concept of IaH was developed by a Special Interest Group within the EAIE. It was given a theoretical underpinning through the invaluable work of Josef Mestenhauser, who advocated for a ‘systemic’ approach and warned against unfocused activities. The Special Interest Group also produced a *Position Paper* in which IaH was defined as “any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility”.<sup>1</sup>

The Special Interest Group continued to organise sessions at EAIE conferences, develop training courses, facilitate workshops, publish an *EAIE Toolkit* and sign a Memoranda of Cooperation with similar groups in Australia in 2010 and South Africa in 2012.<sup>2</sup> This collaboration has sparked ongoing discussions on the meaning of concepts, similarities and differences, and on implementation. The result has been a range of joint conference sessions, workshops and publications.

It has become apparent that IaH is a dynamic concept that changes along with the development of higher education, but also through technological developments.

Online collaboration between students in different countries has opened a wealth of opportunities to acquire international and intercultural competences without travelling abroad.

#### CURRENT USAGE AND TRENDS

The *EAIE Barometer* demonstrates that 56% of universities in Europe have included IaH in their policies, while *Trends 2015* shows that 64% of European universities claim that they undertake activities for Internationalisation at Home.<sup>3,4</sup> It could be argued that, exceptionally, bottom-up implementation of practice is preceding top-down development of policies.

The shift towards mainstreaming internationalisation in teaching and learning means that different stakeholders are assuming ownership of internationalisation. Academics now take centre stage, rather than the international office. Yet, across Europe, many still see the international officer as responsible for everything international, including the internationalisation of teaching and learning. Many international officers feel this responsibility. Responding to this, the EAIE has developed a training course that helps international officers find the most effective role within the process of implementing IaH.

Considering the continued importance of IaH, and to help create a common understanding among stakeholders, a new definition was introduced that hopefully provides more focused guidance than the original:

Internationalisation at Home is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments.<sup>5</sup>

Neither definitions nor policies will ensure that IaH will be implemented in a meaningful way. But it is notable that the new definition stresses that *all* students should acquire international and intercultural competences through the domestic

curriculum. It also stresses that study abroad is an *extra* option that only a minority of students can be expected to choose.

#### INTERNATIONALISATION AT HOME AND OF THE CURRICULUM

The increasing attention on IaH is not limited to continental Europe. It has gained prominence in Australia and the UK through its connection with the related concept of Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC), and both of these are emerging concepts in South Africa and in Latin American countries.

Internationalisation of the Curriculum encompasses Internationalisation at Home, but is intended to describe both formal (assessed) and informal (not assessed) curriculum regardless of where it is delivered. Crucially, then, mobility programmes and cross-border or transnational education are also included in Internationalisation of the Curriculum, but neither form part of the concept of Internationalisation at Home. That said, both IaH and IoC:

- Aim to reach 100% of students;
- Focus on the intercultural as well as the international;
- Are embedded within the core formal and informal curriculum, not simply in the elective elements;
- Are delivered through internationalised learning outcomes and assessment;
- Do not depend on the presence of international students or staff and do not assume that their presence will automatically 'internationalise' the student experience;
- Do not depend on teaching in English;
- Are specific to individual programmes of study and the academics who deliver them.

However, Internationalisation at Home assumes that students will not study, work or volunteer abroad as part of their programme of study, so the home university and domestic locations are key to its delivery. The differences between the

two concepts are further explored in the contribution by Betty Leask *et al* in this issue (see page 34).

#### AN AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

Internationalisation can only reach all students if the majority of academics, if not all, integrate it into their curriculum and their teaching and learning through internationalised learning outcomes and associated assessment. Not all academics feel confident in taking forward this agenda, and doing so requires focused professional development for internationalisation, which has often been lacking.

To support staff development, international partnerships remain essential as they offer new dimensions beyond student exchange. They will increasingly involve academics in the benchmarking of learning outcomes and collaboration to develop internationalised learning environments. Local partnerships can offer intercultural learning opportunities in a domestic environment.

Implementing Internationalisation at Home requires a shift from an input and output-focused orientation to one tied to outcomes and assessment. This may present challenges for universities that have evaluated their internationalisation efforts by counting the number of mobile students and staff or the number of international partnerships, yet it will be crucial if the aim is a comprehensive internationalisation strategy.

— JOS BEELEN & ELS PETH JONES

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2. Beelen, J. (Ed.) (2007). *Professional Development Series 2: Implementing Internationalisation at Home*. Amsterdam: EAIE.

3. Engel, L., Sandström, A., Van der Aa, R., Glass, A. (2015). *The EAIE Barometer: Internationalisation in Europe*. Amsterdam: EAIE.

4. Surssock, A. (2015). *Trends 2015: Learning and Teaching in European Universities*. Brussels: European University Association.

5. Beelen, J., and Jones, E. (2015). Redefining internationalisation at home. In A. Curai, L. Matei, R. Pricopie, J. Salmi & P. Scott (Eds.), *The European higher education area: Between critical reflections and future policies* (pp. 67-80). Dordrecht: Springer.