The future of international higher education and international academic collaboration: Strengthening partnerships for our common goals.

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Abstract

International academic collaboration is more necessary than ever to address growing global challenges, including economic and geopolitical tensions, racism, nationalism, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In this report, we predict future dynamics relating to international academic collaboration or cooperation in the global context.

We describe nine key themes that have to be taken into account in understanding short- and long-term future challenges in international higher education and international academic collaboration: (i) Fundamental global macro-level trends affect international higher education; (ii) International academic collaboration plays a key, though contextualised, role in higher education; (iii) COVID-19 will have a persistent impact on international collaboration; (iv) Physical academic mobility will resume with revised assumptions/rationales; (v) Greater emphasis will be given to locally-based international cooperation; (vi) Virtual collaboration will grow in frequency and in importance; (vii) Reduced public funding for international academic collaboration in some contexts will likely exacerbate existing inequalities; (viii) Shifting geopolitical allegiance will affect who is collaborating with whom; and (ix) Institutions may increasingly view international academic collaboration in relation to society. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of the implications of these trends for the future of international higher education.

Over the past decades, two main, and—to a certain extent—contradictory, trends have dominated the development of international higher education: its massification, and its role in the global knowledge economy. The increasing demand of a rising middle class for access to higher education, particularly in contexts where the supply of higher education is insufficient to meet such demand, has motivated a dramatic increase in the number of students seeking higher education across borders, with the number of internationally-mobile students surpassing 5 million in 2017

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(IOM-GMDAC, 2020). At the same time, recognition of the importance of top quality research and education for the knowledge economy has resulted in a selective emphasis by governments around the world on excellence initiatives, which benefit a limited number of top universities at the cost of general support to tertiary education, a process which has exacerbated the divide between a small elite group of countries, universities, scholars and students, and the rest of global higher education.

These tensions influence many aspects of current international higher education, including international academic collaboration. Recent stresses - namely the COVID-19 pandemic, but also global challenges such as climate change, increasing geopolitical tensions, economic recession and rampant racism, nationalism and populism in many parts of the world - are likely to both impact these trends and further solidify inequalities, both within and between systems. At the same time, international academic collaboration is more necessary than ever, if we are to have any hope of addressing the substantial global challenges we face.

Predicting the role of international academic collaboration or cooperation in relation to the future of international higher education requires a clear understanding of the current macro-level changes or global trends that lay the foundation for trends in national and international higher education, as well as the meso-level changes at the systemic level. In this contribution, we describe ten key themes that have to be taken into account in understanding short- and long-term future challenges in international higher education and international academic collaboration.

1. Global macro-level trends lay the foundation for understanding trends in international higher education.

Globalization has brought about social, economic and political changes that influence all systems in the world, including systems of higher education. Increased economic competition between countries has created a **global knowledge economy**, which privileges those with the advanced skills and competencies fostered by higher education, while political globalization has resulted in a complex system of global governance, which affects the development of higher education policy around the world. These dynamics have, in turn, affected other social systems which impact higher education. For example, economic globalization has led to an expansion of the middle class, resulting in a larger number of families with both the

means to support children through higher education and the aspirations to do so (Marginson, 2016). Global campaigns in support of universal primary education have also increased the number of secondary school graduates, leading to rising numbers of aspiring higher education applicants.

One clear impact of globalization on higher education has, therefore, been the **massification** of systems around the world. The enrollment of students in higher education has been expanding for the past seven decades. Although there are not exact figures, at present, there are more than 200 million students around the world studying at more than 20,000 institutions of higher education (IAU/UNESCO, 2021; UIS, 2019), and the massification of higher education continues, especially in emerging economies. As a result of this rapid expansion, many new private providers have emerged on the market. The nature of the academic profession has also changed, as systems have required additional staff to support growing student populations. In some parts of the world, this has meant hiring faculty members without doctoral degrees; in others, it has led to a proliferation of part-time faculty (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2010).

