

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' MOBILITY: A CASE OF STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

Over the last years most countries have been immersed in a process of globalization that has given rise to a growing interdependence between societies as well as a strengthening of international relations both in the economic-financial and in the political and communicational levels. New societies are emerging where structural reforms associated to the process of deregulation and liberalization caused deep changes in work relations. These changes became apparent in the need for growing levels of education and training to gain access to a job and in the growth of importance of the service sector in the structure of production. In this context knowledge is one of the most efficient and dynamic productive inputs, laying the foundations of a new world economy based on information and knowledge, and thereby making education a vital component for the generation and transmission of education. Historically, education has evolved hand in hand with socio-technological changes. Nowadays, progress in information-technology and communication promote a new educational paradigm, whereby the search for quality, pertinence, and internationalization in higher education has a prominent place. The goal of this paper will be to present some indicators to analyze the evolution of the process of internationalization of education in the Department of Economics of the National University of the South (Universidad Nacional del Sur).

Keywords: Internationalization of Education, Academic Mobility

Introduction

Over the last years most countries have been immersed in a process of globalization that has given rise to a growing interdependence between societies as well as a strengthening of international relations both in the economic-financial and in the political and communicational levels. New societies are emerging where structural reforms associated to the process of deregulation and liberalization caused deep changes in work relations. These changes became apparent in the need for growing levels of education and training to gain access to a job and in the growth of importance of the service sector in the structure of production. In this context knowledge is one of the most efficient and dynamic productive inputs, laying the foundations of a new world economy based on information and knowledge, and thereby making education a vital component for the generation and transmission of education. Historically, education has evolved hand in hand with socio-technological changes. Nowadays, progress in information-technology and communication promote a new educational paradigm, whereby the search for quality, pertinence, and internationalization in higher education has a prominent place.

Internationalization of higher education refers to a process which involves the design and implementation of policies and programmes and that aims at, on the one hand, incorporating the international and intercultural dimensions in the missions, goals and functions of teaching, research and extension of higher education institutions, and on the other hand at channeling the benefits derived from international cooperation (Knight, 2005). International cooperation at the educational level is conceived of as the way in which educational institutions enter into relations in pursuit of a mutual benefit. Interuniversity cooperation attempts to promote intellectual collaboration through the formation of networks between institutions and teachers to enable the access, transmission and adaptation of knowledge both within countries and beyond their frontiers. Higher education institutions as agents of cooperation play a vital role in cooperation for development.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the process of internationalization of Higher Education. For this purpose different modes of internationalization are presented; then, the vision that the group of organisms and institutions related to the implementation of higher education have of this process is analyzed and finally some indicators which make it possible to measure the depth the process has reached in the Department of Economics of the National University of the South (Universidad Nacional del Sur) are presented.

Modes of internationalization of Higher Education

Even though mobility of higher education students is the pioneering mode of internationalization of higher education, over the last years other forms have emerged which do not necessarily require students moving from one place to the other and that constitute the so called transnational higher education. The distinctive feature of the modes education has adopted is that individuals involved in the teaching or learning process are in different places. So students live in a different country-host country-from the one in which the educational institution is based- providing country. This mode causes teachers and materials to cross national borders (IESALC, 2004).

The following modes of transnational education can be distinguished:

Campus or sites, in this case the foreign institution settles in another country allowing students living in that country to participate in some of the programmes it offers.

Franchises, in this mode a foreign educational institution authorizes an entity located in the country where the student lives to offer, as an official provider, one or more programmes which will enable students to obtain a degree approved by the franchising university.

Articulation Programmes, in these programmes students can take courses in another institution different from the one in which they are enrolled and these courses are then computed with the credits necessary to obtain the degree. The institutions involved sign general or specific agreements for that purpose.

Double degree Programmes, in this case two universities, one a local university and the other a foreign one, offer a joint programme. This programme gives students the possibility to obtain, after taking one course of studies, two degrees: one issued by each of the universities.

Double degree programmes and articulation programmes sometimes involve the student's partial stay abroad.

Corporate Programmes, one institution recognizes the programmes delivered by another entity located in a different country with the sole requirement of passing certain exams.

Distance learning, this proposal aims at incorporating the advantages offered by technology to formal teaching, structuring programmes of study to be delivered in the distance mode, without losing the enriching benefits of contact and personal communication.

The virtual campus allows for the exchange of doubts, opinions, and experiences through its multiple applications.

International institutions, this mode groups the certifications granted by organisms which do not belong to a national system of education.

Teacher, tutors and researchers temporary mobility as well as the tasks performed by consulting agencies and external assessment agencies constitute another dimension of the internationalization of higher education.

