Virtual Internationalization in Higher Education
From a niche to the mainstream

Dr. Elisa Bruhn-Zass
GIZ, Sector Programme Education
Advisor for Higher Education

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CONTEXT

Covid-19

Digitalization

Internationalization
Beyond COVID-19

Access

Digitalization & Internationalization

Resilience

Sustainability
ICT IN INTERNATIONALIZATION

- Online media, e-learning
- Social media
- E-tutoring
- Virtual TNE
- OER, MOOCs
- Virtual mobility
  - IVAC, VE, COIL
  - Virtual study abroad
  - Virtual field trips
  - Virtual expert mobility
- Artificial Intelligence
- M-learning
- Games, VR, AR
- Website
- ... + more
VIRTUAL INTERNATIONALIZATION (VI)
COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONALIZATION

Articulated institutional commitment

Administrative leadership, structure & staffing

(Home) curriculum, cocurriculum

Faculty policies & practices

Physical student mobility

Collaborations, partnerships, TNE

ICT

Helms & Brajkovic (2017) / Bruhn (2020)
VIRTUAL INTERNATIONALIZATION

- Administrative leadership, structure & staffing
- (Home) curriculum, co-curriculum
- Faculty policies & practices
- Physical student mobility
- Collaborations, partnerships, TNE
- Online & distance education

Strategies and articulated institutional commitment

Helms & Brajkovic (2017) / Bruhn (2020)
### SURVEYS ON COVID-19 & INTERNATIONALIZATION
**(DATA FROM EUROPE)**

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VIRTUAL INTERNATIONALIZATION & COVID-19
## Covid-19 Impact

- Campus buildings closed  
  - D: 89 %

- Business trips cancelled  
  - D: 79 %

- Exchange programs for staff cancelled  
  - D: 90 %
  - EUI: 9,4/10 „most affected“; 81 %: „most negatively affected mid-term“

## Response

- Virtual workplaces offered  
  - D: 98 %;  
    - EUI: 8,8/10 „most impacted“

- Making use of partnerships for sharing good practices  
  - EUI

- Virtual conferences

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*% refers to HEIs which affirm that this is the case, unless otherwise provided

DAAD (2020) / EUI Survey (2020)
The extent of sharing good practices and measures within the alliance
1 = not at all, 10 = to the fullest extent possible

n=89

21%
LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

• Key drivers and stakeholders for (virtual) internationalization
• Define and implement strategies and institutional commitment
• Competencies crucial (intercultural competence, digital literacy)
• International partnerships for good practices
• Blended staff mobility (EUI: 46 % „could be further supported“)
# Covid-19 Impact

- Courses cancelled
  - D: 40 %
- Co-curricular events cancelled
  - D: 97 %

# Response

- Conversion to virtual teaching
  - D: 98 %
  - EUA: 95 % „all“, 4% „some“
- IaH strengthened
  - IAUP: 49 %
- Virtual mobility* increased
  - IAU: 65 %
  - IAUP: 63 %
  - EUA: 25 %
  - EU NESET: 85 %

*diversity in definitions!

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Fig. 17: Has COVID-19 stimulated alternatives to physical student mobility?

- No: 1%  
- Yes, we increased virtual mobility and/or collaborative online learning: 60%  
- In development: 1%  
- Planning or considering their development: 4%  
- Don't know: 34%
LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

- ICT-based measures for resilient, inclusive internationalization (IaH)
- Virtual exchange, virtual study abroad, and other forms!
- Considering digital divide, capacity – 59% in Europe able to increase virtual mobility, contrary to only 44% in Africa (IAU)

IAU (2020) / EUI Survey (2020)
## COVID-19 Impact

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<td>Offices closed</td>
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</table>
| Business trips cancelled                    | IAU: 93 % (Europe)  
D: 79 %  |
| Conferences cancelled or postponed          | IAU: 88 % (Europe)  
|                                              | D: 90 %  
EAIE: 54 %* |
| Exchange programs cancelled                 | D: 90 %  
EAIE: 54 %* |
| Research activities stopped                 | IAU: 9 % (Europe),  
43 % (Africa)  |
| Research collaboration resilient            | D (Rüland)  
IAU/EUA |

## Response

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| Virtual workplaces offered                    | D: 98 %  
EUI: 8,8/10 |
| Conversion to virtual teaching                | D: 98 %  |
| Virtual conferences                           | *data from very early stage (Feb 2020) |
LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

• Key drivers and stakeholders for (virtual) internationalization

• Put forward international (virtual) research collaboration, implement IaH in curricula, and provide education and (academic) support to international students

• Staff development offerings important (digital literacy, teaching international students online, etc.)