Political globalization has also supported the global spread of neoliberalism as a key philosophy influencing the structure and evaluation of our social systems, including higher education. Institutions have fundamentally changed their modes of governance to adopt more corporate structures, and new actors in higher education systems, such as regional accreditation bodies and quality assurance agencies, have proliferated. Neoliberalism's embrace of **competition** as the best driver of quality has also had a profound influence on global higher education, particularly via the creation of global university ranking systems. Since rankings mostly value research outputs, universities tend to pay more attention to research than teaching or service to society. As a result, higher education institutions compete over qualified international and local faculty, international students with strong educational backgrounds (especially in STEM), and funding. Furthermore, rankings influence how nations and institutions govern their universities and structure their systems of higher education. There is now enormous emphasis on the creation of world class universities and on metrics that gauge quality in terms of the indicators most valued in the rankings (Hazelkorn, 2015).

Despite the economic and political pressures on countries to expand higher education systems – and to compete with one another via the higher education

industry – **public spending on higher education has reduced** in many parts of the world. This is partially due to general circumstances of austerity but has also been motivated by neoliberal understandings of what makes a strong higher education sector. The impacts of austerity have been pronounced, particularly in terms of student funding arrangements and pressures on universities to diversify their revenue sources through, for example, the creation of for-profit spin-offs and other income generation activities (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2010). This trend has also been exacerbated by COVID-19, which has led to increased costs and reduced revenue in universities around the world.

Finally, globalization has enabled a **technological revolution** around the world, with enormous impacts on higher education. Technology has fundamentally changed classroom dynamics – including disrupting the very notion of a "classroom" in many contexts – and opened up new opportunities for virtual collaboration. At the same time, technological developments have resulted in the expansion of access to international travel, as transportation has become more affordable throughout the world.

2. **As a result of many of these trends, international collaboration plays a key role in all systems of higher education, although the specifics of how international collaboration manifests depends significantly on context.**

International collaboration has arguably been the cornerstone of internationalization of higher education policies, which have developed in response to globalization in most countries in the world. International academic collaboration can include activities which relate to all three traditional functions of the university, i.e. research, teaching and service. Specific forms include international student mobility (both short- and long-term); the growth of international programs and institutions (dual and joint degrees, international branch campuses); international scholar mobility, leading to joint regional and international research projects, as well as increasingly international disciplinary conferences and workshops; the increase of funding designated for scholar mobility to permit joint research; and the possibility of shared access to cutting-edge instruments and physical facilities.

Understanding the drivers of international research collaboration, on the part of institutions and individuals, helps to better predict the future of this trend for all forms of international academic collaboration. Although these vary significantly by context, drivers for international research collaboration include:

- The growing need to *pool intellectual resources and expertise in order to solve global issues* in an increasingly interdependent world;
- The *benefits of pooling financial resources given the decline of public funding* of higher education and academic research;
- The potential for *higher quality research, economies of scope and scale, faster completion of projects, and lower individual, institutional, or national costs* for funding research;
- The potential for *greater prestige and increased citation impact through international research collaboration*, given the significant influence of global university rankings on institutional decision-making, and the subsequent benefits to individual researchers, departments, and institutions in the competitive knowledge economy;
- The potential to develop shared understanding, trust, and commitment between and within international academic communities (Amaratunga et al., 2018; Georghiou, 1998; Maringe & de Wit, 2016).

The relative ease of mobility in the present day, alongside digitalization in society and within higher education, has also greatly facilitated the possibility of many forms of international academic collaboration (The Royal Society, 2011).

3. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the global higher education landscape, in ways that will have a persistent impact on international collaboration.

In order to continue operations during the uncertain circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, universities had to rapidly move all of their teaching, research and service activities online, including those related to international collaboration. Such a rapid “pivot” required financial resources, adequate technological infrastructure (including high-speed internet), and substantial knowledge and

understanding of education technology (by faculty, staff and students), as well as a flexible administrative structure at both the institutional and national levels. The pandemic, therefore, **exacerbated existing inequalities** in the global higher education landscape, as wealthier systems (and institutions within systems) were better prepared for the shock and able to continue operation without noticeable disruption (Chan, Bista & Allen, 2022).

