

The Internationalisation in Higher Education for Society Mapping Report



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Internationalisation in Higher Education for Society: Mapping Report

Report of the IHES Project

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Abbreviations

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
ACA	Academic Cooperation Association
AGAUR	Agencia de Gestión de Ayudas Universitarias y de Investigación
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EU	European Union
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IaH	Internationalisation at Home
IHES	Internationalisation in Higher Education for Society
IoC	Internationalisation of the Curriculum
LLLP	Life-Long Learning Platform
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RII	Relative Importance Index
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDU	University of Southern Denmark
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SU	Stellenbosch University
TEFCE	Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education
TNE	Transnational Education

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IHES Matrix

The following IHES Matrix developed by Brandenburg et. al. (2020) was used in the analysis of the mapped activities in Higher Education institutions (HEIs) and as a framework in focus group discussions with representatives of civil society and regional authorities. The Matrix is explained in more detail in Chapter 1.

Term	Source
Goals	Develop global citizens
	Fight radicalisation
	Fight xenophobia/populism
	Improve the acceptance of scientific results (instead of alternative facts) and critical thinking
	Provide practice-oriented research
	Support European identity
	Support science & knowledge diplomacy / soft power
	Support the environment & sustainability
	Support the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN
	Support/preserve democracy
	Support/preserve peace
	Support social integration
	Knowledge transfer
	Support economies of developing countries
	Support local/regional economy
General education of the public / capacity building	
Support active citizenship	

Term	Source
Actor groups within HEI	Alumni
	Domestic academics employed by HEI
	Domestic administrative staff employed by HEI
	Domestic students
	Incoming administrative staff
	Incoming international academics
	International academics employed at HEI
	International administrative staff employed by HEI
	International degree students
	International exchange students
	Leadership of the HEI (e.g. presidents, VPs, deans)

Term	Source
Target groups in society	Communities abroad
	Enterprises / companies
	General public
	Migrants in the country of the HEI
	Municipalities, local & regional institutions
	Parents of HEI students
	Peers and friends of students
	Public service providers (e.g. hospitals) abroad
	Public service providers (e.g. hospitals) in the country of the HEI
	Refugees abroad
	Refugees in the country of the HEI
	Representatives of civil society & NGOs abroad
	Representatives of civil society & NGOs in the country of the HEI
	School pupils abroad
	School pupils in the country of the HEI
	Youth abroad
Youth in the country of the HEI	

Term	Source
Dimension of internationalisation for actor group at HEI	HEI capacity building for developing countries
	Inbound academic mobility
	Inbound administrative staff mobility
	Inbound student mobility
	International strategic HEI cooperation
	International study programmes
	Internationalisation at Home (IaH)
	Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC)
	Online teaching and learning with international partners
	Outbound academic mobility
	Outbound administrative staff mobility
	Outbound student mobility for internships & service learning
	Outbound student mobility for studies
	Outbound voluntary activities of students
	Research and applied research
	Research networks with international partners
	Transnational Education (TNE)
	Voluntary activities of inbound international students
Welcome centres for international scholars or other workforce	

Term	Source
Involvement at HEI	Holistic (the whole HEI is involved, it is an institutional approach)
	Partial (individual departments, faculties, chairs, student clubs, etc. are involved)
	Individual (individuals are involved through an outside organisation such as the British Council or the DAAD or in a project of their own)

Term	Source
Movement between HEI and society	From HEI into society (e.g. international academics teaching outside the HEI in public places)
	From society into HEI (e.g. migrants, refugees, mature students or "international night of science" in the HEI)
	Both directions

Term	Source
Beneficiary	Only society
	Society and HEI

Executive summary

Situation

Internationalisation has evolved from being a fringe concern at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), in the 1970s and 1980s to becoming of core importance since the 1990s. In the last decade, increasing attention has been paid to social engagement and therefore societal needs. However, a systematic link between the two is yet to be made.

Until recently, European institutions saw greater focus on exploring and understanding the importance of internationalisation to advancing education and research; while considerably less emphasis was placed on social engagement (their "third" mission). Yet global developments suggest that more emphasis on the role of internationalisation is essential to helping HEIs better identify and address their external community needs, at home and abroad.

The debate on how to make existing internationalisation activities related to social engagement more systematic has gained speed and momentum since 2019. The idea of the Internationalisation in Higher Education for Society (IHES) developed by Brandenburg et al. (2020) tries to provide an instrument to achieve this. The definition specifies that the main beneficiary should be external to the university. In other words, IHES activities should intentionally seek to provide impactful benefit to the wider community.

The approach

This report builds on existing studies of the IHES concept and practice. It forms part of a wider IHES project, which aims to create tools and provide recommendations and guidelines to help HEIs and NGOs design successful IHES activities, thus stimulating new IHES projects. This report also provides an overview of the current status of IHES.

For reasons of consistency and comparability, this report analyses emerging internationalisation activities and approaches to contribute to a better understanding of institutional practices, and to support the upscaling of these initiatives within and beyond Europe.

This IHES project moves from conceptualising IHES to providing tools to help HEIs develop future activities by integrating the perspective of societal players. The report helps develop these tools by analysing the relevance of IHES Matrix aspects and listening to what the societal actors expect, need, and can contribute, (instead of relying exclusively on university perspectives,) thus strengthening mutual benefits.

The mapping in this report was conducted in early 2021 and comprised three parts: desk research, an HEI mapping survey and two civil society and regional authority focus groups. A total of 69 activities by 48 HEIs (most of which are European) were analysed to identify meaningful patterns in their efforts to bring internationalisation and societal engagement together.

Such activities should also increase the involvement of the wider community (at home or abroad). They may bring the global to the local, or vice versa, as both are equally valuable. And they occur in any areas in which a HEI is active: education, research and third mission. IHES can use many kinds of activities and its actors can be any university group: academics, students or administrative and technical staff.

The Brandenburg et al. analysis (2020) shows that while IHES is not yet mainstream, its clearly growing examples are bound to be more numerous than those identified in previous studies. The IHES Matrix methodological tool is used to analyse activities under several criteria: the goals pursued, target groups involved, international elements and key HEI actors.

The Brandenburg et al. study (2020), was used as a reference because of the comparable IHES Matrix framework. Regional and institutional differences are noted. The survey results were then merged with IHES Matrix information from the focus groups, in order to unite the perspectives of HEIs, civil society and regional authorities.

Key findings

The study looked for approaches that had considerable impact on their target groups and HEIs to further the development of IHES practice. Since this impact was largely qualitatively observed rather than quantitatively measured, the report is cautious about drawing causal conclusions.

With this caveat, the analysis showed that two-way activities (HEI to society and vice-versa) have a stronger perceived impact on both target group(s) and HEI than unidirectional activities. This also now seems to be the most common approach, as 52% of the submitted projects see activities going both ways. This is a slight increase from the results of the IHES study (45%) (Brandenburg et al., 2020, p. 56). The same seems to be true for activities with a holistic approach (52%) in comparison to partial (41%) or individual (6%) actions. And yet, there is potential for more activities to move towards a holistic approach. Therefore, the findings suggest that stronger emphasis on more structured, comprehensive IHES approaches is needed. The lack of quantitative evidence (in the form of indicator-based baseline data) further suggests that metric-based IHES tools are needed to provide better insights and facilitate progress monitoring.

While most of the goals are shared by HEIs, civil society and regional representatives, we observed differences in their scope. Most HEI relevant goals included: developing global citizens (very relevant to 63% of the activities), supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (very relevant to 61% of the activities) and the education of the general public / capacity building and knowledge transfer (both very relevant to 52% of the activities). The examples provided by regional representatives were more focused at regional level, but focus group participants expressed their intention to increase international engagement, particularly in the areas of social integration, the fight against populism and xenophobia.

However, despite the high compatibility of the goals addressed, regional representatives see potential for more and better cooperation with higher education actors, in particular regarding climate and environmental challenges, which are very relevant to HEIs. A multi-stakeholder cooperation approach is wanted for: 1) research and innovation, and knowledge generation to guide policy making 2) applied research and 3) cooperation on design thinking, to promote the entrepreneurial spirit of young people (including PhD students) in order to empower them to devise solutions to real-life problems.

Relevant HEI actors were mostly domestic academics (58% played a central role), students (49% played a central role), and staff (54% played a central role), while international students (46% degree students and 39% incoming played a central role), academics (25% employed and 13% incoming played a central role) and staff (31% employed and 10% incoming played a central role) were currently much less involved. This substantially limits the reach and opportunities of IHES, especially regarding Internationalisation at Home (IaH) with the local community.

Similarly, most of the target groups were also local. This shows a lack of general international awareness and a need to further improve the international aspect of social engagement activities. For example, 32% of civil society and NGO representatives have a very relevant presence in the HEI country, but achieve a score of 17% abroad. Meanwhile 21% of public service providers (e.g. hospitals) achieve a very relevant presence in the HEI country but only achieve a score of 11% abroad.

International strategic HEI cooperation is the most prominent aspect of internationalisation elements used in IHES activities (54% very relevant). Given its overarching nature, this provides a solid framework for future cooperation and for reinforcing the other elements. Internationalisation at Home (31% very relevant) and Internationalisation of the Curriculum (32% very relevant) achieve scores in line with the dominantly local target groups, as shown above. They demonstrate how IHES activities can nurture study programmes – a clearly positive outcome that also addresses the sustainability and dissemination of activities in both online teaching and research networks with international partners. However, several elements were deemed not relevant: Outbound administrative staff mobility (50% not relevant), Inbound administrative staff mobility (42% not relevant) and Welcome centres for international scholars or other staff (39% not relevant).

Conclusions and recommendations

HEIs may find themselves in a more advantageous position than NGOs, as they have both the capacity and resources to enable internal and external change, in addition to a responsibility to support their local communities and organisations. HEIs should therefore strive to support projects and initiatives that aim to bring sectors together by addressing common goals. This suggests that it is more realistic (and probable) to expect IHES projects to be initiated by HEIs. However, involving civil society in their development and implementation seems essential to achieving mutually beneficial two-way, high-impact IHES projects. Identifying and supporting local organisations who can act as bridge builders into their communities (local youth, student and other civil society groups) will therefore be key for HEIs to achieve their societal goals.

As the goals set by HEIs are usually in line with societal needs but the modus operandi is often inadequate, we recommend establishing connections that go beyond research/project level and lead to understanding each other's way of working. There is a need to discover how best to work together, to engage each other and to raise HEI awareness of the benefits of partnering with NGOs, especially when it comes to field expertise. The civil society representatives pointed out that building trust is crucial, and that there is a need to recognise civil society's work. One way of addressing this need could be to establish continuous exchange platforms between HEIs and civil society in different fields, to discuss their different areas of work and consequently, match interests.

The fact that international players are still substantially less involved than domestic actors calls for a stronger focus on Internationalisation at Home. New arrivals can bring the global to the local.

Similarly, while Internationalisation at Home activities, which tend to focus on the local communities, are reasonable; we would advocate for a stronger push towards IHES activities abroad, for example, foreign study. International target groups could also be identified through existing international HEI networks. Local civil society and regional representatives in partner university countries may lack international connectivity. Engaging further with them would be beneficial to everyone involved.

If HEIs want to follow current IHES trends, they could focus on the above, prominent, internationalisation elements. However, if an HEI wants to generate a truly innovative activity, it might consider one of the less common elements, such as inbound or outbound administrative staff mobility.

Overall, the analysis showed that IHES has gained some traction in recent years and is on its way to becoming an idea that could lead to more projects like those covered here. Nevertheless, such projects are still a minority among internationalisation activities and the vast realm of social engagement. This report provides insights to: help all current actors, inform the next steps of the IHES project, support regional IHES laboratories in Catalonia (Spain) and Olomoucky Kraj (Czech Republic), shape the guidelines for practitioners, and help develop an IHES model.



