Internationalization of Higher Education and Training of World citizens, Global citizens

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Abstract

Internationalization of higher education is imperative for universities with clear training objectives for their students, and competences they should acquire to become competitive in a globalized world where it is necessary "to think globally, and act locally".

The internationalization of education must be a mainstream component of its curriculum, research and social projection, thus facilitating inclusion of all students and overcoming reducing vision of the sme by providing the possibility of pursuing academic semesters or take internships abroad.

Key Words: Internationalization, global, local, inclusion, globalization, global citizens, global citizens.

Introduction

Internationalization of higher education in current world is not just a choice that universities may decide or not to stay within; it is an imperative of policy and a permanent challenge to make their students world citizens, individuals bearing a critical conscience which enable them to assume the world from a global perspective, as well as decide and act in front of situations beyond their immediate environment, decisions measured by analysis and interpretation of their action field, because they understand that the global is their commitment, where they perform their daily business, leaving the comfort area to assume the challenges of a globalized world.

Current trend and dynamics of education, as well as economics and communications in Europe, Asia, the United States, and more developed countries in Latin America, and in general in all regions, demonstrate the importance of internationalizing formation of future professionals. Each day, they should face new challenges in a globalized world, each time with major possibilities of acting in real time basis, no matter geographic distance, and culture, even overcoming time-space variables.

The concept of internationalization of higher education is understood in various ways, and according to these perceptions institutional policies are defined and applied, or activities are scheduled, sometimes without a defined north which shows the way of expected formation for their students as world citizens, and as local citizens, that is, having acquired the necessary and sufficient competences to think globally and act locally.

A simple expression in its statement, but deep and accurate, is the answer given by profesor Hans de Wit, University of Applied Sciences, Amsterdam, to a journalist for a journal at the National University of Colombia, when asked about what internationalizing higher education means:

> It means that teachers and students understand what they are teaching or learning as not within a local context but global, and that the whole work performed bears an international dimension. If any university does not understand it, such university is going to lose its profile, and will not be able to compete with other universities of international dimension. (Uribe, 2014, pag. 10).

Retaking professor de Wit, higher education is a determining element for individual growth and collective. In addition, in a certain way, it is the one responsible for impacting, from the academic and the researching, production of new knowledge, and social transference of the same, formation of qualified human resources, and with the necessary qualifications to act within a local world with international thought and projection.

Internationalization, as well as resrach and social projection, is a part of mission axis of higher education, and from this vision, it fixes academic plans and the curricular proposal of each discipline provided to the students for their professional formation. This triad should be aimed at developing competences for compared analysis of skills, to integrate the local to the global, and vice versa. Local, to understand and accept multiculturism, and communication skills, in a second and third language, both written and oral.

On this particular, Gabriela Tijerino, from Latin American University of Science and Technology, ULACIT, in San Jose, Costa Rica, states:

> Davies, Fudler and Gorbis (2011) identified the six driving forces of change within job skills that will be demanded in ten years regarding automation and intelligent systems, as well as with a globally interconnected world, diverse and adaptable:
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> 1. Longevity: it is estimated that by 2025, the number of US citizens older than 60 years, will increase 70%.
>
> 2. Increase of intelligent equipment and systems: we are facing the greatest transformation regarding the relationship we keep with intelligent equipment pieces in every field of our life.
>
> 3. A computed world: The world turns into a programable system, parting from a precedentless amount of data, which enable us to identify patterns and design systems at a scale never seen before.
>
> 4. A transformation in the way we communicate parting from availability of technonogical means.
>
> 5. Superstructures: Social technology allows new ways of creating and producing value, expanding collective intelligence, previously affordable only for large organizations.
>
> 6. A world globally connected: there is an exchange and integration beyond geographic borders (Tijerino, 2014:9).