It appears likely that these inequalities will persist, as countries will also emerge from the grip of the pandemic at different rates, with more resourced countries being able to provide their citizens with high-quality vaccines sooner than the rest of the world. Institutions in wealthier countries are also more likely to be more equipped to weather the financial challenges caused by the pandemic (although it is important to acknowledge that the financial impacts have been sizable everywhere in the world, including – and perhaps especially – in wealthier countries which rely significantly on fee-paying international students to balance their budgets).

It is also likely that there will be some more positive long-term impacts. The rapid shift to virtual modes of working has enabled new forms of online research collaboration and dissemination (e.g., through seminars, webinars, and conferences, many of which have been made freely available to the public), the proliferation of collaborative online international learning (COIL) and other forms of virtual mobility, and the digitalization of teaching materials, to name a few. If these new modes of collaboration persist, there are some crucial positive implications, including increased accessibility for students and faculty who previously could not participate in physical mobility, due to economic or other reasons, and improved sustainability (a key factor for international education in the future, in light of the ongoing climate crisis).

We anticipate that these long- and short-term trends will mean the following for the future of international academic collaboration:

- Physical academic mobility will resume, but with revised assumptions and rationales;
- We will see greater emphasis on locally-based international cooperation, i.e., focused on internationalization at home and internationalization of the curriculum;

- Virtual forms of collaboration will become increasingly frequent and important;
- Reduced public funding for international research collaboration - particularly in and with lower-income contexts - is likely to exacerbate existing inequalities within international higher education;
- We will see shifting geopolitical allegiances, which - in turn - will affect who is collaborating with whom;
- Institutions may increasingly view international collaboration in terms of its potential impacts on society.

4. Physical academic mobility will resume, but with revised assumptions and rationales.

The pandemic has had a tremendous influence on international higher education in general, but especially on student, faculty and staff mobility, due to border closures, travel restrictions, visa regulations, and remote teaching. In these unprecedented circumstances, different modes of mobility, such as virtual exchange, have been used as a temporary alternative to physical mobility. (One example is the decision of the European Commission to partially allow virtual exchange in replacement of physical exchange under the Erasmus+ mobility program.)

However, it is unlikely that physical academic mobility will be entirely replaced by virtual forms of mobility in the long term. Recent analysis of the extensive data on virtual forms of mobility, afforded by the rise in such efforts during the pandemic, has confirmed that virtual mobility cannot provide the same kind of learning experience as full immersion in another country (Buiskool & Hudepohl, 2020). As a result, even during the pandemic, a small number of academic mobility programs continued operating despite the restrictions, demonstrating the resilience and significance of physical mobility for academic cooperation, and there are now signs that institutions (and individual students) are rapidly resuming mobility efforts, as vaccination programs roll out around the world.

According to the Institute of International Education (IIE) *Fall 2021 International Student Enrollment Snapshot* report, 70 percent of US institutions surveyed reported an increase in their international student enrollments for Fall 2021, an increase which cannot be attributed to online learning, given that 99

percent of institutions surveyed were offering in-person or hybrid classes, with only one percent of institutions offering online classes only (Martel, 2021). Most US universities also plan to fund outreach activities for international students to the same or higher level than before in the upcoming academic year and have made significant changes to their operations, in order to accommodate international students who cannot arrive in the US and/or do not have access to vaccination in their home countries. For example, 72 percent of universities surveyed by IIE offered the vaccine to students, faculty, and staff on campus, as opposed to requiring students that be vaccinated prior to arrival (Martel, 2021). Many HEIs also simplified their application process by allowing online testing, waiving standardized testing requirements, expanding deadlines for application submission, and allowing admission deferrals. All these measures demonstrate a commitment to physical mobility, which is likely to continue. At the same time, it is notable that US higher education institutions are open to offering hybrid and online modes of teaching to those students who are not able to arrive in the country due to COVID-19 related difficulties.

In terms of COVID-related impact, the situation is not too different for the other main Anglophone receiving countries (i.e. the United Kingdom and Australia), which have also seen a rather drastic decrease in inbound international students over the past few years. However, both contexts are also grappling with other factors affecting physical mobility - namely, a decrease in the number of European students studying in the UK as a result of Brexit and a decrease in the number of Chinese students studying in Australia, due to geopolitical tensions. Increasing competition from non-Anglophone countries is also starting to affect the dynamics of international academic mobility (Altbach & de Wit, 2021; de Wit, Minaeva & Wang, 2022, forthcoming).