Introduction to the Internationalisation in Higher Education for Society and its Matrix

1. Introduction to the IHES concept and the Matrix

The internationalisation in higher education is a process of intentional institutional change (De Wit et al. 2015), designed to strategically and practically advance higher education institutions' three core missions: education (both teaching and learning); (applied) research; and service to society, which is sometimes referred to as community outreach or community engagement. This widely shared view within higher education has led to a context in which internationalisation activities are more comprehensively defined, ideally permeate entire institution, and become increasingly intertwined with other current processes and their objectives, covering everything from digitalisation to increased inclusivity, and the environmental sustainability of the institution.

However, in Europe, until recently, there has been more focus on exploring and understanding the role of internationalisation in advancing education and research; and considerably less focus and emerging knowledge about the importance of internationalisation in helping HEIs better identify and address the needs of their external communities, at home or abroad. While 65% of Europe's higher education institutions list improving the quality of education as one of their top internationalisation goals, and 38% see internationalisation as important to improving the quality of their research, only one in ten institutions (11%) name improving their service to the local community as a main internationalisation goal (EAIE Barometer, 2019).

While internationalisation activities that serve society may not yet be mainstream, two recent, parallel conceptual contributions have significantly enhanced understanding of community engagement in higher education. These are the TEFCE (Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education) and the IHES concept and matrix. While the former focuses primarily on engaging with local communities, the latter places greater emphasis on the international aspects of societal activities. In doing so it lays the conceptual basis for this report.

This report builds on existing knowledge of higher education engagement with society and focuses on extending the benefits of internationalisation to society at large. It aims to create the tools to help academic and social actors design successful IHES projects, thereby stimulating new IHES activities.

Under the TEFCE initiative, Farnell et al. (2020) define community engagement as being "focused on how universities address societal needs in partnership with their external communities", shedding light on the variety of "communities of place, identity and interest" that are part of the local university ecosystem, and which include government, business, civil society organisations and citizens, both at home and abroad (i.e. the local communities of partner universities in other countries). In an earlier publication, Benneworth et al. (2018), non-exhaustively define the various overlapping groups in the community in more detail. These range from consumers, the general public, citizens and community members, to lay people, children and adolescents, elderly patients, disadvantaged groups, vulnerable groups, culturally and linguistically diverse groups, marginal groups, hard-to-reach people, consumers with specific conditions (for example, people recovering from a stroke), to people with chronic diseases, etc.

Whereas local and international communities are multiple and intersecting, engagement is understood by Farnell et al. (2021) as a "process whereby higher education institutions undertake joint activities with external communities in a way that is mutually beneficial, even if each side benefits in a different way." Last but not least, social needs are defined as the "political, economic, cultural, social, technological and environmental factors that can influence quality of life in society."



Beyond providing a clear and useful definition of community engagement in HE, Farnell et al. further provide an eight-dimensional framework, covering aspects from teaching and learning, to management and supportive peers. This framework is designed to help HEIs map the extent of community engagement fully to enable further enhancement.

In 2019, Brandenburg et al. also defined IHES as a process through which higher education institutions purposefully transfer the many benefits of their wider internationalisation activities to local communities. Conceptually, IHES lies at the intersection between internationalisation and community engagement literature, as it is an all-encompassing concept capable of driving "comprehensive internationalisation" beyond the physical boundaries of institutional campuses into local environments.

The authors believe that IHES activities intentionally and purposefully seek to visibly benefit the wider community. They also increase wider community involvement at home or abroad. Such activities may bring the global to the local, or the local to the global, both being equally valuable. And they occur in any HEI area: education, research and third mission.

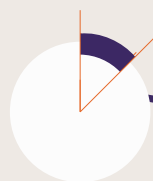
Understood through Farnell et al's community engagement lens, IHES is a process through which universities address societal needs in partnership with local and international external communities, both at home and abroad, through activities with an international dimension.

The IHES Matrix (Brandenburg et al., 2020) covers the following seven dimensions:

1. Goals pursued by any IHES activity
2. HEI actor(s)
3. Target group(s)
4. HEI involvement
5. Internationalisation dimensions
6. Flux between HEI and society
7. Beneficiaries

These aspects can be used to map IHES practices at HEIs and in their local environments.

The Brandenburg et al. (2020) analysis shows that while IHES is not yet mainstream, existing projects are clearly growing and will be more numerous than those identified in previous studies.



Mapping: scope and methodology

Mapping survey

Survey: geographical representation

Survey: institution size and type

Survey: data analysis

Focus groups: rationale, profile, and participant selection

Mapping: scope and methodology

Alongside desk research, in February and March 2021 Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) ran an extensive mapping survey to identify existing activities that could fit the framework of IHES. In March, Lifelong Learning Platform (LLL) organised two focus groups with regional authorities in Spain and the Czech Republic, and with European NGOs as a complementary needs analysis exercise. These were held to understand the IHES experiences and needs of non-academic actors.

2.1 Mapping survey

Each submitted activity was measured against the set of criteria set out in the IHES Matrix, in order to gather systematic information about its content, and also about the meta-elements involved in its implementation. We also wanted to know which HEI actors were involved, which goals the activity pursued and how the activity connected to social actors.

Snowball sampling was used to perform this mapping exercise. Therefore, the results and responses cannot claim representability beyond our sample, although many observations can be interpreted as indications of dominant trends and are useful for practitioners in the field. Responses were weighted against a designated set of criteria, but often depend solely on each respondent's assessment of the activities conducted at their institution. Respondents were mostly Heads of International or other offices and academic staff working on this kind of projects.

The mapping survey collected a total of 213 responses, of which 69 activities by 48 HEIs were used for this report. The activities included were selected according to whether they fell under the IHES definition: they have an external target group, an international dimension, address one or more specific goals, and include HEI actors. As IHES is an emerging concept, our assessment of the activities was rather light.

This exploratory study covers a diverse range of examples. The breadth of their intended impact ranges from those with a few very focused goals to those comprising numerous, broad goals. The examples also varied in terms of their depth, with some projects seeking deep impact for very specific groups; while others focused on less impact across a wider range of target groups. The examples also include projects supporting the local and regional economy and others focused on the public good and social justice. For reasons of consistency and the comparability of internationalisation-related activities and approaches, this report builds on the IHES Matrix described above. It is used as the main grid for identifying additional IHES examples and emerging good practices, to improve understanding of IHES practices, and support the upscaling of these initiatives in Europe.



2.2 Survey: geographical representation

We divided respondents into four European (Central and Eastern Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, and Western Europe) and three non-European (Central and South America, Africa and Asia) geographical areas.

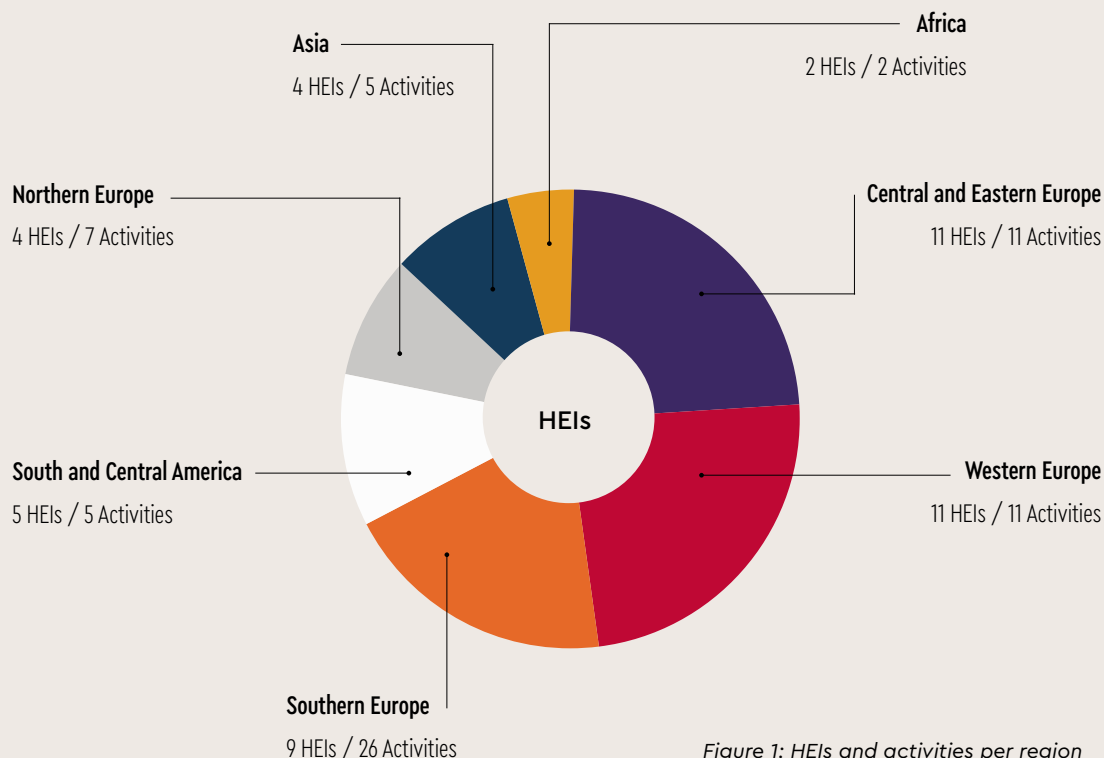
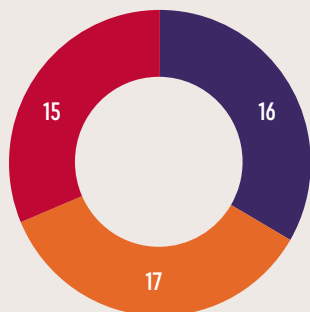


Figure 1: HEIs and activities per region

2.3 Survey: institution size and type

Respondents were asked to provide a little basic information about their institutions: overall student numbers, the number of international students and the HEI type. They were also asked how their institution works with the local community (see page 23).

HEI size

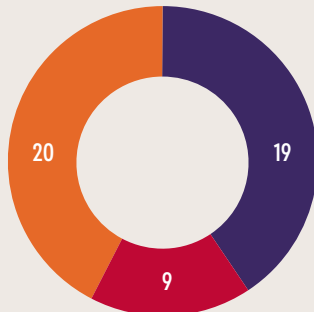


n = 48

- 25,000 or more students
- 10,000 to 24,999 students
- 1 to 9,999 students

Figure 2: HEI size

International student numbers

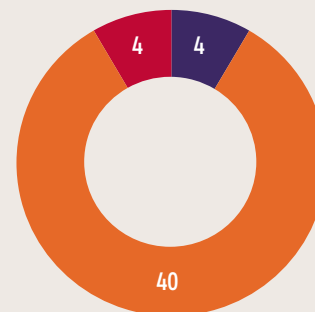


n = 48

- 1 to 499 international students
- 1000 and more international students
- 500 to 999 international students

Figure 3: International student numbers

HEI types



n = 48

- Other
- University
- University of Applied Sciences

Figure 4: HEI types

2.4 Survey: data analysis

The findings were initially analysed as a whole to identify dominant trends across the board in activities linking internationalisation and society.

Then we analysed the data per region, type and HEI size, in order to identify any relevant peculiarities. These results were compared using the percentages per region, type or size, because representation differed between the different regions and institution types.

This mapping builds on the Brandenburg et al. IHES study (2020) to add perspective, and track the progress of the "IHES movement" over time. While the first IHES study looked at the presence of specific IHES Matrix aspects (goals, actors, target groups, international elements, etc.), this mapping examined the relevance of each aspect, in order to obtain a refined insight into how these activities are implemented.

The lists of relevance were determined by calculating the Relative Importance Index (RII) on the Likert scale (importance for external target groups, international

elements, and goals: 1 – not relevant, 2 – slightly relevant, 3 – moderately relevant, 4 – very relevant; and for actors: 1 – not involved, 2 – in a supportive role, 3 – in a central role). Chi-squared tests were conducted to identify specificities in particular regions or per institution type or size.

