Global Transformation in IARU Member Strategies – Draft Concept Paper

Introduction

Global Transformation (GT) is a new term which tries to capture the dynamic shifts from a bipolar to a globalized world. While until recently the world was divided between the rich “North” and the poor “South”, this dichotomy no longer reflects the political and economic conditions of the world around us. Subsequently, universities do no longer either belong to the “developed” or the “developing” world, nor do categories such as “established” versus “emerging” universities mirror a clear-cut geographical or geopolitical reality. Most emerging economies, such as the BRICS, face within their countries a wide variety of economic conditions and a broad range of quality standards in Research and Higher Education (R&HE).

In national policies (such as in Switzerland) the shift from a bipolar to a multipolar world is reflected in moving from “development cooperation” to “international cooperation” or “global cooperation”. At the international level the current transition from the “Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)” to the “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” reveals the same conceptual (and operational) shift.

So far there has been little debate how universities respond to this transition. IARU is in a privileged position to reflect its respective experiences and share them in a position paper – similar to the IARU Position Paper on “The Knowledge Ecosystem – Measuring the Value of Research Intensive Universities”. Analogous to the key activity on the value of research intensive universities, the GT position paper should be complemented by a collection of best practices of various IARU members and supported by conceptual key documents (literature review). Ultimately, the ambition is to agree on a core commitment in relation to the GT paradigm, and possibly provide guidelines similar to the IARU “Green Guide for Universities”.

Objective

The objective of the concept paper is to define the collective IARU position and commitment to address the challenges of global transformation. It provides management, international offices or other relevant units of IARU members with reflections and arguments on the collaboration with partner institutions in developing countries or emerging economies.

Basic considerations

Asymmetric partnerships

The paradigm shift of a bipolar world to a globalized world has implications on universities. In the past, the bi-polar world has often resulted in two types of international relations at the academic level: peer-to-peer relations with similar “established” universities in the “North”, and largely asymmetric

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1 The participants in the GT learning initiative agreed to use this term as an appropriate novel expression of today’s geopolitical environment.

A recent example of using the term in the sense of the GT initiative: https://www.bonn-conference.net/
partnerships with institutions in developing countries (“emerging” universities). Such asymmetric “North-South” relations traditionally have been driven by researchers in the North interested in development or (tropical) environment specific topics; they have largely been triggered by humanitarian motives and incentives; and they have been supported through funding of development cooperation agencies. Often, researchers from the North have been dominant in agenda setting and in providing the resources, leading to asymmetric power relations and dependencies. This description of conventional “North-South” relations, however, primarily reflects a Euro-centric world view. IARU is well set to balance this view with complementary perspectives.

Neoliberal world-view
Globalization is largely driven by the paradigm of free trade and economic growth. The internationalization of the academic world takes place in this neoliberal context. For the survey on relations of IARU members with “developing countries” and “emerging economies”, they were defined as countries included in the DAC List of ODA Recipients. While this pragmatic approach facilitates the classification and communication on the meaning of GT in our context, it reveals the underlying assumption that the economic indicator GNI/capita is an adequate approximation to assess the R&HE landscape of a country. It remains to be discussed whether this economic world-view appropriately captures the relevant dimensions of research and education.

Motivations
The objectives and expectations of collaborating with partners in developing countries and emerging economies are manifold. The main incentive is a genuine academic interest and the opportunity to gain diverse perspectives on scientific problems. It enhances the possibilities of ensuring that scientific knowledge generated at the universities address and provide solutions to the grand global challenges. It enables researchers to address topics specific to the environment and resources of developing countries and emerging economies. At the faculty level, it opens new perspectives and access to data that are otherwise not accessible.

At the institutional level, it opens new academic markets to attract good doctoral and postdoctoral students. In addition, it is a good opportunity for the university to contribute to their corporate responsibility. While recruiting good students from developing countries and emerging economies may be criticized as brain-drain or “war” for talents, it contributes to capacity building of these candidates in the humanitarian tradition of development cooperation.

If students are involved in such collaborations, their intercultural competences are strengthened and they learn to organize themselves in a challenging environment. They are exposed to different social realities and get engaged in activities that may raise their awareness and increase their social sensitivity.

Beyond the benefit to the individual researcher or student or the university as an institution, the collaboration with partners in developing countries and emerging economies is a contribution to science diplomacy, often in environments where other political instruments are less promising. It may also pave the way for industry relations and open future markets, in particular through establishing alumni networks.