The impact of COVID-19 on physical academic mobility is well illustrated by the case of international student mobility in Australia. The Australian higher education system has long been heavily dependent on international students. As of 2020, Australi was the the fourth leading host country with 463,643 international students (Mason, 2021). In 2020, over 50 percent of international students in Australia hailed from China and India (Mason, 2021); in 2018, Australia hosted 14 percent of all outbound Chinese students, and 20 percent of all outbound Indian students (DESE, 2021).

However, due to strict and extended border closures as a result of the pandemic, 44 percent of Chinese student visa holders were outside Australia in August 2020, growing to 64 percent in August 2021 (DESE, 2021). Many Indian student visa holders also remain outside Australia: 6 percent in August 2020, and 21 percent in August 2021 (DESE, 2021). Overall, Australian

It remains to be seen if the pandemic-related declines in physical mobility will continue after vaccination rates rise around the world, or if this marks a more durable shift in the history of academic mobility. What seems most likely is that virtual and physical mobility will coexist in complementary ways in future, responding to different rationales and possibilities. Furthermore, what is clear is that we are likely to see an even greater divide between those able to access physical mobility and those that cannot than was already the case. Physical mobility of students and scholars has long been an opportunity mainly available to elites, given that it requires financial resources, sufficiently good health, time and aspiration to travel and an absence of binding family responsibilities. As a result of these barriers, only a small percentage of the academic community participates in physical mobility. This has been exacerbated by border closures, travel restrictions and increasingly complex and restrictive visa regulations during the pandemic (De Wit & Altbach, 2021). Although some of these barriers may subside with them, vaccine nationalism - including significant imbalances between nations, in terms of vaccine availability, quality and recognition - is likely to exacerbate these long-standing barriers to physical mobility, at least in the medium term.

5. **We will see greater emphasis on locally-based international cooperation, i.e. focused on internationalization at home and internationalization of the curriculum.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has only emphasized the importance of skills fostered through international academic collaboration (e.g. responsible global citizenship, problem-solving skills, and intercultural competencies). Given limitations on physical

mobility for the majority of students in the world (both those that have long existed and those that have arisen in the pandemic context), we anticipate that we will see a **far greater emphasis on locally-based international cooperation, i.e. focused on internationalization at home and internationalization of the curriculum.**

Internationalization of the curriculum has long been understood as an outstanding mechanism for fostering the skills and attitudes necessary to address global challenges. Indeed, it may be more effective than physical mobility for ensuring internationalized learning (Leask & Green, 2020). The results of mobility programs are usually assessed utilizing quantitative data (e.g., the number of students who participated in mobility, the duration of exchange programs, the diversity of countries where universities send their students, the diversity of international students), rather than the outcomes in terms of student learning. Such assessment does not demonstrate if mobile students gain intercultural competencies and/or raise their intercultural awareness. In contrast, when internationalization is advanced via the curriculum, internationalized learning outcomes are drafted and assessed towards the end of the experience. This qualitative approach paints a much richer picture of students' learning. More broadly, internationalization at home increases the impact of internationalization efforts, by expanding beyond the small minority who are able to access physical mobility opportunities (Jones, 2020).

Although arguments in favor of internationalization at home have long circulated in academic circles, the perceived benefits of physical academic mobility for cross-cultural learning have tended to ensure that physical mobility remains the core internationalization strategy for many systems and institutions around the world. However, the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic may have shocked the system sufficiently to finally strengthen efforts to increase internationalization at home activities (Leask, 2020) - activities which will only become more salient as the climate crisis evolves.