Finally, we note where the input from civil society and regional representatives addresses issues common to the findings from the HEI survey, such as types of cooperation and successful practices.

Since IHES involves applying internationalisation to the needs of universities' societies (in a "glocal" sense at home and abroad), as described in the methodology section, this report included a substantial set of societal actors to identify probable issues, key aspects and contextualise findings.

Impact in this study: terminology and limitations

In the IHES project we adhere to the slogan of the Global Impact Institute: "It does not matter what you do but what you achieve". This means that we are concerned with the impact of IHES activities. In this context, we rely on the definition of impact in the American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition.

Impact: The striking of one body against another; collision. synonym: collision. The force transmitted by a collision. The effect or impression of one person or thing on another.

In other words, impact for us is the last in the line of interactions and their consequences. It starts with an input which is an activity (e.g., a classroom visit) conducted by any actor (e.g., an international professor or student) aimed at a target group (say school pupils). This input leads to an output (e.g., the number of pupils exposed to an international view of life by the international student) and leads through this output to an impact (e.g., the mind of some of the pupils becoming more open and globally oriented).

The key problem with impact is to measure whether the respective activity indeed influenced the target group. While it is comparatively simple to measure input (did the activity take place (yes/no), number of conducted classrooms visits) and output (number of pupils with whom the professor interacted, number of schools or cities in which this activity took place), it is hard to quantitatively measure impact. The main reason for this, is that when it comes to impact, the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle applies: you may see some effects but how can you be sure that it is the right effect or that it was caused by the activity?

Therefore, we aim to measure an impact by analysing in a pre-to-post approach using a set of indicators of different quality and scope:

- **The openness factor of the Big Five Inventory¹,**
- **A set of opinion questions**
- **A list of Learning Outcome statements.**

This allows us to:

- **Identify indicators that show an effect by comparing the state before and after the intervention**
- **Analyse the depth of the effect: personality traits as measured by the Big Five Inventory are much harder to change than opinions**
- **Control whether all indicators point into a similar direction: "indicare" in Latin it does not mean to prove but rather to point towards something, to hint.**

In this survey, however, we only had the opportunity to collect project examples and not directly assess the participants of these projects. Therefore, impact in this specific report must be understood at a much lower level of confidence: it is to be understood as the perception of the people responsible in their respective projects about the effects they achieve. Since this is technically the weakest form of impact measurement (most people overestimate their impact), we asked them to also provide qualitative information on how they come to this assessment and what kind of methods of measurement they apply. We do not claim, therefore, that any of the projects mentioned in this report do indeed have a real impact but rather caution our wording always towards expressions such as "the participants believed to have the following impact".

¹ <https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~johnlab/bfi.htm>

2.5 Focus groups: rationale, profile, and participant selection

The two IHES focus groups aimed to map cooperation between higher education actors and other stakeholders, and to better understand societal needs and challenges when it comes to cooperation with and support from higher education. The focus groups served as a reference, and complement to the mapping survey, which gathers HEI experiences and perspectives on social cooperation and contributions. Both the focus groups and survey rely on the IHES Matrix, which is the main reference used in the analysis.

The two focus groups gathered regional representatives from Spain, the Czech Republic, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) from European education, training and youth networks. The Catalan and Czech regional authorities already partner the IHES project and bring regional perspectives to the partnership, while the other partner, LLLP (a pan-European network of European NGOs), provides a civil society perspective.

The **regional authorities focus group** brought together 11 regional authority representatives from Spain and the Czech Republic – ministries and affiliate bodies responsible for education, research, innovation, and sustainable development². Most participants were from Catalan institutions, which were therefore overrepresented in the focus group, especially as they represented a single Spanish Autonomous Community. The congruence of findings should therefore be seen from a perspective of existing bias. The Czech authorities were represented by three regions with similar powers but relatively different levels of IHES experience. Where possible, the findings indicate significant regional specificities.

Civil society representatives in the focus group (10 participants representing 8 organisations) covered a wide range of education, training and youth fields, and, through their networks, a large area of Europe. LLLP members are themselves European networks (with members from at least 8 European countries). The participants represented a wide spectrum of topics, sectors and actors, including networks of university students, schools and school student unions, youth volunteers, VET actors, a network on democracy and human rights, a network on wellbeing in education, and a network on social justice. An additional interview was conducted with an LLLP member working in the area of sport and culture. The interview findings are included in the overall analysis.

These three perspectives (HEIs, NGOs and regional governments) are compared throughout this report in order to develop comprehensive, practical recommendations. The two focus groups enabled an in-depth exchange of experiences and perspectives on IHES-related topics and allowed more detailed insight into types of existing cooperation and an analysis of what social actors need from higher education and why. They also explored how this could be achieved or enhanced through joint efforts.



² For example: the Inter-university Council of Catalonia - CIC, The Agency for Management of University and Research Grants (AGAUR - Agencia de Gestión de Ayudas Universitarias y de Investigación), Advisory Council for Sustainable Development, representatives of the Olomoucký, Ústecký and Zlínský regions (CZ).

Relations between higher education institutions, European non-governmental organisations and regional authorities in Catalonia and Olomoucky Kraj

The relationship between regional authorities and HEIs

The relationship between NGOs and HEIs

3.1 The relationship between regional authorities and HEIs

There are differences in how regions cooperate with the HE sector, which on the one hand, stems from the legal frameworks and competences of regional bodies, and on the other, from regional priorities in terms of the social challenges tackled. For example, in the Czech Republic, regional authorities have powers over secondary education but not higher education, so cooperation with the HE sector is less direct. Each region develops its own education strategy, which reflects priorities and shapes HEI cooperation. In some cases, HEIs send female role models to talk to secondary school pupils to encourage more girls to study STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), or provide expertise in specific subject matters. International cooperation projects with universities in other European countries (for example, the UK or Ireland) are also organised. Regional bodies support schools through grants, events, projects and by supporting projects involving other actors, (usually NGOs which are largely limited to local, regional or national projects).

The Catalan authorities have more power over the ways universities are supported and engaged in addressing regional priorities – through funding schemes for research and innovation, international projects and partnerships, doctorates (often industrial), coordination bodies, multi-level and multi-stakeholder alliances. The focus group noted the challenge of coordinating different regional administrations and HEIs.

3.2 The relationship between NGOs and HEIs

NGOs cooperate with HEIs at different levels. Cooperation at secretariat level can be more focused on project and research-based activities, whereas a more direct relationship between civil society and HEIs can be observed at membership level. Participants stressed that collaboration generally has been strengthening and growing over the last decade.

Focus group participants highlight that an important share of their cooperation with HEIs comprises specific research topics of shared interest. Specifically, civil society works with HEI researchers in areas of non-formal education, volunteering, scouting, citizen education, sports, health and lifestyle, and other topics. An important element of this collaboration is bringing practitioners' field expertise to academia. This allows civil society to share the reality in the field and to advocate for research approaches more suited to their fields of expertise. These partnerships also support civil society efforts to gain external recognition for the value of non-formal education by obtaining sound evidence of their (educational and social) impact from HEIs. The results of such collaborations are also beneficial to NGOs aiming to improve their own activities and programmes.

EU-funded projects are another important avenue of (often research-based) cooperation between civil society and HEIs. Most of the focus group participants and HEIs took part in Erasmus+ projects (as well as other schemes such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund – AMIF). One of the biggest/most relevant Eras-

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda through an Advisory Council for Sustainable Development responsible for mainstreaming the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across ministries and departments is a good example of such coordination. The Catalan government encourages SDG achievement via the National Agreement for the 2030 Agenda, an alliance of public and private stakeholders, including universities, which aims to introduce structural changes. To join the alliance, organisations have to submit a proposal specifying how they plan to integrate the 2030 Agenda into their work.

The Agency for Management of University and Research Grants³ funds social engagement through its support for research, industry-related PhD's, talent incentives and international projects. Such programmes include support for and encouragement of Open Science and the sharing of relevant scientific results. The Inter-University Council of Catalonia, (the coordinating body of the Catalan University System,) also promotes quality employment, internships in Catalonia and international partnerships (for example a collaboration with Brainport Eindhoven).

mus+ projects for IHES is the Social Erasmus project, which focuses on community engagement and service learning and aims to connect international students with local communities.

At membership level, national and local members also work on shared projects and research as outlined previously. However, focus group participants noted that they now have a closer relationship, with more constant collaboration between the sectors. Here, a more systematic approach allowed for steady collaboration. Universities acted not as project/research partners but also as the providers of resources that helped boost the activities implemented by national/local NGOs. Additionally, practitioners were able to bring their knowledge into the university classrooms as guest lecturers sharing their field expertise.

Evidently, the way in which both sectors cooperate is also affected by the political and financial situation of each country and each university, as well as the relationships that national/local members have been able to build with HEIs over the years. In sectors such as scouting, the bigger the presence of the organisation in the country, the higher the chances of connecting with universities, generally through former scouts who support the movement and act as ambassadors.

³ AGAUR - Agencia de Gestión de Ayudas Universitarias y de Investigación

How do higher education institutions work with society? Findings from the mapping survey and focus groups

External target groups

International elements at HEIs

HEI actors

Goals

Societal engagement and flux

Beneficiaries and perceived impact

How are HEIs working with society?

Interactions between HEIs, their actors and international dimensions on the one hand, and society at large on the other were mapped by analysing the selected activities using the IHES Matrix. The Matrix provided insights into how the activities are conducted in several areas – from external local and international target groups to HEI actors and their interactions with local NGOs and municipalities.

The following sections detail the key findings from this analysis. Where relevant, we have indicated differences based on regional specificities, institution type or size. Only significant deviations from the general dataset were highlighted. For example, we have indicated when certain goals are more relevant in some regions or where any of the HEI actors are more involved in a central or supportive role in other regions. We were also interested in the type of institutional setting and cooperation that yields most impactful results and

ways to monitor impact successfully. We outlined some recommendations based on the findings.

Each thematic section contains up to three parts:

- Findings from the mapping survey with commentary and input from the focus groups
- Insights that differ from the overall findings, due to the region, HEI type or size
- Comparison of findings with the previous IHES study (Brandenburg et al., 2020)

Regarding the institutional setup when it comes to collaboration with their respective local communities, HEIs have reported the following results.

How does your HEI work with the local community?

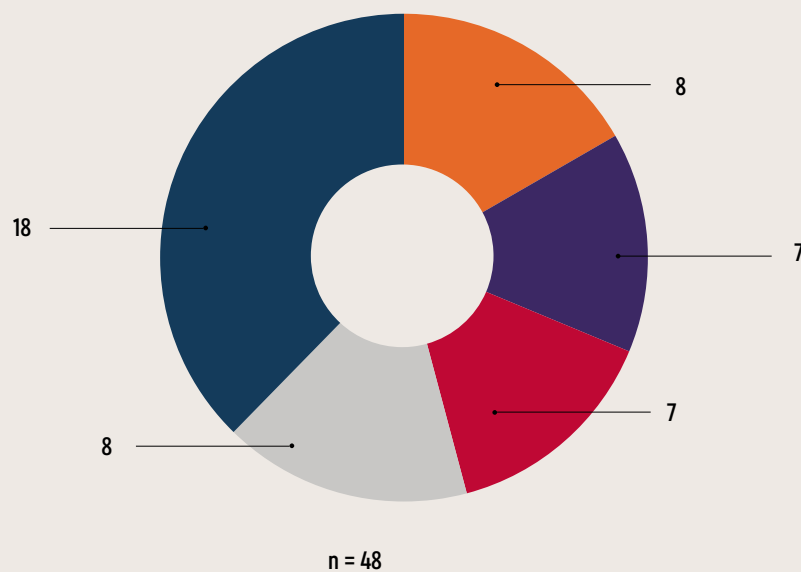


Figure 5: How does your HEI work with the local community?

