



Erasmus+ - Key Action 2

Capacity Building within the Field of Higher Education

TIGRIS Project

Project number: 586290-EPP-1-2017-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP

***Report on outcomes and recommendations of the “Workshop on
Curricular Reforms for Internationalisation and the International
Classroom”***

19th – 21st February, 2019

Work package	Title
WP2	<i>Reinforcement of capacities</i>
Activity	Title
WP2.2	<i>Organisation of trainings for members of Kurdish partner HEI for strategic development of internationalisation</i>

ORGANIZATION NAME: UGOE	AUTHOR: Dr. Tanja Reiffenrath et. al.		
APPROVED: none			
DESCRIPTION: Outcomes and recommendations of the “Workshop on Curricular Reforms for Internationalisation and the International Classroom”			
DOCUMENT CODE: none	VERSION : 1.0	SUBMISSION DATE 03.04.2019	PAGE 1 of 7



Document Title

Date of Issue	03.04.2019	
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Organisation	Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (UGOE)	
Approval Status	Draft <input type="checkbox"/>	Final <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Number of Pages	7	
Keyword list	Internationalisation, Curriculum, Reform, Internationalisation at Home, International Classroom, IoC,	
Recipients	Only Partners <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Method of Distribution	Email <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Internet <input type="checkbox"/>
Confidentiality Status	Confidential <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

History

Version No	Date	Revised by
1		
2		
3		
Etc		

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Report on outcomes and recommendations

The workshop aimed at providing a basic introduction to the concepts ‘internationalisation of the curriculum’ and ‘internationalisation at home’ and equipping participants with the knowledge and tools to begin implementing IoC at their home institutions.

It should be noted that the participating higher education institutions have only scarce numbers of incoming international students. While IoC may well serve as a tool to attract international students and include them proactively in processes of teaching and learning, participants should bear in mind that the primary target group of IoC measures are their local student cohorts on the home campus. In this respect, IoC may be understood as contributing to a curriculum reform that has the potential to heighten the quality of education, to adequately respond to issues to local diversity, and to link the HEIs to globally engaged stakeholders (businesses and NGOs) in the region.

IoC shall then not constitute an end in itself, but contribute to students’ competences in areas, such as disciplinary knowledge, critical thinking skills, research skills, digital literacy, communication skills, leadership and teamwork skills, personal competences (awareness, self-confidence) and to students’ social and ethical responsibility. Each institution is encouraged to adapt the goals and tools of IoC to align with their envisioned/existing graduate profile.

In some cases, English-medium instruction programmes have already been established. These may provide excellent starting points for transnational collaboration in education – particularly in light of the fact that many of the participating institutions already have strong links to international partner universities and some of them have already harnessed the potential of digital media in other contexts. Nevertheless, participants should bear in mind that IoC does not require them to translate existing programmes, thereby also potentially excluding current local target groups from the education offers. Instead, we advise that IoC be understood as a conscious opening of the curriculum to ‘other’ perspectives – global and local.

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During the workshop, participants have worked to make the positions of various stakeholders involved in IoC explicit, amongst them university leadership, academic staff, international offices, students, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. They have formulated rationales from each of these perspectives and highlighted that amongst the stakeholders; there seems great consent as to why IoC has significance for their respective contexts. They are advised to continue crafting rationales together with colleagues from all levels across their own institution to draft an institutional vision that is 1) in line with existing or emerging strategic documents and 2) shared by members of the institution. In creating a sustainable vision of IoC, it will be essential that IoC does not remain a top-down vision, but that especially academics may assume ownership.

This could be supported by relying on already existing good practices. These have become particularly apparent when existing examples of IoC in the informal curriculum have been discussed. Participants reported the presence of support services, student clubs and initiatives that either already have an international/global outlook (e.g. debate club, journal club) or in which an international dimension might easily be incorporated (e.g. activities on issues of sustainability/ the environment might take on both a local and global perspective). The participating universities might harness the acceptance of these existing practices to foster IoC in the informal curriculum.

Moreover, the workshop has introduced participants to different approaches of formal curriculum internationalisation, from a more economic and pragmatic “add-on” approach to the more extensive “infusion” of the entire curriculum. In this respect, a great challenge that the participants are currently facing has become apparent: All universities currently see themselves under great pressure to meet the demands of implementing ECTS models in an utterly short period of time. IoC may well be aligned with the process of crafting/revising learning outcomes and making study programmes align with the requirements of the Bologna reform. Participants already have very good knowledge in the field of learning outcomes and the workshop has created common ground as to how ILOs may be infused with an international or intercultural dimension. Participants shall be encouraged to act as multipliers and share this knowledge with academics who teach in the

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respective study programmes. Colleagues from the international offices may assume vital roles in mediating the process, but it should be stressed that responsibility for learning outcomes should rest with the respective academics.

At the same time, IoC runs the risk of posing an additional burden on programme coordinators and academics if not carefully communicated and adequately supported by central services (e.g support in crafting learning outcomes; staff development measures for faculty members).

Two reminders seem in order in this context: The implementation of ECTS across the entire institution and its many study programmes is a lengthy process. Likewise, IoC is a lengthy process that cannot be carried out in a linear manner, but that will require continuous feedback, in particular from academics and students. A top-down predefined schedule for IoC activities may not be ideal in supporting the implementation of IoC. Instead, the participating HEIs should have the opportunity (and task) to formulate goals and milestones for IoC fit to their respective institutional contexts. We suggest that the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research take on a mediating role in this regard. Drawing on e.g. the good practice of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), the Ministry might convene a working group comprised of representatives of each HEI, as well as ideally representatives of the professional sector and perhaps an external advisor, to jointly clarify 1) what IoC means for Kurdish universities and creating common ground over terminology and 2) to provide practical suggestions grounded in the realities of the universities in the region.

To help kick-start the process in each of the institutions, we want to suggest that the participating universities begin by piloting IoC projects in selected study programmes and faculties to foster conversations about this matter amongst members of their institution and to generate good practices.

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List of appendices

For the appendices, please see the files attached.

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2. Appendix 2: List of resources on IaH by Prof. Jos Beelen, The Hague University of Applied Sciences
3. Appendix 3: Recommendations “On the Internationalisation of Curricula”, German Rectors’ Conference (HRK)



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