Reimagining the Internationalization of the Curriculum: Best Practices and Promising Possibilities (Leask et al., forthcoming), published in Spanish by the Universidad de Guadalajara in Mexico, is a useful resource for those interested in innovative approaches to IoC currently being implemented by institutions around the world. The book brings together case studies and analyses of IoC from South and North America, Europe, and the Asia Pacific region. Some promising examples highlighted in the book include:

- The International Business School Maastricht, which has a mission to guide young professionals to become resilient business leaders with a global mind, who can act as change makers for a sustainable world. In 2018, the School established an Intercultural Business learning pathway within its International Business degree, in which IoC is synthesized with education for sustainable development, providing a holistic approach to intercultural and sustainability learning in the curriculum and new roles for lecturers as coaches and experts to deliver the new mission.
- A large-scale, cross-institutional professional development initiative, implemented at the University of Hong Kong, which aims to support academics to broaden their perspectives and practices in the domain of IoC. Early findings suggest that this sort of activity has transformative potential for institutions hoping to move towards more integrated, learning-focused understanding

6. **Virtual forms of collaboration will become increasingly frequent and important.**

As has already been the case over the past year, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, **digital forms of collaboration will become increasingly frequent and important**. Limitations on physical mobility - as well as possible changes in mobility preferences, related to concerns about environmental sustainability - will motivate further development and proliferation of the use of digital technologies in higher education. As previously discussed, this may manifest in “virtual mobility” or “virtual exchanges” of students, faculty and staff, collaborative online international learning (COIL), online webinars and conferences, and the proliferation of open library resources and other open access publications, among others. As in the case of physical academic mobility, we do not anticipate that digitalization will replace all of the physical functions of higher education. Rather, we assume that digital elements will now be incorporated throughout all higher education functions, leading to increased blended and hybrid forms of collaboration.

In the United States, the Stevens Initiative has provided funding and other resources for advancing virtual exchange. In a recent report (Bhandari et al, 2021), it was documented that over 3000 of these exchanges took place in 2020 and more than 80 grants were awarded. The American Council on Education (2021) has also added a transformation lab on virtual exchange and COIL (collaborative online international learning) to offer resources to universities interested in advancing these approaches.

Already underway even before the pandemic, ERASMUS+ Virtual Exchange provides opportunities for virtual mobility for young people aged 18 to 30 years old. This program will be continued by the European Youth Portal.

The Inter-American Organisation of Higher Education created the Virtual Mobility Space in Higher Education (HYPERLINK "https://oui-iohe.org/en/emovies/" eMOVIES) to allow students from OUI-IOHE member institutions to enroll in courses from institutions in other countries, while receiving academic credit in their home institution. A similar scheme denominated *Americarum Mobilitas* allows students from institutions that are members of the Organization of Catholic Universities in Latin America and the Caribbean to participate in academic mobility added virtual exchange. This virtual modality has quickly surpassed in-person exchanges within this network.

Digitalization of international collaboration can have two possible outcomes. Utilizing digital forms of collaboration, which do not require physical mobility and the related financial resources and time allocation, can increase access to international research and education, thus making them less elitist. However, the reverse may also be true. Given that countries, institutions and researchers do not have equal access to digital resources, relevant training, support personnel, or ancillary equipment and software, increased digitization may also further exacerbate the current digital divide in global tertiary education. Digitalization also requires changes in legislation, quality assurance and credit recognition procedures and institutional policies, all of which are more likely to happen rapidly in some contexts than others. All of this, in turn, may result in less collaboration between technologically advantaged and disadvantaged contexts

Digitalization of international collaboration is also likely to result in further dominance of the English language and, relatedly, Anglophone countries. English is already the dominant language for scholarship and research. As the countries with the most developed information technology infrastructure are also English-speaking, the vast majority of conferences, webinars, virtual exchange opportunities, and COIL opportunities are offered by these counties, typically in the English language. It has proven difficult for other countries, in particular those with limited public funding for tertiary education, to offer similar opportunities and/or to attract similar sized audiences for programming offered in other idioms (Unangst, Altbach & de Wit, 2022, forthcoming).

7. **Reduced public funding for international research collaboration - particularly in and with lower-income contexts - is likely to exacerbate existing inequalities within international higher education.**

With a multiplicity of interrelated global events in the contemporary context, including the pandemic, the related global economic crisis in higher education and more widely, and the rise of populist forms of nationalism, we see a decline in public funding for research collaboration in some contexts, as well as a general decline in funding for collaboration in and with lower-income countries (Highman, 2019).