Several reasons have allowed for the rapid growth of transnational education over the last decades, among them the most remarkable ones are: the increase in the costs which a student has to pay in order to live abroad that are even more evident for students from less developed countries, the development of ICTs that facilitate distance learning and the efforts made by institutions to convey a professional and business approach to their programmes which may be attractive for non-resident students. (Fernández López et al 2004).

Internationalization of Higher Education as seen by the actors involved

Since the acknowledgement that the development of nations greatly depends on the quality of the education provided by institutions of higher education and on the transmission, beyond the borders of the country of origin, of the knowledge that might be generated and accumulated in them, the chapter dealing with the analysis of Internationalization, regionalization and globalization of higher education of the declaration of the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) in 2009 in Paris, France, highlights the importance of this process. It indicates that institutions of higher education are responsible for designing strategies to promote the transference of knowledge which will allow all countries to reach development aims.

Within this framework, international networks and associations of universities play a fundamental role, allowing the strengthening of mutual understanding and the achievement of a culture of peace. Moreover, the declaration points out that access to and permanence in quality education must be ensured so that the benefits of the globalization of education reach everybody. At the same time, the importance of the promotion of academic values, the respect for human beings, diversity and national sovereignty must be recognized, without disregarding the sense of belonging of each institution, that is to say, its anchorage to its own historical, cultural and sociopolitical reality.

The Ministry of Education of Argentina has encouraged the process of internalization in Argentine universities for several years by means of actions such as developing projects with the aim of strengthening the offices of international relationships, financing missions abroad, forming networks of cooperation, and participating in higher education fairs.

At present, a programme whose specific aims are encouraging the insertion of Argentine institutions of higher education in the processes of internationalization, integration and local and regional development is being promoted by the Secretariat of University Policies dependent on the Ministry of Education. With the purpose of reaching these aims, actions are being carried out within the national sphere, at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

Within the national sphere, the National Inter-University Council (Consejo Interuniversitario Nacional-CIN-) in particular via the REDCIUN (Red de Cooperación Internacional de Universidades Nacionales-International Cooperation Network of National Universities-) is the organism in charge of dealing with demands on this matter. At the bilateral level the aim of actions is to make cooperation with Latin American countries in general, and with countries members of the Mercosur in particular, more dynamic.

As regards the multilateral dimension, the strategic focus is identified in the Mercosur and the Unasur, along these lines, the Programme participates representing Argentina in the meetings of the Regional Coordinating Committee of Higher Education of the Educational

Sector of Mercosur and in the meetings of the South American Council of Education, Culture, Science, Technology and Innovation of Unasur. The Programme also participates in the Latin American Space of Knowledge (SPU-Secretariat of University Policy).

Internationalization is a relatively recent process within the National University of the South (Universidad Nacional del Sur-UNS), even though an important number of teacher-researchers have kept fluid cooperative relations with akin groups around the world for a long time. It involves activities which project over all ranks or groups, not only at the level of teaching and research. Along those lines, the process has begun to extend towards those who are in charge of the university management at all levels.

The National University of the South has become a destination for many students coming from the rest of the world in the last recent years, due to several factors such as the qualification obtained in the processes of evaluation and accreditation, the courses of graduate and postgraduate studies which are part of its varied academic offer and its strategic localization.

Although stays abroad- for research or for further education- are acknowledged as being of significant importance in the schooling of graduates and teachers, for different reasons this practice is not widely spread up to the present moment. With the purpose of extending the benefits of internationalization, the system of *internationalization at home* (IatH) has been implemented since the end of the last century. The IatH is an approach which has the aim of promoting international education to the interior of the educational institutions, from the institutions themselves, aiming at the appropriation and involvement of all actors (students, teachers and researchers, technical and/or administrative staff) (Juárez Salomo, 2012).

Internationalization of higher education in the Department of Economics at UNS

The Department of Economics is one of the sixteen academic units of UNS. This Department was born together with the National University of the South (Universidad Nacional del Sur) and with the first graduate studies of Bachelor in Economics at the national level. It is in charge of the study and further knowledge of matters related to economics, within the framework of social sciences. With this purpose academic activities tending to the transmission of knowledge are developed in it, both at the graduate and the postgraduate levels. At the graduate level: the Bachelorship and the Teacher Training Course in Economics are offered. At the postgraduate level: Master and PHD in Economics, Master in Agrarian Economics and Rural Management, Master in Sociology, Specialization in Economy and Health Services Management, Specialization in Innovation and Technology Management, and, jointly with other academic units: Master in Politics and Strategies and Master in Territorial Development and Management. All the postgraduate courses have been accredited by the CONEAU. Moreover, courses of specialization and training at the management and company level in the on-campus modality and, since 2005 in the blended modality with the technological support of www.continuar.uns.edu.ar virtual campus.

