“Diversity is the foundation from which equal partnerships can be developed”

IKUDU: STRONGER TOGETHER

“We don’t have to look for Northern solutions for local problems. We have had our own ways of solving problems for ages and ages”

IN CONVERSATION WITH WONDWOSEN TAMRAT

“Contexts are always changing, and true impact is made when our projects change along with them”

CAPACITY BUILDING: LESSONS FROM COVID-19

“Higher education internationalisation is generally characterised by Northern domination and Southern dependencies”

COLONISATION: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE?
Alicia’s love for connecting people and ideas led her to a career in internationalisation. She loves the outdoors, and often has her best ideas while hiking or running in nature.

A trip to Rwanda sparked Petra’s fascination with East Africa. She loves jogging in the Kenyan highlands and eating East African Chapati with sugar for breakfast.

A three-month school exchange in Germany set off James’s career in international education. He is currently semi-retired and is an elected local councillor for the Green Party in the UK.

Mark has studied in the Netherlands and Hong Kong. He is also a hobby photographer, especially interested in landscape and astrophotography.

Eva’s work focuses on cooperation, partnership building and knowledge exchange. She can do a front flip on the trampoline and also considers herself “an excellent rubbuck cook”.

Eva’s work focuses on cooperation, partnership building and knowledge exchange. She can do a front flip on the trampoline and also considers herself “an excellent rubbuck cook”.

Her areas of expertise include partnership development and internationalisation at home.

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Sandra has been an immigrant since she was 10 years old. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, making digital photo albums and having a glass of wine by the beach.

Samia grew up in East Germany and lives in South Africa. Along the way, she has studied in Germany, Scotland, Russia and South Africa.

When she’s not at work, she is working on herself and family for a meal.

Felicity is interested in multilingualism in higher education and developing policies to support international and intercultural education.

渔夫’s historical interest in Central Asia led her to complete a Master’s in Islamic Studies focused on the region. Outside of work you’ll likely find her listening to classical music and opera.

Katherine’s work focuses on comprehensive internationalisation and decolonisation of education practices. In her free time, she enjoys running, cycling, watching films and cooking.

She loves cooking, badminton and dancing to Bollywood numbers.

Huba oversees study abroad and international student services. Cooking is a favourite hobby of hers, and she loves to hike in the mountains of Lebanon with her husband and friends.

She loves cooking, badminton and dancing to Bollywood numbers.

Gabriel Guimarães
Lecturer, University of Limpopo, South Africa
Lize-Marí’s passion for multimodal, innovative teaching methods led her to work on the iKudu project. In her free time she makes artwork with oil, charcoal and pastels.

Erich is Chair of the EAIE Expert Community Cooperation for Development. In his free time, you might find him practicing Tai-Chi, listening to medieval music or dancing in nature.

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Erich Thaler
Senior Manager, Networks and International Partnerships, University of Basel, Switzerland
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EDITORIAL

This issue of Forum shines a spotlight on the longstanding ties between European higher education institutions and the ‘Global South’, a contested term used here to refer to countries facing development challenges in various world regions. In compiling this issue, we were keen to enable readers to deepen their understanding of engagement between Europe and the Global South, highlighting successes and challenges related to collaboration and focusing on opportunities for the future. Similarly, we wanted to understand a little more about the state of internationalisation in the various countries considered to be part of the Global South, and how or whether this was shaping the perspectives or priorities of European institutions in working with Southern partners and stakeholders. As Chair of the EAIE Publications Committee, I am indebted to members of the EAIE Expert Community Cooperation for Development, both for their commitment to publicising the call for proposals for this issue and for their contributions as authors.

Indeed, this issue opens with a synthesis of key policy drivers and issues related to the split realities between Global South and Global North authored by members of the Steering group from this Expert Community (including the Chair, Erich Thaler). Roseanna Avento and Eva Kagiri-Kalanzi then provide a historical perspective on European connections with Africa, from the initial ‘scramble for Africa’ through to the more inclusive agenda-setting of the EU-Africa Strategy.

Following this introduction, a series of articles looks at capacity building in the context of decolonisation, from a description of the iKudu project (a South African–European capacity development project funded by the European Union) to a reflection by Petra Pistor on new opportunities for cooperation as a result of the digital turn. Writing from Myanmar, James Kennedy challenges the assumptions inherent in Global North perspectives on internationalisation and puts forward five principles as a basis for good practice in collaboration.