- Other (please specify)
- Mainly through the international office
- There is no dedicated office, but individual colleagues work specifically on this at central level
- It is not integrated into the organisational structure of my HEI, but individual members of the teaching staff/departments work with various social actors
- Through a dedicated office

Over a third of the institutions surveyed have a dedicated office working with the local community. The others work either through their international office or via individual colleagues (at central level, in the different departments or individual members of staff. "Other" responses included the alumni office, student organisations and departments, including vice-rectorates. Having a dedicated office reflects strong institutional commitment and the activities with most impact were organised by institutions with a holistic approach to IHES (see more on impact on page 32).

4.1 External target groups

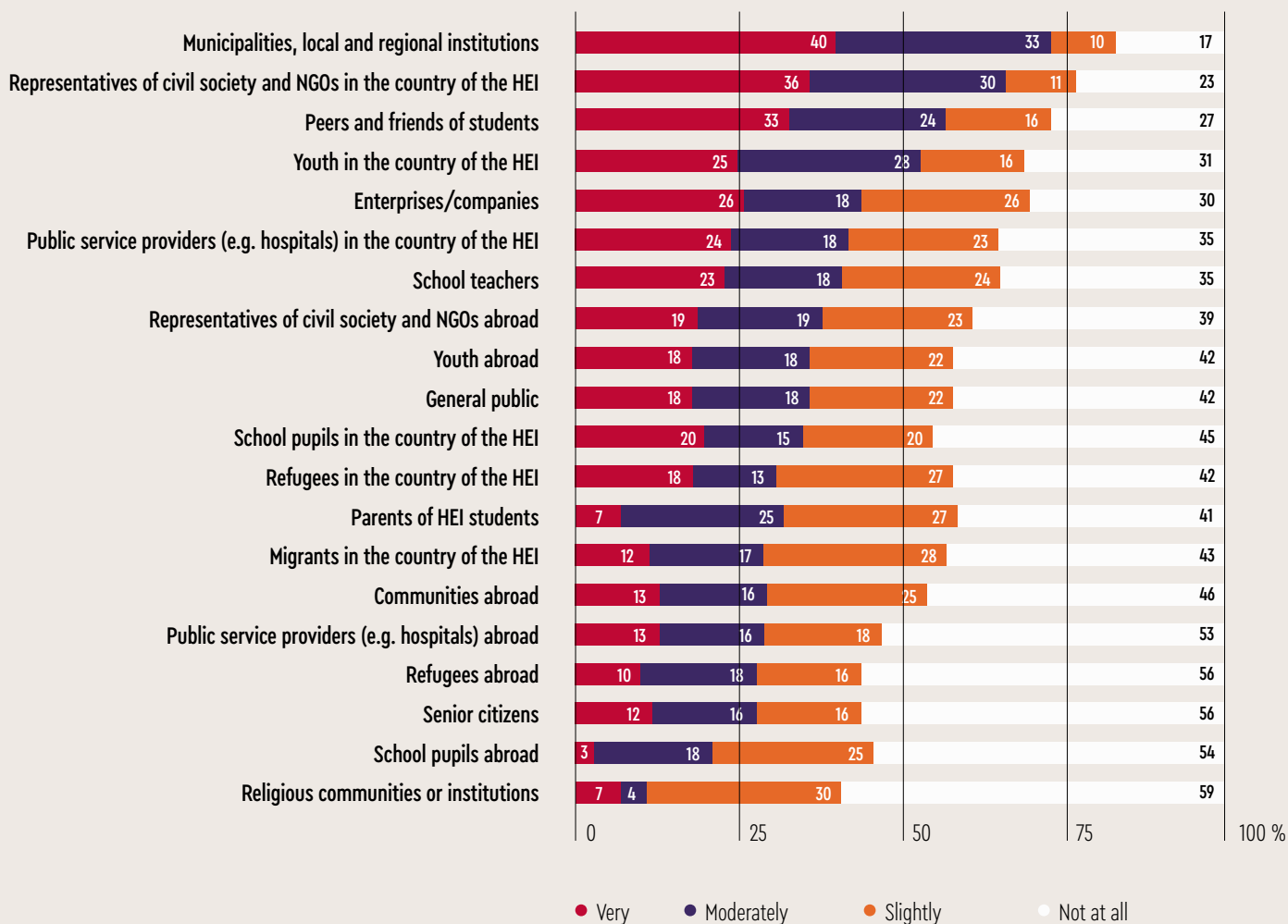


Figure 6: External target groups

Municipalities, local institutions and NGOs were the most relevant target groups for the activities in this mapping. This coincides with the focus group feedback received from those same target groups concerning their levels of engagement with HEIs. Somewhat relevant target groups are: student peers, local youth and companies. Migrant or refugee communities share a moderate level of relevance with public service providers such as hospitals, schoolteachers, pupils and parents. Feedback from the focus groups points to the need to further diversify target groups. Looking at practices on the ground, the creation of IHES ambassadors: individuals who can create and sustain links across countries, institutions, disciplines and sectors, could be the most successful way to achieve this.

One of the key takeaways from the focus groups concern building bridges between academia and the external target groups representing civil society at large; and the crucial role of ambassadors in achieving this. Such links ensure much longer-term cooperation than project-based partnerships. In successful practices, these academic ambassadors tend to have a background in or experience working with civil society and the non-formal learning sector. This duality gives them credibility on both sides. This is particularly true when working with young people, as their members maintain links with the sector after moving on to higher education and/or other sectors.

In other cases, ambassadors combine roles to overcome the financial constraints of working in civil society (which often brings practitioners to look for job opportunities in academia). Therefore, another way of building bridges is to implement long-term research projects, allowing researchers to accompany NGO activities for a number of years, which builds stronger connections with practitioners, volunteers, educators and other civil society stakeholders. National members also act as bridge builders between HEIs and the Secretariat, often by involving HEIs from their countries in the development of project ideas.

Bridging service learning and community engagement is an important area of cooperation between civil society and HEIs to which internationalisation is often tied. Here, an important task has been to ensure that internationalisation is always accompanied by social engagement.

Local target groups were significantly more represented than their international counterparts – be they school pupils, migrants/refugees, public service providers or civil society and youth (whose representation is slightly higher than others). This is in line with the findings of a literature review (Brandenburg et al., 2020 in Jones et al., 2021), which “showed little evidence that institutional internationalisation strategies were addressing the global aspects of university social

responsibility in a systematic way." (Jones et al., 2021, p. 1)

One possible way forward would be the strategic diversification of target groups affected by activities at a given HEI. Creating and successfully maintaining a network of ambassadors has proven to yield results, especially over a longer period. This can be achieved at civil society and local institutions, and perhaps more importantly, at less obvious target groups who often lack formal status or institution membership, such as senior citizens or migrants. The findings of the civil society focus group highlight the importance of ambassadors to establishing and enhancing IHES cooperations.

While the focus on Internationalisation at Home (IaH) is very positive, universities could involve more international target groups by adding IHES components located in other countries to their internationalisation strategies with social actors as meaningful partners.

Regional trends versus the general dataset:

- Enterprises/companies are less relevant in Southern Europe (at around 15%) than in other locations, especially Northern and, to an even greater extent, Western Europe.
- Refugees and international communities are more relevant in Southern Europe and much less so in Central and Eastern Europe.
- School pupils and teachers are more relevant in Central and Eastern Europe and play an even greater role in Northern and Western Europe.
- The general public is more relevant in Northern Europe.
- School teachers have smaller relevance in Northern Europe and higher in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Municipalities, local and regional institutions, and public service providers are less relevant in Central and Eastern Europe.

These findings are in line with the list of target groups addressed in the previous IHES study (Brandenburg et al., 2020, p. 54) which also showed a significantly lower presence of all the non-national target groups. Although there are some deviations, the Brandenburg et al. list of target groups is similar to that of this relevance-mapping exercise.

4.2 International elements at HEIs

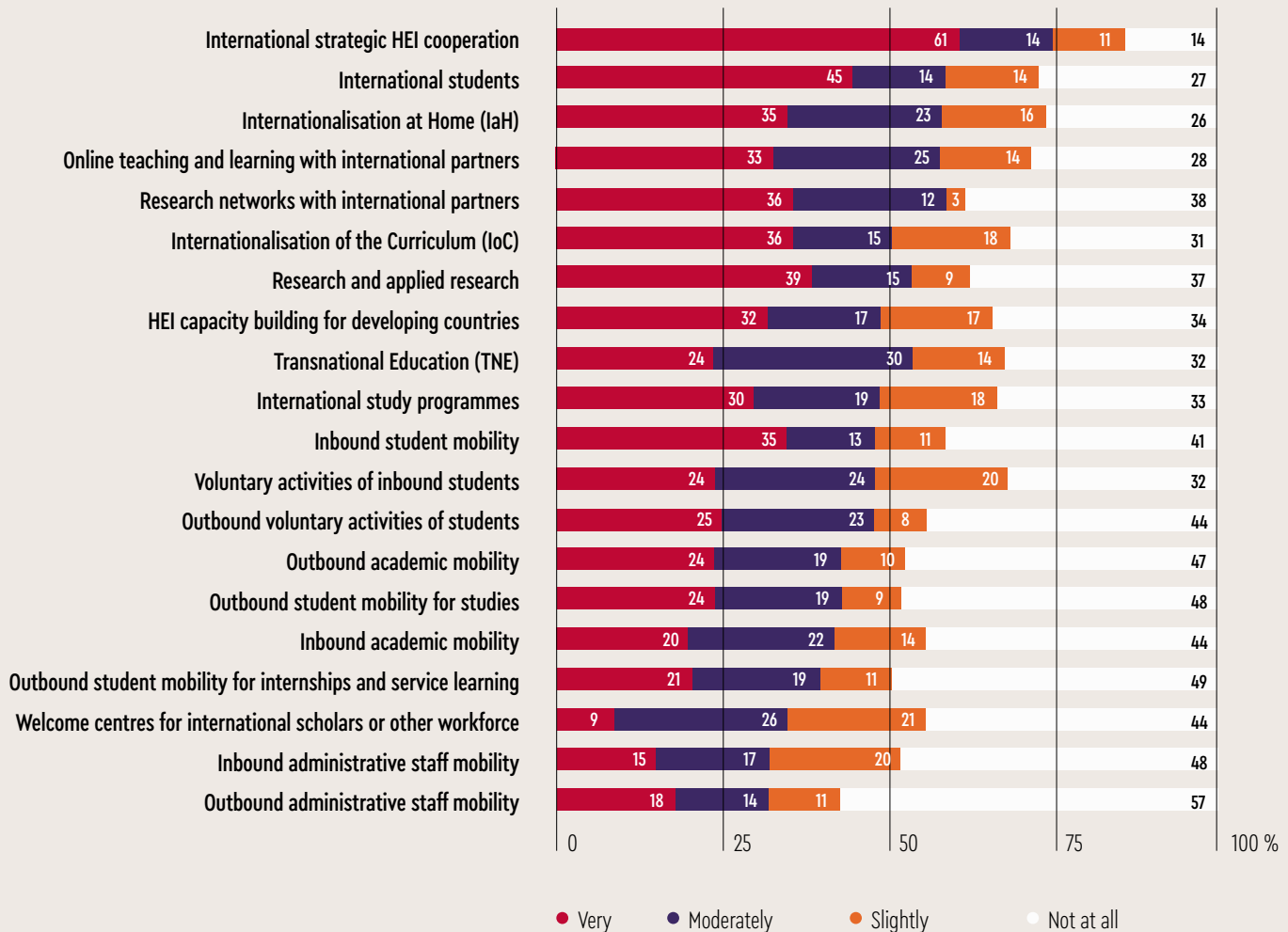


Figure 7: International elements at HEIs

Overall, HEI international elements are slightly more relevant to surveyed activities than the external target groups (their RII is 0.1 higher on average). This provides a solid foundation for the further development of international aspects in collaborations between HEIs and society.