New opportunities
Under the influence of globalization, the focus of partnerships with universities in emerging and developing countries is shifting. As developing countries and emerging economies are investing into
strengthening their academic institutions, the number of potential partners – and at the same time competing institutions is growing.

Chameau (2013)\(^2\) argues that such partnerships can bring benefits to both sides:

- Established universities bring experience and reputation while emerging universities bring the energy of a ‘start-up’ along with resources.
- Established universities can accelerate their discoveries through expanded resources and emerging universities gain the experience and credibility of the network.

While the interaction between “established” and “emerging” universities may not be entirely symmetric, it can provide a win-win situation\(^3\). As IARU is not threatened by competition from “emerging” universities, it can benefit from their fresh spirit and from increased diversity of its knowledge ecosystem.\(^4\) In addition, IARU can demonstrate that it takes its commitment to global responsibility seriously, beyond immediate short-term economic or scientific benefits.

IARU is an alliance of global universities. It integrates universities from different geopolitical, cultural and historical backgrounds. In view of the increasing importance and dynamic shifts in weight between different world regions, IARU is an ideal platform for finding the right balance between striving for excellence and exclusivity among peers and recognition of potential benefits of greater inclusion, fresh insights and increased awareness – the energy of a ‘start-up’ along with resources.

**Expected outcomes**

The scope of this initiative covers research and education, such as individual or institutional research collaborations, country-specific programs, educational programs, capacity building or student exchange. The expected outcome of the IARU initiative is to share and discuss experiences on engaging with emerging and developing countries at the institutional level, identify best practices and areas where we can work together, and develop a set of guidelines to serve the IARU community.

More specifically, the GT initiative intends to:

- Implement ambitious mission statements

  In their mission statements, all IARU member universities somehow refer to “making a better world” and “contributing to the solution of global challenges and problems”. Global transformation relates directly to these statements by faculty collaboration with partners in regions where these challenges are most pertinent. A joint IARU statement would add value to the discourse on global transformation in the higher education landscape.

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\(^3\) Chameau (l.c.): “… a new paradigm within the research environment that goes beyond the more classical forms of interaction. … They can offer win-win solutions through collaborative-competition among not only well-established universities, but also between them and emerging institutions, fostering the pursuit of excellence among all the partners. Not all these partnerships will produce world-changing scientific results, but I can assure you that they will succeed in fostering understanding among diverse communities. We live in a world where civility and respect for the ideas of others are sometimes forgotten and replaced by division and destruction. These scientific networks can only benefit understanding and mutual respect, especially through the multiplier effect provided by the young people who participate in these ventures.”

\(^4\) Innovation towards ensuring our shared sustainable future is no longer confined to conventional sites of global research leadership, but is emerging across the globe. ([Going Global 2016](http://www.kaust.edu.sa/speeches/2013-oct-9.html))
- **Increase awareness of drivers and motivations**
  The initiative should spark interest and leverage the topic in the home institutions and within IARU. It should identify incentives and convey arguments to researchers and university leaders as to why one should invest in the collaboration with developing countries.

- **Overcome asymmetries**

- **Expand and refresh the knowledge and innovation ecosystem**
  In line with the IARU position on the Value of Research Intensive Universities the GT initiative promotes diversifying the IARU knowledge ecosystem by deliberately valuing the fresh spirit of “emerging” universities in research collaboration and student exchange as additional asset.

- **Use the IARU member capability for long-term commitment**
  IARU can build on multiple sustained collaborations of its members with key institutions around the world. It can capitalize on the experiences achieved over years and decades to strengthen its collective network.

- **Establish a world-wide network of future leaders**
  Today, most universities in developing countries and emerging economies are embedded in a wide network of researchers in the diaspora, including at IARU universities. IARU members can build on this (formal or) informal network of faculty with strong linkages in the societies of their home countries. *Vice versa*, IARU alumni may occupy key positions in the public or private sector of their home countries which can open promising opportunities.

- **Capitalize on the integration of UCT as new IARU member**
  With the IARU membership of UCT as of 2016, the first member of the “Global South” will have a voice at the IARU table. This will bring fresh perspectives to the IARU discussion and (presumably) strengthen the GT world-view.

- **Leverage funding from external sources**
  Mobilising funds for collaboration with developing countries often remains a challenge. IARU members are particularly interested in sharing experiences on this issue. It would be desirable if the initiative would help attract additional funding, e.g. from the private sector or development agencies. Joint efforts and liaisons between IARU members may be an advantage in the acquisition of external resources.