I’m delighted that Prof Wondwosen Tamrat agreed to be interviewed for this issue. As President of a relatively new university in Ethiopia, Prof Tamrat holds degrees from institutions in Ethiopia, the United Kingdom and Australia, and serves as a member of the International Advisory Board of the International Journal of African Higher Education. Drawing on his experiences in both the Global South and Global North, Prof Tamrat reflects on potential brain drain from Africa and the modern-day legacy of Africa’s colonial history as reflected in higher education and research. Rather than framing the relationship between Europe and the Global South in terms of dependence or independence, he advocates an interdependent future in relation to research capacity, student flows and collaboration on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

A further set of articles examines more closely the impact of the current public health pandemic on collaboration between Europe and the Global South. Mark Vlek de Coningh and Huba Boshoff discuss some of the initial impacts of COVID-19 on capacity building projects led by Nuffic (the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education), while Felipe Guimarães, Kyria Finardi and Gabriel Amorim look at positive (if unexpected) effects of the pandemic on collaboration with Brazil. Sandra Rincón and Marcela Wolff add a further perspective from Latin America, with a compelling article about how careers service professionals in Europe can work with their peers in the Global South to boost youth employability.

Following a series of institutional and national case studies – from India (by Nidhi Piplani Kapur and Amruta Ruikar), from Kyrgyzstan (by Martha C. Merrill), and from Lebanon (by Hala Dimechkie) – this issue then closes with reflections on the broader architecture of North-South relations. Samia Chasi challenges international education practitioners and scholars to consider their work through the lens of colonisation, recolonisation and decolonisation, while Elizabeth Colucci and Nico Jooste advocate for South–South–North partnerships as a new modality for collaboration. These closing reflections on the overarching structures of Europe’s relationships with the ‘Global South’ leave us with a hopeful, thoughtful glance ahead towards what tomorrow’s more equitable and mutually enriching North–South partnerships may hold.

— DOUGLAS PROCTOR, EDITOR
PUBLICATIONS@EAIE.ORG
TOWARDS SOUTH—SOUTH—NORTH PARTNERSHIPS
Today’s global challenges require a new way of connecting across borders to solve shared problems. New networks are emerging to better connect institutions in ways that put the Global South in centre stage.

According to the Oxford Martin Commission’s report *Now for the Long Term*, attempts to solve today’s global challenges are undermined by the absence of a shared global vision. Global connectedness and the free movement of people seem to be taken for granted even as protectionism grows to the detriment of multilateralism. As such, we urgently need to develop new cooperation paradigms.

South–South cooperation – defined as an exchange of expertise between governments, organisations and individuals in the Global South – requires a new focus, especially in terms of its relationship to the North. One solution could be to place greater emphasis on South–South–North (SSN) cooperation, driven by higher education.

This should entail developing platforms for dialogue that speak to a multiplicity of cultures, advance common understanding and promote a more collaborative and equitable world. SSN cooperation must develop an agenda that is driven equally by South and North, acknowledges fundamental differences and celebrates and pursues shared interests such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

**GLOBALLY RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE**

The OBREAL Global Observatory – an association of diverse, internationally oriented academic and research institutions, as well as university associations and networks from Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia – is reconstructing its modes of cooperation to effectively foster and advocate more targeted, responsive and structured SSN cooperation.

Originally born as a European Union (EU) project to promote bilateral, multi-thematic relations between the EU and Latin America, the Barcelona-based association has evolved its structure and membership to become more globally responsive and inclusive, moving beyond the somewhat antiquated approach of bi-regional cooperation through which Europe has traditionally divided the world into silos.

**OBREAL Global’s mission is divided into two parts:**

1. To promote dialogue and synergies between governments, academia and society, taking into account the specificities and heterogeneity of regions around the world.
2. To create cross-regional and truly global SSN bridges for enhanced development in higher education and research, via collaborative multi-regional projects and knowledge production.