When analyzing, from the perspective of our country, statements by Davies, Fidler and Gorbis (2011), in the citation made by Tijerino, the following is found:

> […] The proportion of population aging 60 or older, moved from 5,05% in 1938, to 5,335% in 1985, and it is estimated in 11,145% by 2025 (Banguero and Castelar, 2010, page 125)… and, fertility rate has evolved from 7,2 in 1951 to 4.60 in 1973, and by 2025 it is estimated in 2 children per woman" (Banguero and Castelar, 2010, page 132).

Likewise, regarding the five remaining drivers, Colombia has performed important developments on technological infrastructure, and subscription of regional treaties which allow integration in the various priority fronts for Colombia; and it may be stated that internationalization and globalization overpas education, impacts all sectors and social groups, turning into a reality and a condition that requires professional bearing special competences and related skills for labor insertion, innovation and disciplinary management in the various labor, research and academic globalized fields, with professional and teachers likewise global.

Davies, Fidler & Gorbis, (2011), cited by Tijerino, 2014:9), state that:

> […] they identify the ten skills required for future labor spaces, related to internationalization and the resulting interculture, social intelligence, and intercultural competences, in order to be able to properly interact in various environments and cultures:

1. Common sense: The ability to determine the true meaning of what is being said.

2. Social intelligence to meaningful and directly connect to other individuals, and encourage desired reactions.

3. Adaptive thoght to propose solutions beyond standards or routines

4. Intercultural competences to work in various environments

5. Informatized thought: The abitity to transform amounts of data into abstract concepts and understand reasoning based on data.

6. Informatic literacy: Contents development by using technological means to achieve persuasive communication.

7. Transdisciplinarity: Understand concepts through various disciplines.

8. Design of mentalities: Design tasks in function of expected and desired results.

9. Cognitive ability to establish what is important

10. Virtual cooperation: Being productive and achieve virtual team commitment which operates online. (Tijerino, 2014:11).

Now, the question is whether internationalization of higher education and development of skills to enter into and act in a globalized world, intercommunicated and with a permanent change dynamics, are assumed by higher education institutions (IES), from the principle of equity, or just small groups of students of a high socio-economic level may Access these strategies. The answer to this question is 'no', which is evidenced in writings on this matter stating that otherwise internationalization of the Higher Education Institutions -HEIs in academic mobility processes, a large number of students are being excluded from this possibility. Authors and institutions, as mentioned below, ratify such exclusion: Hans de Wait, states:

> […] The approach of internationalization has always been toward mobility, that students get an experience overseas (one semester, one year, a full career). We know that this is elitist because just a small number of student can afford it; just 20% -25% can do so. (UNAL Journal #174, 2014, pag 10).

Ronald Graichen states:

> … internationalization is not measured by the number of scholarships, or agreements with other education institutions, because this model requires a great ivestment, and benefits are very few; his answer is aimed at creation of a culture from inside, which involves and benefits the largest number of teachers, directors, students, and graduated individuals, whose starting point is mastering a second language (Knuts-Graichen, 2013, pag. 1)

The National University of Cuyo - UNACUYO (Argentine), states:

> … Internationalization at home is the process of involving international and multicultural aspects from university environments: classrooms, teacher rooms,

student mess halls, multimedia rooms, language laboratory in academic projects of extension and research. That is, internationalization tools with no physical displacement; in this manner it is possible to widely include the whole UNACUCYO community" http://www.uncu.edu.ar/internacional, 2014).

Beelen Jos, in his article "Scarce internationalization in a global perspective" states:

The main focus of the HEISs is preparing students for a globalized world. At the same time, it has been proved that this purpose is not achieved by the traditional displacement to overseas, which will continue to be a tool only affordable by small number of students. Only the academic plan may provide the students with the necessary intercultural and international competences" (Beelen, 2011, pag 98).