International strategic HEI cooperation is by far the most prominent aspect of internationalisation, followed by international students. The overarching nature of strategic cooperation makes this aspect a prerequisite, as it provides a well-rounded framework for future cooperation and for strengthening other elements.

laH and Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC) follow suit, proving that such activities feed into the content of study programmes – a clearly positive outcome that also addresses the sustainability and dissemination of activities in both online teaching and research networks with international partners. This also confirms the findings related to the target groups (domestic preferred over abroad). In other words, most current IHES activities focus on laH, which forms a much less relevant part of most HEI internationalisation strategies. Yet this aspect is probably the strongest instrument for achieving long-term change as it can address a majority of students and staff who cannot be mobile. Transnational Education (TNE) is not as relevant for the activities as for the former aspects, and it is an area with potential for further improvement.

The regional authorities emphasised a need to operationalise the international potential of their partner HEIs. Regional representatives name the use of international HEI networks as an area in need of improvement.

Regional authorities see the huge potential of international HE connections and cooperations to help address complex social problems that go beyond the regional level. This applies to institutional cooperation in research, as well as engaging international students – for example, in local and regional initiatives or in fighting populism and xenophobia through contact with younger pupils in local schools. Some focus group participants noted that there is a need to raise awareness among higher education actors, including students, about existing initiatives and to empower students to see themselves as agents of change. Admittedly, regional representatives face challenges in reaching out to the HE sector, especially to international students. As one participant noted, HEIs connect regional pieces and shape the regional ecosystem; they are much more than just providers of mobility – they are facilitators of interactions within and among regions. Governments have a funding role, but HEIs connect all the pieces.

Inbound student mobility has a more polarising relevance for HEIs (where it is seen as either very or not relevant) than academic and staff mobility. All types of outbound mobility lacked relevance, proving the predominantly local focus of these activities.

Research and its international partner networks were also mostly either very relevant or not at all relevant in this sample. Nevertheless, the focus group findings indicate that research cooperation with HEIs is very relevant to Europe's NGOs and specifically to the Catalan authorities. **For example, research-based cooperation appears to be key to helping NGOs obtain evidence to support recognition.** For HEIs these partnerships

can support internationalisation, and more specifically IHES, by taking advantage of the grassroots-level work conducted by NGOs. It will be important to recognise each other's expertise and work together instead of in parallel, to ensure these partnerships' success. This is especially true when HEIs intervene in non-formal learning, adult learning or youth-focused projects without partnering with and/or taking into consideration the work already done by NGOs, which may lead to damaging competition for an already limited pool of funds.

The Catalan authorities express a need to enhance international cooperation through co-creation with HEIs, for example, around the circular economy. Finding different ways to work with international counterparts in this area and enabling exchanges across countries (for example, through expert mobility) would provide different perspectives on addressing similar challenges. Additionally, the participants clearly stated the need to boost international cooperation beyond mobility. They highlighted the need to share, generate and disseminate knowledge and applied research to provide sustainable solutions and to provide evidence to guide policy and decision makers. It is also equally important to share knowledge with society and support citizen

Regional trends compared to the general dataset:

- **TNE, research, applied research, and research networks with international partners are more relevant in Northern Europe.**
- **laH is most relevant in Western Europe (73% very relevant compared to 35% overall). International study programmes are also more relevant in these countries.**
- **Outbound academic mobility is most relevant in Northern Europe and least in Southern Europe.**
- **Inbound administrative staff mobility is least relevant in Northern and Southern Europe (inbound academic mobility is also not as relevant in Southern Europe).**
- **Research and applied research is of less relevance in Western Europe, but tops the list in Northern Europe alongside research networks with international partners.**
- **Outbound student mobility is more relevant in Central and Eastern Europe.**
- **HEI Capacity building is barely relevant in Central and Eastern Europe.**
- **Online teaching and learning, and research networks with international partners are not as relevant in Central and Eastern Europe.**

Inbound student and academic mobility, and research and applied research are ranked lower in this sample while international strategic HEI cooperation and TNE are much higher on the list of international elements at HEIs than in the previous IHES study (Brandenburg et al., 2020, p. 55).

4.3 HEI actors

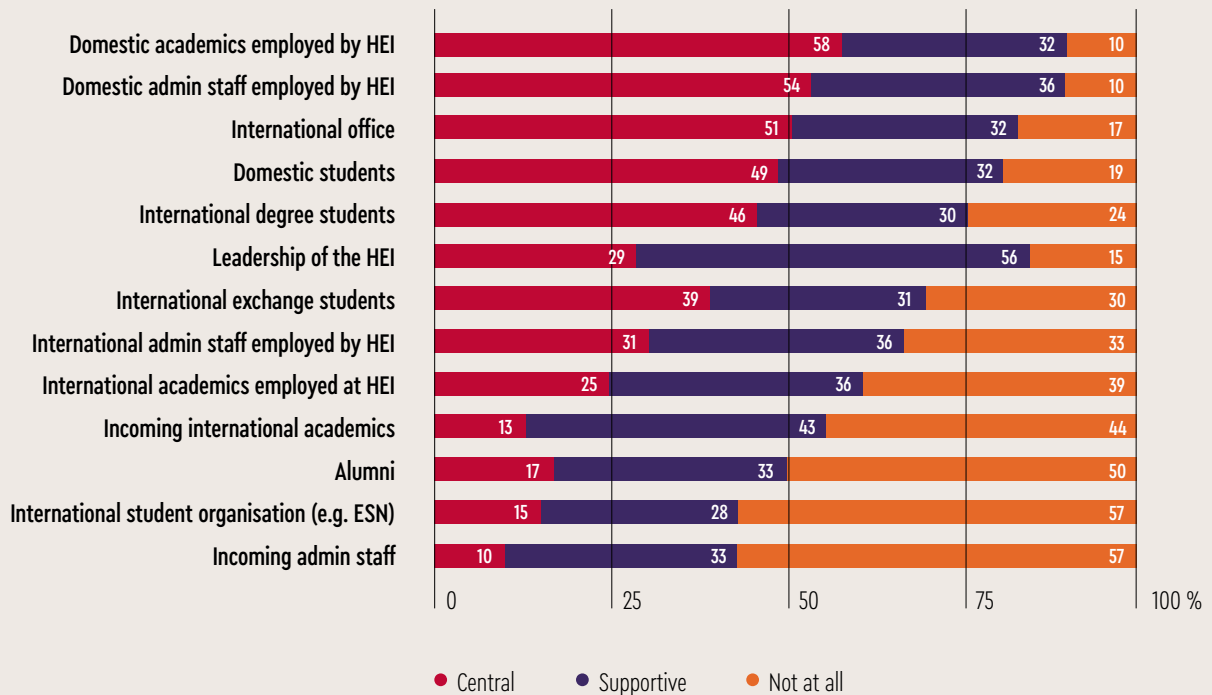


Figure 8: HEI actors

Most key actors at HEIs are domestic academics and administrative staff, in principle those from an international office. Domestic and international degree and exchange students follow suit with roughly equal involvement in key and supportive roles.

Leadership is involved in a central or supportive role in more than 80% of the cases with existing and new academics and staff being slightly more supportive, but rarely involved in a central role. **Incoming academics, students and administrative staff are generally much less involved in the activities than their domestic colleagues.** This, in combination with the fact that most target groups were also domestic, suggests that a substantial amount of the submitted projects are actually social engagement projects lacking a true international perspective, despite the fact that they are considered IHES by the submitting HEI.

It is possible to assume that some incoming colleagues either engage in IHES-like activities or prefer to focus on their research or teaching while visiting an institution. Research output feeds into career promotion performance metrics, and service to society is of minimum, if any relevance in these metrics. It is therefore understandable that international academics tend to focus on research and teaching. **Including service to society in performance metrics would change this by providing incentives for international staff to engage in relevant activities at their host institutions.**

International exchange students and student organisations were least involved in the activities mapped by this exercise.

Regional trends versus the general dataset:

- While domestic academics in Western European countries are involved in either central or supportive roles, they are not at all involved in one third of the activities in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Domestic students are more involved and domestic academics are less involved in Central and Eastern Europe.
- HEI leadership is more centrally involved in Southern Europe than in other countries.
- International academic staff are more involved and the international office is less involved in Northern Europe.
- International student organisations are more relevant in Central and Eastern Europe.

The relevance of actors at HEIs in this sample largely resembles the list in the last IHES study (Brandenburg et al., 2020, p. 53). As that study looked at the presence of the actors rather than their type (central or supportive role), HEI leadership is more involved in this sample if we count central and supportive roles as a "yes" answer.

4.4 Goals

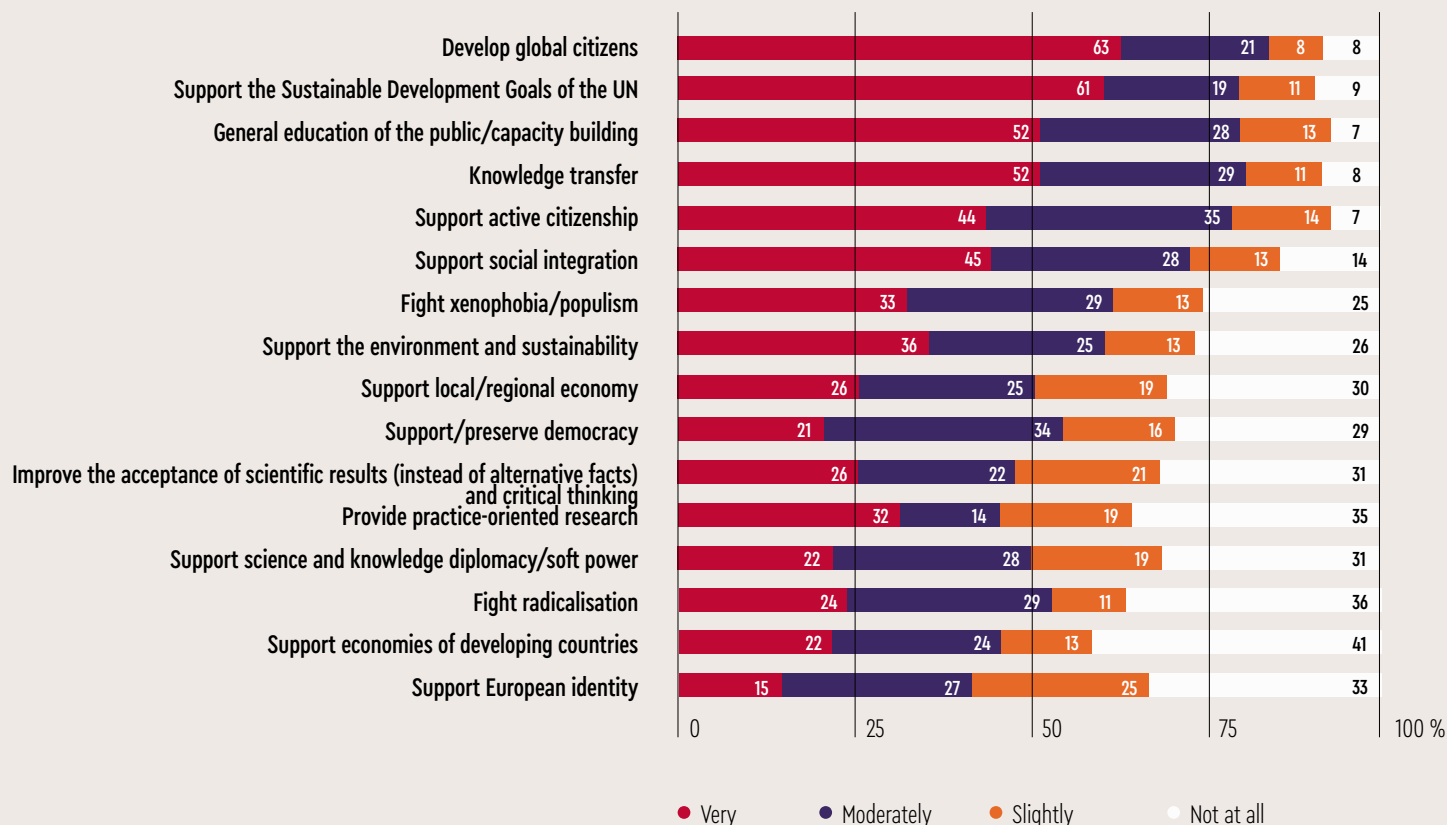


Figure 9: Goals

Developing global citizens, supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals and general education of the public lead the list of goals pursued by the mapped activities.