While OBREAL Global has over a decade of experience with EU projects that target development cooperation in higher education (such as the Erasmus Mundus programme, Alfa, TEMPUS and Erasmus+), it has now taken on the challenge of finding appropriate funding schemes that specifically support SSN collaboration. The EU programmes do offer possibilities for global collaboration between diverse regions, and such funding has had a tremendous influence on universities in regions across the globe, but extremely few multi-regional projects are selected, as the programmes’ complex funding instruments do not facilitate these.

**CROSS-REGIONAL EXCHANGE**

Such limitations are not just found in EU programmes: Africa and Latin America, for example, share many common priorities, yet higher education cooperation between the two is not politically visible or systematically financed by the South or the North. Past initiatives such as those financed by Brazil, Russia, India and China seem to have faded as political spheres of influence have evolved.

The EU’s new fascination is with Africa (as evidenced by the recently agreed EU budget for development cooperation, as well as in the communication on the European Education Area and its global dimension), yet no one speaks of multi-regional alliances and approaches to meet Europe’s recovery objectives or development cooperation goals. This
has its ramifications in the way we work academically, in student and research mobility flows and in the general shape of development cooperation processes.

Taking again the example of Latin America and Africa, some universities have worked bilaterally in research; however, at the level of university associations and networks, cooperation tends to be relegated to separate circles. This does not reflect the internationalisation agenda of many Latin American universities, which is increasingly diversifying globally, nor does it reflect the common challenges and historical ties that the two regions share.

The linguistic barrier to cooperation between certain regions is becoming increasingly easy to circumvent, as is extensive and costly travel (a potentially positive effect of the pandemic). With the growing emphasis on contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals through higher education, SSN multi-regional partnerships should be the way forward, embraced by financial instruments, development banks and other international partners and donors.

**THE NEXT CHAPTER**

OBREAL Global is attempting to move the compass on this topic by developing regional ‘chapters’ for South America, the Caribbean, Central America, Africa and India. These chapters are driven by members of OBREAL Global, many of which are important regional higher education associations. Each has developed its own work plan based on the dynamics of the region and its needs. An inter-chapter board promotes dialogue between the chapters and defines joint projects and work groups.

The Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA), which is committed to university integration in southern Africa, co-leads the Africa Chapter of OBREAL Global, identifying core priorities and projects that should change the perspective of South–South cooperation, rendering it multi-regional and not simply intra-regional or African.

SARUA represents the public and private universities of the 16 countries that form the Southern African Development Community (SADC). As such, it is inherently South–South, enabling collaborative networks and partnerships for the development of the region’s institutional and human capacity. Its vision is to be a dynamic catalyst for higher education revitalisation and innovation in the SADC. However, it realises that it cannot do this with an inward-looking vision; part of the reason behind its decision to partner with OBREAL Global was to enable its members to form part of a network of regional organisations across the globe.

Through the Africa chapter and the inter-chapter activities, SARUA members will participate in dialogues, projects and benchmarking processes that strengthen their role in contextually relevant development. For example, SARUA is chairing a working group that aims to assess internationalisation trends globally and the extent to which they incorporate and prioritise SSN relations. This working group is also driven by the Grupo Montevideo Association of Universities in South America, the Association of Colombian Universities and the OBREAL Global India chapter chair: Symbiosis International University.

**WORKING IN HARMONY**

SARUA also has the opportunity to shape global dialogue and collaboration between various regions with which southern African institutions do not traditionally work.

As an example, SARUA is a strategic partner for implementing the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative, an EU-funded programme to support the strategic partnership between Africa and the EU and to help to achieve the African Union’s integration goals in higher education, particularly in quality assurance. This will help reinforce SARUA’s role as a promoter of regional integration and a protagonist of African continental integration. Through OBREAL Global, which leads the team implementing the harmonisation initiative, challenges and successes within Africa’s continental integration process may be reflected more globally, allowing examples and lessons to be taken from other regions of the world.

SSN collaboration requires dynamic higher education platforms that seek new approaches to connect networks and associations in different parts of the world. That this is being done by organisations such as OBREAL Global and SARUA without explicit and dedicated funding mechanisms implies both a challenge and an opportunity. While it is important that stakeholders in the South and the North chart their own path together, irrespective of external funding, the international partner and donor community should recognise and fund truly SSN multi-regional solutions to help solve the major challenges the world faces today.

— NICOJOOSTE & ELIZABETH COLUCCI

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