In March 2021, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the body responsible for funding research and knowledge exchange at higher education institutions in England, announced that it would be reducing its international development budget from £245 to £125 million for the 2021-22 fiscal year, due to economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving "a £120m gap between allocations and commitments" (UKRI, 2021). Aside from the sheer scale of the cuts, the announcement was shocking in its procedural aspects, as the cuts required a reduction in funding allocated to existing grants, rather than only affecting future funding calls. As a result, some international research teams had to be reduced or dissolved entirely, with real consequences for

As a result, we are likely to see further inequalities in terms of global research outputs - with the majority of published academic work continuing to be authored and disseminated by scholars based in higher-income contexts - and research priorities (due to a global imbalance in the ability of researchers to access to funding).

Declining public funding in certain parts of the world may also result in private actors, such as think tanks, research institutes, and private research foundations, playing a more significant role in global research spaces. Such a shift presents the opportunity for new and different kinds of research partnerships and collaborations between universities and the private sector. However, it could also result in the proliferation of new boundaries on research agendas - i.e. if only those academics working on agenda-relevant research could access these funds and partnerships - as well as potential limitations on public dissemination of research results. The effects of moving away from public funding of academic research are most dire for non-STEM disciplines, as departments and research budgets for these fields seem to suffer the most and may have the least access to private sources of funding.

Furthermore, university-industry and other forms of public-private partnerships in international research collaboration may effectively be a step backwards in the efforts to ensure that international research collaboration is diverse, representative, and equitable. Access to such forms of collaboration will undoubtedly be restricted to the most elite of higher education institutions.

8. We will see shifting geopolitical allegiances, which - in turn - will affect who is collaborating with whom.

As a result of geopolitical pressures, we are also likely to see **shifting geopolitical allegiances, affecting who is collaborating with whom.** As an institution within society, the university participates in and is subject to shifts in political relationships at local, regional, and global levels. In a globalized world, geopolitical shifts in power over the past decades - related to political dynamics, economic crises, and demographic movement - have significant worldwide knock-on effects, including on higher education and international academic collaboration.

One prominent example is the repeated censure of international academic collaboration with China, apparently due to the national security concerns as voiced by various national governments. The undeniable rise of China as a global power and a leading player in international higher education (as may be observed by its position in global university rankings, its extensive research and development budget, and volume of research publications) plays a part in contemporary geopolitical volatility (Marginson, 2018).

In 2017, there were 103 Confucius institutes in the US alone. However, this number has decreased rapidly in recent years, with 89 US-based Institutes already closed and five additional Institutes scheduled to close by 2022. If we look more closely at these closure trends, it is apparent that the majority of these closures have occured in the last three years. For example, in the US, only 17 institutes were closed from 2014-2018, whereas 22 institutes were closed in 2019, 24 in 2020, and 26 in 2021 (National Association of Scholars, 2021). The same trend can be observed in European countries, such as the UK, Belgium, Sweden, Germany, and The Netherlands.

Another recent example of the changing geopolitical climate is the December 2021 announcement by the European Union to launch a new program - "Global Gateway" - as an alternative to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. The European Commission has claimed that, while the Chinese program was not transparent and left some countries in debt, this new initiative will be sustainable and trusted among partners.

Alongside political concerns about collaboration with China, a related rise of populist forms of nationalism in several countries and regions of the world, including the US, the UK, Australia, Hungary, and others, has led to anti-internationalist calls for more nationally focused ends for higher education across teaching, research, and service functions.

As a result, we see growing political interference in international academic collaboration, affecting university-university partnerships, university-industry collaboration, research collaboration and funding, and teaching and learning (for instance, with regards to Confucius Institutes and language/cultural learning) (Altbach & de Wit, 2021).

Specifically, we see increased securitization of universities, knowledge, and of individuals, with greater levels of federal oversight into research collaboration,

ongoing and frequently unwarranted legal cases against scholars with links to non-allied countries (e.g., US scholars with collaborative relationships with China), and political fear-mongering regarding intellectual property theft and foreign influence related to foreign research funding.