Together with the Institute of Economic and Social Research of the South, the Department carries out policies aiming at encouraging the formation and consolidation of research groups; training of human resources; organization of disciplinary and interdisciplinary groups.

The Department of Economics has a long tradition in national as well as international cooperation, especially within its most consolidated research areas, which has resulted in many postgraduate students studying abroad and the joint development of scientific research and production with foreign universities. These activities were developed within the framework of International Programme accords, agreements, or calls. Although some agreements of cooperation were signed in the 90's, there has been a remarkable increase in

the signing of agreements in the last decade. 56 % of them were made with Latin American institutions, of which 40 % were located in Brazil. The institutions located in Spain and Germany (annex chart 1) predominate among the European institutions which have created bonds of cooperation.

Among the programmes at multilateral level in which the department has participated, the Programmes of Cooperation of the European Union ALFA MASMEDIA (coordinated by the Technical University of Berlín), the Programme of Inter-University Cooperation (Programa de Cooperación Interuniversitaria-PCI) of the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional-AECI), the ALFA RomaAnet programme (coordinated by the University Degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata), the LINNEUS-Palme Programme (Linköpings Universitet of Sweden), the ALFA AURES Programme (coordinated by the Technical University of Berlin), the programme of Associated Centers for the Strengthening of Postgraduate Studies (Centros Asociados para el Fortalecimiento de Posgrados-CAFT_BA-CAPES/SPU, among others, stand out.

Teachers' Mobility

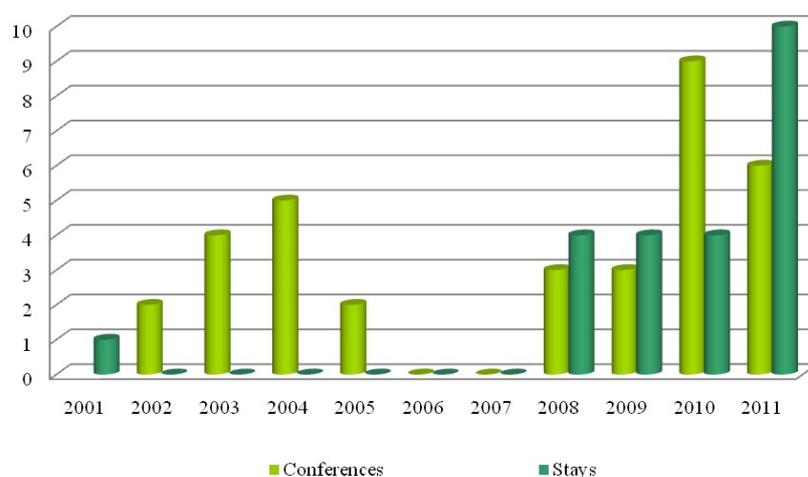
Among actions carried out with the purpose of promoting the training of teachers, support for activities in educational institutions in the rest of the world is really significant. Over the last years teachers from the department have dictated postgraduate courses, participated in panels and symposiums where they have lectured on different topics. Furthermore, they have stayed in well-known European and Latin American universities on research programmes directed by prestigious researchers.

It is worth pointing out that this kind of experiences allows the teacher to be in contact with other realities- with distinct cultural, social and linguistic diversity- besides contributing to his or her academic education. They will foster the development of new integration and leadership aptitudes, which will prove useful in his or her professional activity.

Likewise, five teachers have attended postgraduate studies in foreign universities, three of which achieved the master degree and several teachers who are doing postgraduate studies rely on the advice of teachers from foreign universities- as directors or co-directors of their grants or thesis-.

Even though international teacher mobility is incipient and the diversification of the modes adopted is scarce, observing its evolution- for lecturing as well as for research stays- it may be stated that an increasing trend is apparent over the period analyzed, which, in the light of recent cooperation agreements signed might become even more marked (Graph 1).

Graph 1. Department of Economics of UNS. Teachers' Mobility



Source: Based on The Department of Economics Yearbooks.

Undergraduate Students' mobility

Within the framework of the policy of internationalization, the Department of Economics of the National University of the South (Universidad Nacional del Sur) has always promoted exchange programmes for undergraduate students, mainly under the *Articulation programmes* mode. The Academic Committee of International Mobility (Comisión Académica de Movilidad Internacional-CAMI) is responsible for the recognition of subjects attended by students during their stay in foreign centers. The aforesaid Committee is formed by the Academic Secretary and the coordinators of the thematic areas of the said academic unit.

Over the past years a group of students doing the Bachelorship in Economics has participated in study stays at institutions abroad, most of them at European universities. The participation of 44 % of the students was financed by scholarships granted in the framework of agreements signed between organisms in the sphere of the Ministry of Education of the Nation and the destination institutions; the rest of the students obtained their finance from the destination country and two of them paid for the expenses of the trip with their own funds.