The NGO representatives who took part in the focus groups covered most of the goals except for: support science and knowledge diplomacy/soft power, support the economies of developing countries and support the local/regional economy. The most commonly addressed goals were in line with the HEIs goals: social integration, democracy and active (global) citizenship, support of the SDGs and fighting all kinds of discrimination. This is also in line with regional authorities' focus group goals: they placed high priority on social integration and the SDGs.

The examples provided by regional authorities were more focused on the regional level, although the intention expressed during focus groups was to engage more at international level, particularly in the areas of social integration and the fight against populism and xenophobia. One of the ways Czech regions address the latter is by sending international students to secondary schools to talk to pupils and share their experiences.

Supporting the local/regional economy falls in the middle of the list for HEIs, while it was reported as relevant by the Catalan regional authorities, who are actively involved in coordination, management and partnership building in the area of economic develop-

ment (mainly knowledge transfer). The Catalan strategy believes that funded organisations and institutions will develop or enhance skills related to regional priorities, thus making these areas more competitive and leading to the development of international partnerships. In turn, the Autonomous Community government will use these skills and knowledge to learn, and to feed further policy development. A range of ongoing and pilot international initiatives and projects link higher education actors (specifically including PhD students) to industry and provide innovative solutions to social challenges.

In the area of climate and environmental challenges, which are very relevant for HEIs, some regional representatives see a potential for more and better cooperation with higher education actors, as part of a multi-stakeholder approach in three main areas: 1) research and innovation, and knowledge generation to guide policy making 2) through applied research and 3) cooperation on design thinking, promotion of entrepreneurial spirit among young people (including PhD students), empowering them to devise solutions to real-life problems. International cooperation can be promoted through science diplomacy, leading by example in responsible and sustainable practices. The most important aspect of all, as indicated, is maintaining regular and open dialogue between the actors and with HEIs.

One of the questions raised was how to combine specialist academic knowledge and the multidimensionality and multidisciplinary of social problems. Some

participants felt that the invaluable contribution and support higher education can provide governments lies precisely in providing relevant knowledge and offering solutions through their expertise. In view of EU priorities such as the green and digital transitions, participants noted that the imperative is to make these solutions inclusive and impactful, which requires incorporating these priorities into universities' international activities. The current challenges of the pandemic, for which regional authorities need support from HE actors, include addressing mental health issues and the huge inequalities COVID-19 has revealed and exacerbated.

HEIs view fighting radicalisation, supporting the economies of developing countries, and supporting European identity as the least relevant goals. Interestingly, while supporting European identity is a primary political priority for Erasmus+, the largest European funding programme, this sample does not recognise it as particularly relevant. This may be because it is not as strongly picked up on the ground, or it simply is not seen as relevant for these activities. This goal is also not specifically tackled by regional authorities and NGOs.

The main challenges identified during the NGO focus group include recognition of the work conducted by NGOs on the different social goals concerning IHES. HEIs need to recognise the importance of the work done by student organisations and other civic groups, and to acknowledge their value as stakeholders and the benefits of partnering with them.

Regional trends compared to the general dataset:

- **Developing global citizens is very relevant in only 9.1% of cases in Central and Eastern Europe, compared to 62.5% overall. In Northern Europe it is the most relevant goal.**
- **Supporting the economies of developing countries is not a relevant priority in any of the activities in Central and Eastern Europe compared to 22% overall.**
- **Fighting radicalisation is more dominant in Southern Europe than other regions.**
- **Supporting the environment and sustainability is a more relevant goal in Western Europe.**
- **Supporting the SDGs is the least relevant goal in Central and Eastern Europe, while it is among the most relevant goals elsewhere.**

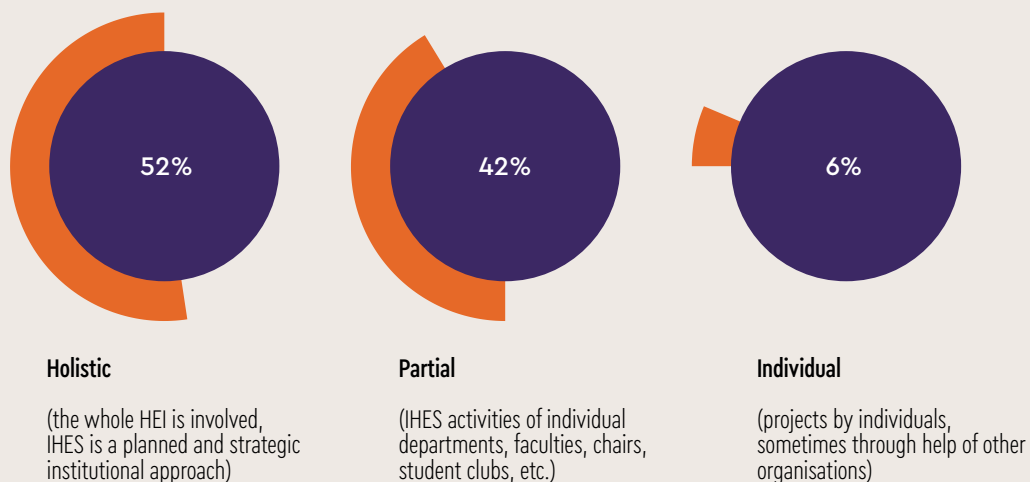
Supporting SDGs is much higher up this list than in the first IHES study (Brandenburg et al, 2020, p. 52). Improving the acceptance of scientific results (instead of alternative facts) and critical thinking has also become more important, partly due to the increased prominence of this topic in public discussions over the last two years.

4.5 Social engagement and flux

As we are advocating for the thorough integration of IHES activities at institutions, we need to understand how exactly the activities are positioned at the HEIs where they take place, how they move between HEIs and society and, most importantly, the strength of

their impact and how it is measured. Looking at these aspects allows us to understand what kind of organisational setups yield the most impactful results and where practitioners can further improve their work.

4.5.1 HEI involvement



n = 63

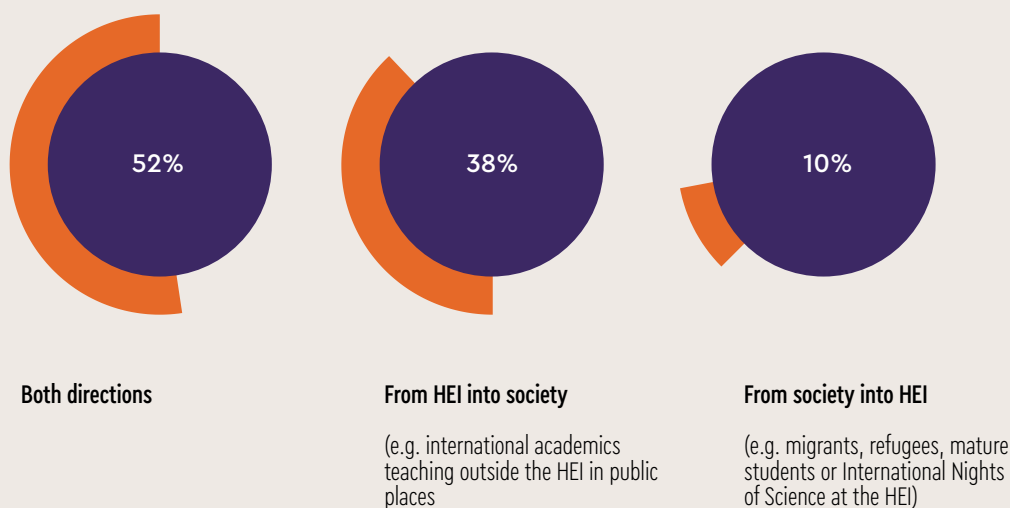
Figure 10: HEI involvement in the activity

When asked about the level of HEI involvement, half of the respondents reported holistic involvement, with 41% of respondents indicating partial involvement and only 6% reporting individual initiatives (projects by individuals, sometimes with the help of other organisations) as the predominant form of cooperation.

The holistic approach is more common at large HEIs with over 25,000 students, while medium sized HEIs (10,000-24,999) tend to have a partial approach. It is important to stress **that activities with a holistic approach were reported as having a strong perceived impact on both target group(s) and HEI actors.** This is a clear indication that many colleagues at various levels of the institution need to be involved for an activity to be impactful, and strong support from the institution's hierarchy is required when developing future activities.

*These results show some progress was made since the IHES study (Brandenburg et al., 2020, p. 56) when partial involvement was higher (65%), and holistic involvement was lower (30% of HEI projects compared to 52% in this mapping). While these samples are not fully comparable, a **positive trend of reducing partial and increasing holistic involvement can be observed.** Individual involvement in both studies was below 10%.*

4.5.2 Movement between HEI and society



n = 63

Figure 11: Movement between HEIs and society

While slightly over half the activities move in both ways between HEIs and society, around a third of activities only move from the HEIs to society. Movement in both directions should be the desired model because it involves societal actors as more than mere recipients of the benefits that internationalisation brings to a HEI, becoming involved at every stage of the activity, and increasing their contributions to HEIs.

This issue was also raised by NGO representatives in the focus groups, where they voiced a strong interest in contributing more to teaching and research at HEIs. Movement from society into HEI is the least common type of interaction, proving this imbalance. As stated in the focus groups, HEIs need to recognise the importance of the work conducted by student organisations and other civil society groups, acknowledge their value

as stakeholders and see the benefits of partnering with them.

Recognition (and validation) of the learning outcomes from participation in the non-formal learning activities implemented by NGOs is another area where civil society needs to work further on developing the definition of learning outcomes so that HEIs recognise that non-formal learning has its own standards and logic.

Activities with a holistic approach move in both directions between HEI and society. Whereas activities with partial HEI involvement are more likely to move only from HEI into society.

This figure was slightly lower (45% for HEI projects)

in the previous IHES study (Brandenburg et al., 2020, p. 56), which also indicates a positive trend because the perceived impact is stronger in activities moving in both directions. Movement from HEI into society is down to 10% (from 45% to 37%), a positive indication that the trend is shifting to movement in both directions.

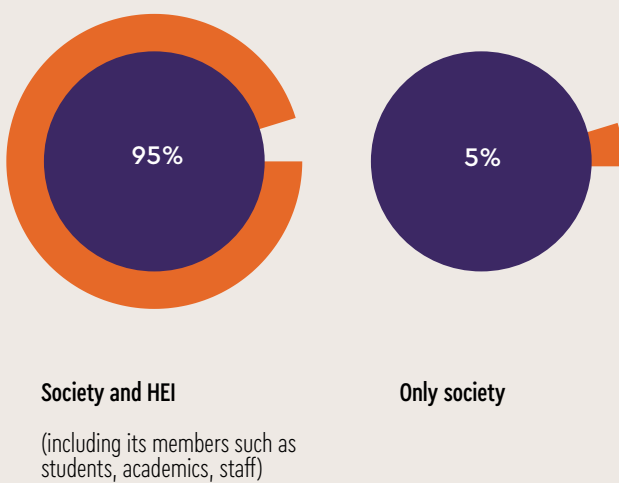
4.5.3 Supporting bridge builders and strengthening partnerships

The focus groups shared the view that there is generally a strong need to close the gaps between HEIs and civil society. For HEIs to achieve their social goals, they must identify and support local organisations (youth, student and other civil society groups), who can act as bridge builders. These anchors can provide immense support during the implementation of IHES (and similar initiatives) on the ground, especially where there are language barriers. Participants noted that HEIs often do not use the best channels to reach out, to communicate with the local community and civil society (i.e. by going through secondary school hierarchies rather than reaching out to secondary student organisations directly). Creating strong partnerships with local NGOs could help overcome this obstacle. There is still work to be done to close the gap between community engagement and service learning to allow international students to effectively engage with the community.

