

EMMA-E14  
YTU Meeting  
(2- 4 April 2017)

Academic Mobility in HE worldwide : where  
are we? where might we go in the futur

Francine Diener  
Emma-E14 coordinator

Inspired by a talk given by **Eva Egron Polak**, in Brussels, 8 February, 2017

She is Secretary General of the International Association of Universities (IAU)

<http://iau-aiu.net/>

Founded in 1950, the IAU is the UNESCO-based worldwide association of higher education institutions : 620 member institutions, 120 countries (none of the 17 partners of Emma E14 ..., but all countries of Emma E14 partnership have several members except Laos and Myanmar).

# 1. Academic mobility

The nomadic scholar has a long history (e.g. Erasmus of Rotterdam, 15th century)

- “Nationalization” of HE in the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe
- International collaboration – a panacea after WWII and increasing steadily
- Expansion with globalization for last decades of 20th century
- Mobility is nowadays a global phenomenon

here slides 5

## What do we learn?

- There is steady growth in mobility of degree-seeking students:
  - In 15 years (1999 – 2014) the number of mobile students more than doubled from 2 to 4.3 Millions

### However:

- In the same 15 years total student numbers grew approximately equally:
  - From 94 to 207 Millions
  - Growth in absolute number of mobile students, no growth in proportion to all students – stable at 2%

Here the slides 7 and 8

# What do we learn?

- Mobility remains stable and highly unbalanced
- Few sending and receiving countries account for the biggest flow
- Imbalances in most sending and receiving countries is increasing over time
- Too few countries have balanced mobility
- More developing countries as main destination countries

# What is Internationalization of HE ?

## **Internationalization :**

a multidimensional, intentional process, bringing international/intercultural perspectives to learning/teaching, research, outreach and management of an institution.

- A top priority for HEI leadership, increasingly viewed as an integral/inescapable aspect of overall HEI development strategy ?
- A process contributing to improved quality of HE?



# Mobility in the broader context of internationalization of HE

If internationalization is as high a priority as policy makers and HEI leaders affirm, mobility must either be greatly expanded or must not be viewed as the main or only instrument

We must go **beyond mobility** to make internationalization of HE benefit a wider audience

# How to go beyond mobility in internationalization of HE ?

- Internationalization of curriculum
- More international focus in degree programs
- Identification of 'international' competencies for all
- Internationalization "at home" via extracurricular activities
- On-line and distance learning
- Trans-national education (branch campuses, programmes abroad, etc.)
- Internationalization of research and outreach locally

# Diversity of purposes and benefits for nations, individuals, institutions

**Host nation:** potential revenue, qualified human resources, future 'ambassadors', research, ...

**Sending nation:** human resource development, capacity building, enhance cooperation ...

**Individuals:** access to programs unavailable at home, prestigious qualifications, international awareness, cultural sensitivity, language, skills for globalized labor market, opportunities for research...

**Host HEI:** more and more quality students, potential revenue, improved research capacity, diversified learning space...

**Sending HEI:** increased attractive offer to students, staff and capacity development, access to other programs, institutional partnership and collaboration...

# Persistent obstacles and risks linked to academic mobility

- Participation – despite stated importance – **numbers remain small**
- Funding – too often opportunities are **only available to those who can pay**
- Gaps – restrictions on collaboration **only with known/ranked universities**
- **Visa** - difficulties for entry into and from many countries
- **Recognition** of credits and prior qualifications
- **Brain drain**
- Cultural **homogenization** and linguistic impoverishment

# Where might we go in the future?

- Sustainability of partnerships : without on-going funding, **will collaborations continue?** Can mobility remain central?
- Mobility may continue to rise but it is unlikely that it will outpace overall growth of enrolment unless **major investments** are made
- Mobility alone is insufficient to make internationalization opportunities available to a **wider audience**
- **Short-term** but more frequent mobility is most effective for countering brain drain
- For capacity building staff mobility must fit into **institutional strategy**

We Need continuous **qualitative research on impacts (mid to long-term) of mobility and other internationalization actions**