• Support / integration of international faculty
STUDENT MOBILITY

Covid-19 Impact

- exchange programs discontinued
- students grounded
- cancelled
- students unable to enter
- students leaving

...no welcome events
...no marketing events, info on exchange programs, etc.

STUDENT MOBILITY

RESPONSE

The In-Between

Advising
Online applications, bureaucracy
Online marketing
Virtual events & orientations
Hybrid / blended mobility

at home

abroad
STUDENT MOBILITY

LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

To what extent would you find blended mobility formats useful?
1 = not at all, 10 = to the fullest extent

n=93

48%

91%

+84% say: „could be further supported“
STUDENT MOBILITY

**LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS**

- Blended / hybrid mobility for (pandemic-)resilient mobility
- ICT as support (anytime, anywhere)
- Seamless transitions (before – during – after)
COLLABORATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS, TNE

COVID-19 IMPACT

• Less exchange, problems in joint programs
• Branch campuses closed

RESPONSE

• Partnerships helpful / sharing good practices
  EUI: 60 % / 80 %
  IAUP: 68 % / 56 %
• Maintaining / prioritizing existing partnerships
• Virtual collaborations
• Pooling online resources (courses, MOOCs)
  D: 26 %
  EUI: 59 %

Fig. 12: How has COVID-19 affected your partnerships?

- 51% It strengthened them, we coordinated our efforts to respond to COVID-19
- 31% It weakened them, we had to concentrate resources on local issues
- 18% It created new opportunities with Partner institutions (e.g. virtual mobility, shared resources, etc.)
LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

• Support of existing collaborations
• New forms of collaboration (virtual mobilities, OER/MOOC platforms, micro-credentials)
• Diversifying TNE (blended, industry connections)
• Strengthen resilience (EUI: 96 % „would have been better prepared to face this pandemic“ if their virtual inter-university campus had already been fully operational)
• Access, capacity, quality of higher ed (e.g. in emerging economies)
ONLINE AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

COVID-19 IMPACT

• On-campus education & physical mobility obstructed

RESPONSE

• (Fully) ODE in the mainstream
• Online enrollment through distance education / independent study D: 74 % / 15 %
• Asynchronous learning options for students in other time zones D: 13 %
LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

• ODE in the internationalization mainstream
• Domestic ODE: more and more programs → internationalizing them
• Transnational ODE (Virtual TNE)
• Access to an international experience / to a quality education
• But: hindering factors to access, infrastructure (IAU study: In Europe 85 % of institutions able to offer distance teaching, Africa 29 %)
LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

Do you prefer online or in-person teaching?

- Online: 57%
- No preference: 18%
- In-person: 25%
After the end of the COVID 19 pandemic, the importance of digital elements and offerings in the internationalisation of higher education will ...

- ...decline again.
- ...remain similarly important as during the COVID 19 pandemic.
- ...become even more important than during the COVID 19 pandemic.
VIRTUAL INTERNATIONALIZATION

Covid-19

Resilience

Access

Sustainability

Administrative leadership, structure, & staffing
Curriculum, co-curriculum, & learning outcomes
Faculty policies & practices
Physical student mobility
Collaboration & partnerships
Online and distance education

Strategies and articulated institutional commitment

digital literacy infrastructure
Fig. 22: Assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the importance of internationalisation of higher education (in %)

- Will (strongly) gain in importance: 51%
- Importance will hardly change: 21%
- Will lose (much) of its importance: 11%
- Can't say (yet): 5%
IN CLOSING

Just as they always have, technological innovations will reveal new ways to be a globally engaged university. The tools will change, and new goals will move to the forefront, but the case for internationalization of the university is not diminished. (Kinser, 2014)

...in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society. (de Wit et al, 2015)

Thank you for your attention.
LITERATURE

- Bruhn, E. (2020). *Virtual Internationalization in higher education*. Bielefeld, Germany: WBV.
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LITERATURE


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