The answer should be internationalization for all students as an institutional policy, and for such purpose many strategies and actions should executed, in order to meet internationalization objectives, such as:

1. Mobility at home, considered as a strategy that involves 100% of the students. On this issue, professor Hans de Wit, (mentioned by Uribe, 2014), states:

[…] International approach has always been considered toward mobility, for students to achieve experience overseas (one semester, one year, a full career). We know that this is elitist because just a small number of students can afford it; only 20% -25% can do so. Although we support them, 100% will not be achieved, but most of them will remain at home; then, they have to prepare to work in the future. This issue impacts the curriculum, therefore, universities must restate it to be better prepared, by dedicating more attention to international matter, provide more opportunities to learn foreign languages, understand the various cultures and know how to use everything in local life. In addition, it is necessary to understand what the profession or the discipline means within global context. (p. 10).

2. Double-way academic mobility of directors, teachers, and students. This involves availability of academic and research cooperation agreements, which facilitate staying at foreign universities, and in turn domestic universities host foreign individuals. In-bound and out-bound mobility should turn into an important added value of internationalization at home, by capitalizing teacher experience, domestic students and foreign, by making the classroom an intercultural space.

3. Graduation options or apprenticeship at foreign universities, which, in addition to curricular activities, approach cultural immersion and multiculture as essential components of such internationalization.

4. Promoting and facilitating learning any second language, to then, establish it as a graduation requirement.

5. Guest teachers, performance of cultural events involving specific aspects of other countries, as well as TIC operation.

6. Organization and consolidation of international research, academic and social projection networks.

7. Higher Education institutions in Colombia should also advance in development of virtual international communities, a suitable space for on-line academic exchange and as defined by Howard Rheingold (cited by Moreno Minguez & Suarez Hernan, 2010) as

> […] social additions raised from the network when a sufficient number of individuals establish public discussions for enough time, with sufficient human feeling, in order to set up personal relationships in the cyberspace". (Moreno-Suarez, 2013:55)

Now it may be stated that

> […] Internationalization approach should be holistic, understanding each component as a subsystem that in its interaction with others, produces such important dynamics and synergy that it turns into an imperative to keep a change opening to cultural immersion, either from mobility or from internationalization at home, by becoming and remaining up to the date and tunned with knowledge development and its world trends, as well as use of the TIC as a facilitating item of education and communication" (Lopez, 2012. Pag…

Finally, in order to better explain what the European Committee reported to European Parliament, and the Committee of Regions in July 2013, on higher education internationalization in the European Community, the following paragraph of such report is transcribed below:

> Notwithstanding various member States, and many CES[2] already apply internationalization strategies for higher education, these use to be specially centered on student mobility; international academic cooperation uses to be fragmented and based either on initiatives of academic individuals or research teams, not necessarily linked to any institutional or national strategy. Effective strategies should also include preparation of international study plans, strategic associations, and new ways of providing contents, as well as ensuring complementation with domestic wider policies in matters of foreign cooperation, international development, migration, commerce, employment, regional development, research and renovation (European Community, 2013:4).

Conclusions

1. Internationalization of higher education should enable graduated individuals to acquire competences which enable them to be relevant in a globalized world, and participate through a global thought, and local actions.

2. Internationalization of higher education should be an express intention of HEIs policy.

3. Internationalization policy should include various academic, researching and social projection strategies, available for any and all individuals, so that the whole academic population may access this integrating process, with no exclusion.

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[2]"This term is used to refer to all types of tertiary education centers, including centers of applied sciences, institutes of technology, the Large Ecoles, commerce schools, enginering schools, the IUTs, higher education institutes, professional schools, polytechnical schools, and academies". European Community, 2013:2).

4. Internationalization at home is a fundamental strategy to educate global citizens, competent to communicate in any second, or third language, who, under a critical sense understand and accept multicultural diversity of groups and communities involved in their professional business.

5. Design of plans for international studies, as stated by the Eurpean Committee, should be complemented by contents and domestic policies related to interaction with the world, and use comparative cases in order to promote critical conscience and cognitive processes capable of understanding, transforming and innovating.

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