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UNIFICATION MAPPING OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

Executive Summary of internationalization study



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Executive summary

Higher education institutions in Cambodia and the Philippines face several challenges in their internationalization efforts. A primary issue is the lack of clear directives and policies guiding internationalization, which can create inconsistencies and inefficiencies. Financial limitations also pose a significant barrier, affecting the ability of institutions to fund international projects and partnerships. The internationalization of research is notably underdeveloped, with moderate participation in international research projects and a lack of collaborative research initiatives.

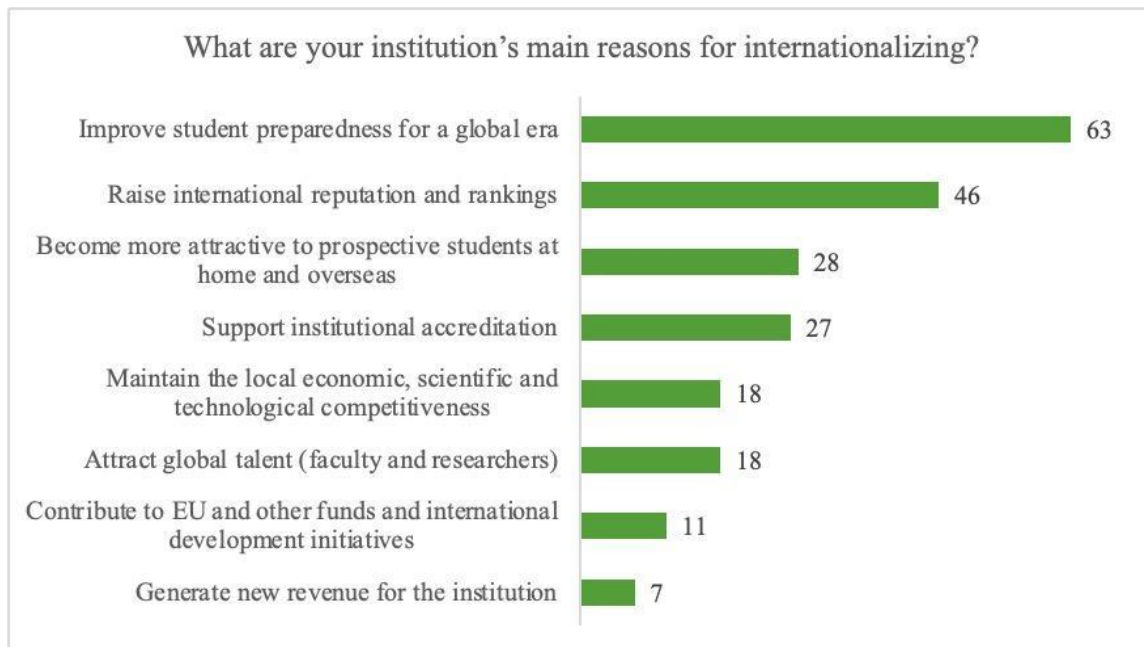
To address these challenges, there is a need for increased support for faculty and staff, improved infrastructure for international collaborations, and enhanced strategies for integrating international perspectives into curricula. Despite these obstacles, there is optimism and commitment among stakeholders to overcome these challenges and advance the internationalization of higher education in these countries.

In the spring of 2024, the Obuda University research team conducted a questionnaire-based study as part of the UNICATION Erasmus+ project, targeting staff members of higher education institutions in Cambodia and the Philippines. The primary objective of this research was to map out the internationalization processes within these universities to support future developments.

The study employed a self-administered online questionnaire with a total of 31 questions, both open and closed, rated on a 4-point Likert scale. The questionnaire addressed various areas, including Institutional Information and Profile, Overall Status and Trends, Institutional Commitment and Policy, Teaching and Learning for International Students, Faculty and Staff Support, Partnerships, Internationalization of Research, Emerging Issues, and the Future of Internationalization. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous, with 81 staff members responding, though not all completed every question.

The findings revealed significant insights into the internationalization efforts of these institutions. Most respondents indicated that preparing students for global challenges is a crucial reason for their institution's internationalization, with business and industrial demand being the most important external drivers. International activities and programs are primarily coordinated by a single office, and the Asia and Pacific regions are the top geographic priorities. Recent developments in internationalization were noted, particularly in the increase of international development and capacity-building projects.

The general institutional budget was identified as the most important funding source, and institutions actively support the participation of international students in research and innovation projects.



A notable majority of respondents reported an expansion in the number of international partnerships at their institutions, supporting the hypothesis of significant development in international projects. However, despite these positive changes, many respondents considered their institution's international educational practices to be only moderately effective. The internationalization of research was seen as minimal, with limited participation in international research and few collaborative research projects, confirming the need for substantial development in this area.

Looking ahead, respondents believe that the most important priorities for their institution's internationalization beyond the 2023-2024 academic year will focus on the internationalization of curricula. They expect the overall level of their institution's internationalization to increase over the next five years.



The research also highlighted critical competencies and strategies for staff in International Offices. Essential skills include soft skills, cultural intelligence, negotiation, adaptability, and experience in international relations, along with language proficiency, communication skills, and a thorough understanding of internationalization strategies. Strategies to enhance international cooperation between higher education institutions in Asia and Europe include fostering mutual respect and trust, effective communication, person-to-person connections, collaborative projects, cultural exchanges, and the utilization of both virtual and physical exchanges.

In assessing the impact of internationalization, stakeholders identified key indicators such as student and faculty feedback, mobility statistics, collaboration agreements, and policy influence. Challenges were acknowledged, including the lack of clear directives, financial limitations, and communication barriers. Nevertheless, stakeholders expressed optimism about overcoming these obstacles to advance internationalization efforts. They emphasized the project's potential to enhance curriculum quality, promote cultural exchange, and strengthen institutional frameworks. Students and faculty members were recognized as active contributors to internationalization through their participation in exchange programs, conferences, cultural exchange opportunities, and collaborative research projects.

Evaluating the effectiveness of the current curriculum involves guiding its development, ensuring faculty competency, and improving communication to meet the diverse needs of both international and domestic students. Despite the challenges, stakeholders remain committed to advancing these efforts and seizing opportunities for growth and collaboration on the international stage.