Ultimately, these outcomes can be summarized in two overarching goals:

- **Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), specifically 4 and 17**
  Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

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5 KFPE: Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries
6 http://www.iaruni.org/institutional-joint-working/value-of-research-intensive-universities/knowledge-ecosystem
Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

- **Strengthening a new narrative on global transformation**

IARU has the opportunity to introduce the concept “Global Transformation” in the discourse on the internationalization of research and higher education. It can shape the discussion on the inclusion of developing countries and emerging economies in forward-looking university partnerships.

**Concerted action**

**Starting point**

Most IARU members have a reference to “global responsibility” in their mission statement, though not specifically addressing the collaboration with developing countries. Many IARU members have strong programs in or with Africa, as well as with China and India. Within IARU universities the majority of activities with developing countries or emerging economies is highly decentralized and therefore not easy to capture. According to the survey of spring 2015, IARU members are active in 90 of the 149 DAC list countries. Most activities are with partners in East and South Asian countries.

While the survey showed a broad range of approaches and instruments applied by IARU universities, it did neither reveal clear patterns of activities or regional priorities, nor obvious differences between IARU members from Asia, Europe or the USA. It reflected the decentralized nature and diversity of contacts with developing countries and emerging economies.

Concerted action of the GT learning initiative will be implemented in three fields: (i) conceptual guidance, (ii) exchange of experiences and mutual learning, and (iii) joint action and instruments.

**Conceptual guidance**

The current draft concept paper is meant as preliminary work towards a final position paper on “Facing Global Transformation”. The paper should provide guiding principles, and include a vision and mission statement related to GT. It should show how GT principles are inherent in addressing global challenges.

The position paper will follow the model of the IARU Position Paper on “The Knowledge Ecosystem – Measuring the Value of Research Intensive Universities”. Analogous to the key activity on the value of research intensive universities, the GT position paper should be complemented by a collection of best practices of various IARU members and supported by conceptual key documents (literature re-
view). Ultimately, the ambition is to agree on a core commitment in relation to the GT paradigm, and possibly provide guidelines similar to the IARU “Green Guide for Universities”.

**Exchange of experiences and mutual learning**

At their first meeting in May 2015 the IARU GT officers agreed to maintain their exchange of experiences and mutual learning. They want to continue with regular, structured meetings of the working group as forums for discussion and as sharing opportunities. This regular exchange may finally result in a think-tank function on GT issues for the benefit of IARU.

The group expects added value from information sharing and pooling of experiences in facing common challenges. The IARU GT officers anticipate that this exchange and mutual learning may lead to leveraging connections of members. At the practical level, the exchange may lead to the coordination of activities or concerted action by IARU member universities who work in the same country, e.g. in Myanmar or in specific African countries. They may share their knowhow and pool their resources.

The group highly welcomes the admittance of UCT as new IARU member and expects an additional authentic perspective to dealing with GT.

**Joint action and instruments**

- **Tools for capturing and promoting GT data**

  All IARU members, who participated in the survey on their relations with developing countries and emerging economies, had difficulties to acquire the requested data, and in many institutions the data was not available in the form needed. International offices often do not have full knowledge of the wide range of decentralised activities of individual chairs.

  Hence, we suggest exploring options of databases on the international relations of each IARU member. The International Knowledge Base IKB\(^\text{10}\) of ETH Zurich may serve as an example. It contains information on ETH Zurich’s international contacts, exchange programmes and collaboration links. The web platform features a global report (public) and detailed reports which are available per country, institution, department and professor for ETH members only.

- **Synergy with the Global Summer Program (GSP)\(^\text{11}\)**

  GT, in essence, complements other IARU initiatives, and aligns rather nicely with the Global Summer Program, which is aimed at fostering leadership and global engagement among the younger generations by creating opportunities through our summer programs for students from this group of leading research universities to come together, and to live and learn together. While GSP courses vary in content and approaches, they are guided by common principles, among them the importance of student engagement with critical issues of the 21\(^\text{st}\) century. Many also extend the learning opportunities beyond the classroom to include service and other forms of experiential learning. More recently, some GSP partners have also provided internship and research-centered initiatives as part of the program.

  While GSP has been extremely successful in realizing its stated objectives, it is also constrained by the nature of the IARU alliance. Despite the fact that many of the critical issues of the 21\(^\text{st}\) century involve the global south, the latter is not represented within the alliance. Essential voices and perspectives, thus, are missing from the discourse.