As previously mentioned, individuals can also act as bridge builders between NGOs and HEIs. Such ambassadors can transfer their experience from the NGO field into the HEI context, and vice versa. They can help HEIs reach out to local organisations and communities, and communicate with them in a more appropriate manner, creating a positive cooperation environment that allows all stakeholders to contribute and take ownership of the initiatives.

4.6 Beneficiaries and perceived impact

4.6.1 Beneficiaries of the initiative



n = 67

Figure 12: Beneficiaries of the initiative

As suggested by the NGO representatives, there is a strong potential and willingness for societal actors to further engage in working more closely with HEIs. How specifically should this be done? They shared a few ideas with us.

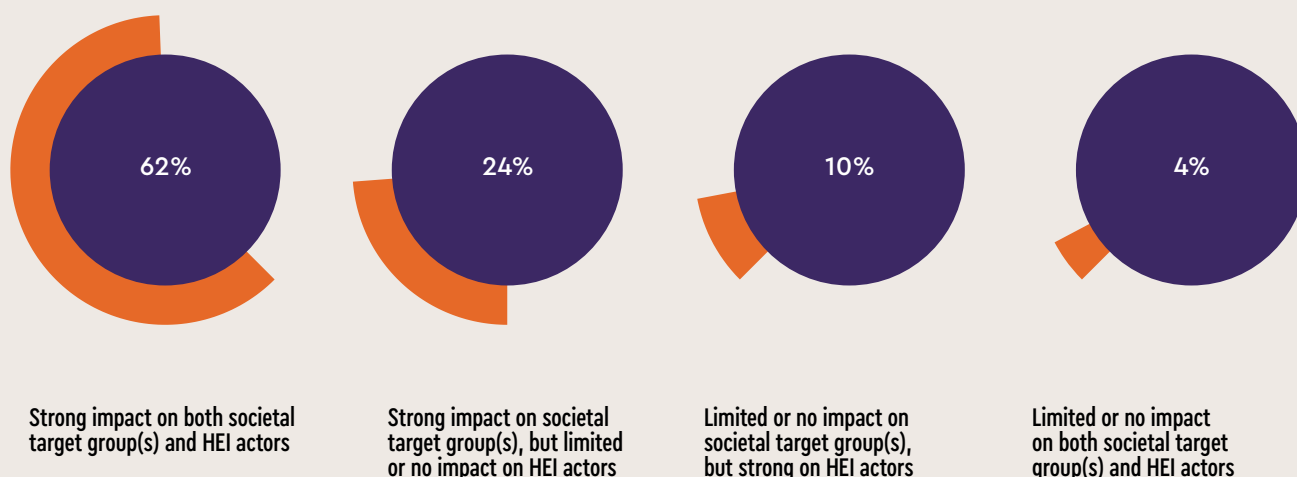
Finally, focus group participants noted the need to connect beyond the research/project level and to work on understanding each other's way of working, in order to discover the best ways to work together, engage each other and raise HE awareness of the benefits of partnering with NGOs, especially when it comes to field expertise. Building trust is crucial, specifically when talking about the recognition of civil society's work. One way of addressing this need could be to **establish ongoing exchange platforms between HEIs and members of civil society working in different fields**, where they can discuss the different areas of work and consequently, match interests.

Almost all of the activities (64 out of the 67 who responded to this question) claim to benefit both society and HEIs.

This is relevant regardless of the type of HEI involvement (holistic, partial or individual) and irrespective of the type of HEI (university, university of applied science, or others) as both society and the HEI (including members such as students, academics, and staff) are reported to benefit from the initiative.

This number has increased from 85% to 95% compared to the previous IHES study (Brandenburg et al., 2020, p. 57).

4.6.2 Perceived impact of the activity



n = 63

Figure 13: Perceived impact

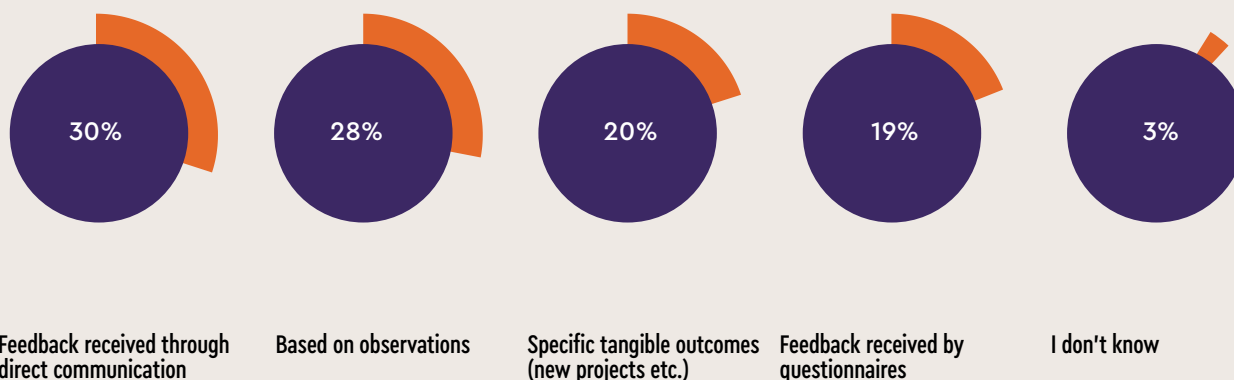
When asked about the strength and scope of the impact, respondents usually responded that this assessment was based on communications with the beneficiaries and their own observations (more on that in the next section).

The impact of the activities was seen as strong on both social target group(s) and HEI actors regardless of the HEI type (university, applied sciences, others) in 62% of the cases. **Activities with a holistic approach to institutional involvement tended to have a strong perceived impact on both social target group(s) and the HEI.** In a limited number of activities, where society is the beneficiary (not the HEI), impact is reported as strong for the target group(s) but limited or inexistant for HEI actors. Where the beneficiaries are society and the HEI, the impact of the activities is reported as strong for both the social target group(s) and HEI actors.

Moving in both directions (HEI to society and vice-versa) has a stronger perceived impact on both social target group(s) and HEI. Those activities also have a stronger impact overall than activities moving in a single direction, be that either from HEI to society or the other way around.

In summary, **the strongest impact is achieved by activities with holistic institutional involvement that benefit both HEIs and society, and where the activity moves in both directions.**

4.6.3 Evidence of impact



n = 63

Figure 14: Evidence of impact

The impact of the activities is evidenced through direct communication and based on observations in two-thirds of the cases. Feedback received by questionnaires and specific tangible outcomes (new projects, etc.) represents around 40% of the cases. While observations and direct communication with stakeholders are necessary for first-hand insights into the progress and impact of the activity, putting **stronger emphasis on more structured types of evaluation might provide better insights and make it easier to monitor** progress over time.

4.6.4 Long-term impact and funding: get everyone on board

Achieving long-lasting change is another challenge that needs to be addressed by NGOs, HEIs and all the education and training stakeholders. At policy level, this goal seems to be gaining momentum with new initiatives (European University Alliances, the new ECHE charter, etc.) with the potential to achieve the impetus required to implement much-needed changes in HEI structures, operations (i.e. community and social outreach) and curricula. Everyone needs to be on board in order to move beyond short-term projects, which usually have limited impact. The focus groups highlighted that the ultimate goal should be to work towards the internationalisation of education and training as a whole, of and for society, so that all education and training levels, types and actors come together to address social issues.

HEIs should strive to support projects and initiatives that aim to unite different sectors. This is now even more relevant in a post-pandemic period that finds different sectors of the population polarised and democratic values endangered (including academic freedom). Projects and initiatives that focus on cross-sectoral and intergenerational dialogue will be key to overcoming the effects of the pandemic and ensuring long-term impact on our social and democratic well-being.

In order to achieve long-term impact, adequate funding is obviously essential. HEIs may find themselves in a more advantageous position than NGOs. As such,

To systematically monitor IHES activities, increasing the feedback received through questionnaires (or other forms of quantitative data) provides more structured data than observations and non-structured feedback alone. It is also useful for advocacy to policy makers when asking for support for successful practices.

they have the capacity to enable internal and external change as well as the responsibility to support their communities and active local organisations. As mentioned earlier, local organisations are best positioned to implement projects and initiatives on the ground, but the support offered to them needs to be reinforced. Many organisations rely on local subsidies to conduct their activities, which does not provide much stability and puts the sustainability of their activities and impact at risk. This is particularly true in the context of the pandemic as NGO funding has been cut in many countries, forcing them to redirect their funding priorities. Local NGOs face the challenges of "how to keep the ball rolling" and how to find resources to make their activities sustainable. HEIs can prove crucial partners in this regard.

Culture plays an important role in internationalisation. In many cases, activities in this area tend to reach people with existing international experience or who come from families who do. Some people may experience prejudice about the value/benefits of international experience. **Therefore, the challenge is for both HEIs and NGOs to convince hard-to-reach people.** Working together (at all levels and all types of education and training and in civil society) will bring about more effective results than working in silos.



Inspiring practices

Citizen Science Talent Programme

International Town and Gown Network

Interfaculty Council for Global Development

The support programme for refugees and people from conflict areas

Banja Luka Pier

Adult Literacy Programme

Public policies for local development

5.1 Citizen Science Talent Programme – the University of Southern Denmark

Goals: Support the SDGs, develop global citizens, support the environment and sustainability, improve the acceptance of scientific results (instead of alternative facts) and critical thinking, support science and knowledge diplomacy/soft power, provide practice-oriented research, knowledge transfer, general education of the public, support active citizenship.

Key HEI actors: International academic staff, Incoming international academics, domestic admin staff, domestic students, international exchange students, international degree students.

Target groups: The general public, school pupils in the HEI country, school teachers, senior citizens.

International dimensions: Outbound voluntary activities by students, research and applied research.

More information: https://mitsdu.dk/en/mit_studie/sdu_talent/talentprogrammer/cs_talent

This course brings local citizen scientists together with international students and researchers at the university. Students learn how to co-create and manage citizen science projects, employ digital media to engage citizens, critically argue for the inclusion of citizens in their field, support the sustainability agenda through citizen engagement, involve their own profession in a cross-disciplinary team and contribute to citizen science research.

These activities contribute to the university's citizen science research and help gain international exposure for the research and local topics. The activities bring research closer to citizens and engage citizens in various fields of research. The fields of research covered by the programme range from public health and nutritional science to historical studies of Danish families and contemporary digital consumption to urban water management, consumption and sustainability. At institutional level, the activity is run by The SDU [University of Southern Denmark] Citizen Science Knowledge Centre and students are awarded 20 ECTS for attending.

5.2 International Town and Gown Network – Stellenbosch University

Goals: Support the SDGs, develop global citizens, support local/regional economy, support the economies of developing countries, knowledge transfer, general education of the public, support active citizenship.

Key HEI actors: International admin staff, the international office.

Target groups: Municipalities, local & regional institutions, civil society representatives & NGOs in the HEI country.

International dimensions: International strategic HEI cooperation, HEI capacity building in developing countries.

More information: <https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=7874>

Within the framework of comprehensive internationalisation at Stellenbosch University (SU), the International Town and Gown Network (a group of twelve universities from across the globe, representing their institutions and the towns where they are located), promotes internationalisation and supports local relationships, social impact and community engagement. This includes the ways in which universities: engage in skills development initiatives to help those recently unemployed or furloughed during COVID-19, practically support public health priorities through means such as COVID testing stations and trialling higher education apps, communication, support and engaging students through peer mentorship and advances in COVID-related research for community benefit. Sharing these practical ways of using civic engagement to support students and other local stakeholders, and approaches to local economic recovery sparked interest in further unpacking this theme at future network meetings. The partner universities are working together to share practices and create a resource hub to help showcase members' innovative approaches to playing an increasingly significant role in advancing their respective local communities. At the HEIs, this work involves international admin staff and the international office. International elements include international strategic HEI cooperation and HEI capacity building for developing countries.