These trends will likely shape patterns of collaboration in the years ahead, such that collaboration is restricted for institutions, administrators, academics, and students from particular countries. North America and certain countries in Europe may collaborate more often among themselves, while China may redirect academic collaboration through its Belt and Road Initiative towards South East Asia, Africa, Latin America and other countries in Europe, although with rising concerns about their economic and social impact, as recent examples in countries like Hungary, Macedonia, and Zambia illustrate. Additionally, reduced funding may further delay the potential to increase access to knowledge at a global level, and restrict the developments of partnerships between scholars and institutions in the “Global South” and the “Global North”.

9. Institutions may increasingly view international collaboration in terms of its potential impacts on society.

One potentially positive impact of recent trends is that **universities may increasingly view international collaboration in terms of its potential impacts on society.**

The concept of Internationalization of Higher Education for Society (IHES) has been debated in academic circles in recent years, with advocates such as Brandenburg, de Wit, Jones, Leask and Drobner arguing that IHES extends the benefits of internationalization to incorporate the local, regional, and global community, thereby participating in the provision of local, regional, and global public goods towards the global common good (Brandenburg et al., 2019). In effect, this involves expanding internationalization activities beyond the traditional pillars of research and teaching to the third function of higher education - that of service to society. It is possible that strategically aligning the service function, or “third mission,” of the university with the internationalization agenda could help to counteract implicit tendencies to compete rather than collaborate - often observed in higher education

more broadly, as well as within internationalization, through academic capitalism and academic ethnocentrism (Jones et al., 2021) - and to address recent critiques leveled at universities for being elitist and disconnected from society. By focusing on progressive concepts and values within internationalization, such as cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, and diversity, IHES may also be harnessed via the functions of the university to promote international collaboration and provide such global public goods as global citizenship, sustainability, democracy, peace, and access to knowledge.

If universities around the world start to see potential value in such an orientation for their internationalization efforts, we are likely to see:

- Further centralization of international collaboration efforts, including those focused on societal impacts, within the strategic plans of institutions;
- Support for programming and formal and informal institutional, university-community, and university-industry partnerships that realize IHES through reciprocity and engagement with local and international academic communities and the broader public;
- Research collaboration with a broader set of stakeholders, including participation in networks and associations, in order to ensure that research is responsive to and accessible by both local and international public and academic communities;
- Further incorporation of local and global perspectives and emphasis on global social justice in teaching across the disciplines;
- And, a recognition of how cross-alignment of IHES with the teaching, research, and service functions of the university can support efforts to positively impact society, through a range of different forms of international collaboration (Brandenburg et al., 2020).

Although such activities remain in the minority of internationalization projects around the world (ACA, 2021), a growing number of institutions are adopting IHES-focused initiatives, and it appears likely that this trend will continue in the years to come.

The recent IHES Mapping Report (ACA, 2021) includes a number of examples of IHES-focused initiatives, including the International Town and Gown Network, coordinated by Stellenbosch University in South Africa (which is an international network of universities committed to social impact and community engagement), the Citizen Science Talent Programme at the University of Southern Denmark (which pairs international students with local citizen scientists in order to both increase student research skills and gain international exposure for local research topics) and the Interfaculty Council for Global Development at KU Leuven (which provides funding for research projects that are co-created between a Belgian researchers and civil society organizations and counterparts in the Global South). It is also now possible to access current examples via the IHES Online Repository.

10. International Academic Collaboration for the future, In conclusion

The trends outlined here point to the resilience of traditional ways of academic cooperation, as well as the possibilities of long-term transformation. Rather than continuing with a mindless inertia, the pandemic has forced a deep interrogation of taken-for-granted practices and a recognition of the substantial possibilities afforded by technology and remote cooperation to augment international collaboration in more sustainable ways that are potentially more effective and inclusive. At the same time, the events of the past year have highlighted the limits of purely virtual collaboration and illuminated the likelihood that new modes of engagement are just as likely to exacerbate inequalities as they are to address them. There is no doubt that we will see new, different and potentially more diverse forms of international collaboration in the years to come. What remains to be seen is what these new forms of collaboration will bring to the sector and, more broadly, the world.

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