All the courses attended by these students during their stay abroad have been recognized as part of the curricula of their studies to graduate as Bachelor in Economics.

In the particular case of the student whose stay took place in the University of Lille, the host institution recognized the courses passed at the National University of the South (Universidad Nacional del Sur) Universidad Nacional del Sur, enabling him to graduate as Bachelor in Economics with a special orientation on Social Economics at the said institution during his stay in France. –*Corporate programs* – (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Department of Economics of UNS. Mobility of students at the graduate level.

Destination country	Host institution	Students	Financing	Period
France	Rouen Business School	2	Self-financed	1999
Austria	University of Applied Sciences, Krems.	5	Ernst Mach Grant from the Austrian government	2008-2013
Holland	Universidad de Groningen	1	Erasmus Mundus Programme ⁱ	2010-2011
France	Universidad des Sciences et Technologies de Lille	1	Erasmus Mundus Programme	2010-2011
Spain	Universidad Rovira Virgili	3	SPU. Redes Programme ⁱⁱ	2011
Germany	Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas de Osnabruck	1	Grant from host institution	2013
Mexico	Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas	1	JIMA Programme ⁱⁱⁱ	2007
	Universidad de Chapingo	1	JIMA Programme	2013
Chile	Universidad de Valparaíso	1	Self-financed	2013

Source: Auto-elaboration. Based on The Department of Economics Yearbooks.

The comparison of the figures that account for the entire UNS undergraduate students' outgoing mobility with those corresponding to the Department of Economics and, taking into consideration that some exchange programmes apply to specific disciplines, would explain the importance attributed to this process within the sphere of the said department, since in the last five years, each year around 20 undergraduate students in average from all the university participate of stays abroad. (Morresi, 2013)

Final considerations

The reasons that drive higher education institutions to carry out policies leading to internationalization can be classified into four basic categories: political, economic-financial, academic and cultural. (Knigh, 2005). The mission of the National University of the South (Universidad Nacional del Sur) views this process as an opportunity for learning and institutional projection, which contributes to: strengthening the functions of teaching,

research and extension, the contact with institutions that have similar ends, the creation of employment opportunities for graduates, and the reinforcement of the ability to deal with regional, national and global problems, among other practices.

UNS vision gives internationalization a distinguished place, making it possible to deepen the process each year signing new cooperation agreements, establishing networks, developing projects in conjunction with foreign institutions and basically through the mobility of all the members of the university community.

On the other hand, the Department of Economics of UNS considers that all these experiences are more and more important for the education of graduates, since they favor a comprehensive education and promote the ability to adapt to new cultures and environments and job placement in a global world. The data analyzed shows that even if this is still an incipient process it has a growing trend that is on the process of consolidating itself with time to reach the above mentioned goals.

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- i. The cooperation in higher education programme 2007-2013: Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window aims at higher education institutional cooperation between the European Union and third countries. It intends to train national universities human resources in the areas of study, teaching, and research by means of the mobility of students at all levels and teachers.
- ii. The formation of international networks is a programme run by the Secretary of University Policies dependent on the Ministry of Education which aims at creating and deepening academic bonds with institutions of countries which were defined as priority areas. (Latin America, Africa and Asia).
- iii. The JIMA Programme is originated from an agreement between the Republic of Argentina's National Interuniversity Council (Consejo Interniversitario Nacional) and the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES) of the Republic of Mexico and it consists in a Specific Agreement of Cooperation for the Exchange of students at the graduate level

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Annex

Chart 1. Departament of Economics of UNS. International cooperation agreements.

Institution	Year
Rovira i Virgili University (Universidad Rovira i Virgili), Spain	1994-2010
Fachhochschule Osnabrück (now Hochschule Osnabrück), Germany	1996
Technical University of Berlin, Germany	2000
Institut de Formation Internationale, Groupe ESC Rouen	2002
University of Applied Sciences, Austria	2006
International University College (IUC), Italy	2008
University of Seville (Universidad de Sevilla), Spain	2009
Autonomous University (Universidad Autónoma), Mexico	2006
Human and Social Sciences Institute of the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	2008
Research and Urban and Regional Planning Institute– University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	2008
Autonomous University of San Luis de Potosí, Mexico	2008
EAFIT University, Republic of Colombia	2008
Sao Paulo's University Institute, Brazil	2009
Sao Paulo's State University, Brazil	2009
University of Business Sciences, Nicaragua	2009
University of Antioquia, Republic of Colombia	2010
Autonomous Juarez University of Tabasco, Mexico	2010
Autonomous University of Valparaíso, Chile	2013
Birla Institute of Management Technology, India	2008

Source: Auto-elaboration. Based on The Department of Economics Yearbooks