The external target groups are: local municipalities, economic development partners, external community-based organisations and civil society representatives & NGOs in the HEI country.

5.3 Interfaculty Council for Global Development – KU Leuven

Goals: Support the SDGs, develop global citizens, improve the acceptance of scientific results (instead of alternative facts) and critical thinking, provide practice-oriented research, support the economies of developing countries, knowledge transfer.

Key HEI actors: Domestic academic staff, international academic staff, domestic admin staff, the international office.

Target groups: Civil society representatives & NGOs in the HEI country, civil society representatives & NGOs abroad.

International dimensions: Outbound academic mobility, inbound academic mobility, Internationalisation of the Curriculum, international strategic HEI cooperation, HEI capacity building in developing countries, research and applied research, research networks with international partners.

More information: <https://www.kuleuven.be/global/global-development/funding-possibilities/globalminds/multi-stakeholders>

The Interfaculty Council for Development Cooperation created a special call to stimulate multistakeholder-based research by young researchers at KU Leuven. The researchers have to co-create a research line together with a civil society organisation in Belgium and in the Global South, as well as with a researcher from the Global South. Topics have to address a development-relevant problem and one or more SDGs. The programme results in new skills in reflecting on development-relevant issues, in creating multistakeholder partnerships and in co-creating processes. The process of exploring and negotiating each party's needs and visions of knowledge production and the relevance of research, offers a particular learning opportunity. The outputs are a co-developed research proposal in which each party's complementary role is outlined, as well as the synergies that result from cooperation. It results in the concrete implementation of projects that are more socially and locally relevant in the South, as well as in the North. The outcomes are interesting for the civil society partners because they do not merely "receive" or "take up" scientific evidence about a topic, they are actively involved in co-creating it. The same is true for the partners in the Global South. Positive impacts include the creation of a research culture in which social relevance and the participation of non-academic players is developed. Beyond the partnership, the direct beneficiaries in the Global South perceive the impacts of each particular project as more in line with the expectations.

5.4 The support programme for refugees and people from conflict areas – University of Barcelona

Goals: Support social integration, support/preserve peace, fight xenophobia/populism, support the SDGs, develop global citizens, knowledge transfer, general education of the public, support active citizenship.

Key HEI actors: Leadership (e.g. presidents, VPs, deans), domestic academic staff, domestic admin staff, domestic students, international exchange students, international degree students, the international office, the gender and equality office, academic affairs.

Target groups: Student peers and friends, young people in the HEI country, the general public, refugees in the HEI country, refugees abroad, migrants in the HEI country, enterprises/companies, municipalities, local & regional institutions, civil society representatives & NGOs in the HEI country, public service providers (e.g. hospitals) in the HEI country.

International dimensions: International students, international strategic HEI cooperation, HEI capacity building in developing countries.

More information: <http://www.solidaritat.ub.edu/refugees/?lang=en>

The University of Barcelona support programme for refugees and people from conflict areas promotes access to HE for refugee students (in Spain and abroad) and supports their social, educational and economic inclusion. There are five action lines: support for refugees in Spain, a transition course to the university, local support to communities and local administrations, international cooperation projects, solidarity initiatives and participation in key fora. The programme considers the involvement of the university community and local, national and international stakeholders as vital to the achievement of these goals. The flagship "Transition to university course" develops complementary pathways for refugees. The transition course is an official university extension course, co-financed by the UB and the Barcelona City Council. This course is provided free of charge to refugees at the university and facilitates these students' transition into higher education. It offers language training, knowledge of the social and cultural environment in Barcelona, teaches human rights and peace culture, and trains student in the labour market. The course is designed to provide a "soft landing" in the local society and educational system. The scholarship also includes accommodation, private health insurance, psychosocial support, academic orientation, legal support, peer-to-peer mentoring, and opportunities to participate in local and European inclusion projects. The scholarship finishes at the end of the transition course but it can cover the rest of the student's educational project.

5.5. Banja Luka Pier – Norwegian University of Science and Technology, University of Banja Luka, University of Sarajevo, Center for Spatial Research

Goals: Support the SDGs, support the environment & sustainability, provide practice-oriented research and teaching, knowledge transfer, support active citizenship.

Key HEI actors: Domestic academic staff, international academic staff, domestic students, international exchange students.

Target groups: The general public, communities abroad, municipalities, local & regional institutions, civil society representatives & NGOs abroad, public service providers (e.g. hospitals) abroad, students.

International dimensions: Outbound student mobility for studies, outbound student mobility for internships & service learning, outbound academic mobility, inbound student mobility, international students, inbound academic mobility, Internationalisation at Home, Internationalisation of the Curriculum, international strategic HEI cooperation, HEI capacity building in developing countries, research and applied research.

More information: <https://liveprojectsnetwork.org/project/banja-luka-pier/>

The project supports SDGs, environment and sustainability and active citizenship by providing practice-oriented research and knowledge transfer. It primarily involves domestic and international students and academics and a wide range of international elements at all of the HEIs involved and covers everything from outbound students and staff mobility to voluntary activities. It also involves many local and international social groups, such as municipalities, NGOs and public service providers. The project includes research on urban acupuncture, the design of a small urban intervention and its construction (inside a student workshop) at a specific location in a public space. This is one of the first architectural interventions in an open public space on the banks of River Vrbas in Banja Luka. The project therefore received generous attention both from professionals and the general public and has in turn generated a number of other small changes and minor projects elsewhere in the city. More are likely to follow. The physical output is a wooden platform along the river Vrbas, which ends in a landing stage (for traditional boats on the river). It holds additional volumes, which can be used for sitting, tables or backrests, and as a stage. Students learned to work in wood and build foundations. They also experienced, and thus learned, that direct action may be a useful method when authorities refuse to open up public spaces for improvement. Local stakeholders and the general public (re)gained access to a highly valued public space along the river Vrbas. As this was the first student building workshop in a public space in Bosnia and Herzegovina, strong inter-university learning (Norway – BiH) was established with students and local activists showcasing possibilities and therefore opening the field for follow-up projects. The project had paved the way for five more similar projects in Banja Luka (2017–2021) by the date of writing. This project also served as a showcase and reference for Bosnian architects, showing them that there are opportunities to work in their country and highlighting other aspects of an architect's work and social responsibility.



5.6 Adult Literacy Programme – The Zambia Catholic University

Goals: All goals except supporting European identity.

Key HEI actors: Domestic academic staff, international academic staff, domestic students, international degree students.

Target groups: All are either very or moderately relevant except senior citizens.

International dimensions: Outbound student mobility for internships & service learning, inbound academic mobility, inbound administrative staff mobility, Internationalisation at Home.

This programme made participants less dependent on social welfare support by allowing them to gain independence through the acquired skills. These include improving their skills in reading, writing, mathematics and IT. Based on the research carried out by a development studies student, the programme has long lasting positive impact on local participants by helping them improve their self-image and raising their social self-esteem. The programme is supported by the Department of Development Studies, University Student Union, and the Czech Development Agency through the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Zambia.

All IHES goals (except supporting European identity) are very relevant for this activity and the key HEI actors are domestic and international academics and students. International elements include HEI capacity building in developing countries, online teaching and learning with international partners and international study programmes, along with outbound mobility and voluntary activities. A variety of social target groups are reached. For example, student peers and friends, young people at home and abroad, and school pupils.

5.7 Public policies for local development – Universidad Católica de Santa Fe

Goals: All very relevant except support/preserve peace, fight xenophobia/populism, fight radicalisation and support European identity.

Key HEI actors: Everyone in a central or support role, except international admin staff and incoming admin staff.

Target groups: Young people in the HEI country, young people abroad, the general public.

International dimensions: All very relevant except Transnational Education, welcome centres for international scholars or other workforce, and international study programmes.

The university has developed a "Public policies for local development" programme involving the local community. It brought together international academics to give seminars and meet local academics and community players working on health, entrepreneurship, education, mass media and federalism. It found different types of collaboration with the public and private sector and achieved comprehensive internationalisation. The programme comprises agreements with the public sector, industries and civic society and provides a solid basis for the expansion of activities and launching new similar programmes. It involves university staff, school staff, the secretary of science, research and extension, and the international office.

More information: https://www.ellitoral.com/index.php/id_um/177134-cinco-propuestas-para-pensar-el-desarrollo-local-ciclo-de-conferencias-en-la-ucsf-politica.html



Conclusions and recommendations

The findings from the mapping survey show generally positive developments in IHES, especially when compared against the IHES study (Brandenburg et al., 2020) conducted two years before this mapping. If we take these findings as a reference point for the progressive rollout of the activities, we see that every aspect of the IHES Matrix was covered by the projects submitted to a greater extent. This means that IHES activities at HEIs and in society have achieved greater perceived impact and become more embedded, with mutual benefits for both.

The focus groups clearly showed the value respondents place on HEI expertise and international activities, particularly their **international (knowledge) networks and partnerships**, which represent an invaluable resource for both groups to mobilise different actors and levels of society to achieve stronger and longer-term impact regardless of any specific IHES goals. In turn, funding support (in the case of the Catalan authorities) and NGO expertise on the ground is available to HEIs to enhance their work, and both groups are open to further and better cooperation and exchanges on relevant social issues. **Cooperation instead of competition** is one of the messages from the NGO discussions, particularly in times of crisis, like the current pandemic which has aggravated social inequality and highlighted the social challenges that can only be adequately addressed through multi-stakeholder collaboration. Both groups of respondents agree on this. Both focus groups point to the **relevance of IHES ambassadors** in this regard, whether through internationally mobile researchers or researchers with an interest and experience in NGOs.

The recognition (and validation) of the learning outcomes from participation in non-formal learning activities implemented by NGOs is another area where civil society needs to cooperate further, so that HEIs recognise that non-formal learning has its own standards and logic. Cooperation with HEIs could help NGOs establish more structured learning outcomes from the learning experiences they provide as well as the longer-term impact of their educational activities. However, this cannot be achieved if NGOs are not seen as key partners and the skills acquired through non-formal learning are not recognised and valued by HEIs.

Furthermore, and beyond IHES, civil society contributions to the work of HEIs can and do happen indirectly, through their support for HEIs in developing competent professionals and well-rounded, active citizens. Participants noted that people who often follow the traditional learning pathway do not get much hands-on experience. Therefore, the provision of non-formal learning opportunities by NGOs should be seen as a potential new stream for IHES activities in cooperation with NGOs to ensure a practical component in academic paths.

To paraphrase some participants, it is important to remember that HEIs and HE actors are facilitators of interactions, and that HEIs connect all the pieces together – but that they cannot work in silos and should not overlook a lot of the groundwork done by other social players.

The areas where HEIs can improve include: the increased institutional presence of activities combining

service to society and internationalisation to increase positive synergies, instead of competing for resources and recognition. The best way to achieve this is by using holistic approaches that yield more impactful results than scattered individual initiatives. Once this framework is in place, developing monitoring mechanisms and improving the collection of quantitative data is necessary for policy making. Existing local cooperations should be nurtured, but not at the expense of increased outreach to international target groups and partners. Involving partner HEIs in, for example, existing university networks should be beneficial, identifying potential collaborations that would otherwise be hard to detect. Meanwhile, the importance of ongoing data collection, analysis, and the improvement of existing activities, including practitioner networking and exchanges of experience, should not be underestimated.

Our partners will develop new activities and overarching IHES guidelines in the upcoming phases of the project, to tackle the needs described above.

In parallel, a network of IHES-friendly institutions, practitioners and researchers will be established to solidify cooperation, streamline communication, and provide an exchange platform for future cooperation. With a substantive theoretical background and accumulated experience, IHES activities are expected to bring valuable benefits to HEIs, other institutions and society at large.

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