\(^{10}\) [https://www.bi.id.ethz.ch/ikb/](https://www.bi.id.ethz.ch/ikb/)

\(^{11}\) [http://www.iaruni.org/gsp](http://www.iaruni.org/gsp)
The Global Transformation initiative aims to fill this intellectual gap. Though details remain to be fully flushed out, GT’s most significant contribution is the centrality that it places on the global south, not only as the subject of, but also a partner in, our global engagement. Expanding this circle of partnership will allow GSP to evolve to the next level of engagement.

The GT working group has also anticipated the funding challenge, particularly as it pertains to the affordability of program for students from the global south, and noted that collective fundraising (through joint proposals to corporations etc.) may be necessary.

- **Synergy with the Global Cross-Disciplinary Tournament (GXT)**
  Global Cross-Disciplinary Tournament is a student-run competition among students of IARU institutions. The last tournament was hosted by the Australian National University in 2014.

  The GT working group considers the GXT to be favorable in promoting student initiatives and engagements between students from different cultural backgrounds and societal realities. With the University of Cape Town joining the IARU network, the GT working group wishes to recommend enhancing the GXT in a manner that allows global transformation at the student level. The GT working group suggests that the student association in charge of organizing the next GXT may consider devoting the tournament to the subject of global transformation. A possible topic could be “The Future of a Global Society”.

- **Philanthropic funding for scholarships**
  Similar to the support by Santander to the GSP, it would be desirable if the initiative would help attract additional funding, e.g. from the private sector or development agencies. Joint efforts and liaisons between IARU members may be an advantage in the acquisition of external resources.

- **Links with leading institutions in the “South” or affiliated alliances**
  Starting points could be existing programs of IARU members with which other IARU members may want to liaise, or regional alliances such as continental Academies of Sciences or university alliances.

  Joint activities with such institutions may e.g. comprise field courses or postdoc programs.

- **Ethical standards for international collaborations**
  International collaboration, particularly with new partners in unfamiliar countries, requires a high degree of sensitivity to cultural and ethical norms and diverse political and legal environments. We therefore suggest that IARU agrees on a model text on ethical standards for international collaborations which can be adopted by or adjusted to the specific conditions of the IARU members or their collaborating partners.

  Examples are the KFPE’s Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships - 11 Principles & 7 Questions mentioned above, or the “Code of Conduct for scientific cooperation of ETH Zurich” adopted in 2014.

- **Presidents’ Statement**
  Analogous to the Presidents’ Statement on sustainability we suggest developing a short statement of GT commitment of the IARU Presidents.

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12 [http://www.iaruni.org/gei/gxt](http://www.iaruni.org/gei/gxt)
Commitment of funding

The statement may include a voluntary commitment of funding for GT specific activities, e.g. in the order of 1% of the university budget, or the rate of 0.7% as the recommended UN target on ODA spending, or the equivalent of the home country commitment of each IARU member.

Mandatory progress reports

Similar to the Individual Campus Sustainability Reports we finally suggest uniform reporting of GT related activities and commitments to be shared among all IARU members.

Next steps

The GT working group wants to pursue the implementation of the measures suggested above. All participants of the first workshop in May 2015 are committed to continue their collaboration and to convert the recommendations in tangible outcomes.

As a first step the group asks for reactions and comments by the SOM to revise the current concept paper before the PM in spring 2016. The revised version will serve not only as input for the PM, but also as basis for a session proposed to the Going Global Conference 2016, which coincidently will take place back-to-back to the scheduled workshop in Cape Town in May 2016. The GT working group has submitted this idea for the 10th IARU anniversary competition (Annex).

More concrete steps will be agreed at a workshop in May 2016 at UCT, for which the GT group requests IARU funding. The group will prioritize the list of joint action and instruments and will elaborate a plan for implementation.

It is intended to nominate a smaller working group for regular communication and interaction. The current project coordinator volunteers to continue steering the process of preparing guidelines and other documents as suggested. The individual members of the GT group will advocate the implementation of measures within their own universities.

The expected outcome is twofold:

On the one hand, we envision a final position paper on “Facing Global Transformation”, providing guiding principles and including a vision and mission statement related to GT. It should be complemented by a collection of best practices of various IARU members and supported by a literature review.

On the other hand, the ambition is to agree on a core commitment in relation to the GT paradigm. For this purpose the group will explore the potential for joint commitment to the activities listed above or voluntary agreement on selected measures by individual IARU members – similar to the commitment the IARU sustainability initiative.

The expected time-frame is to submit a plan of concerted action for approval to the SOM 2016 / PM 2017.

The drafting committee:
Barbara BECKER (Project coordinator), ETH Zurich
Kiichi FUJIWARA, The University of Tokyo
Helle SAMUELSSEN, University of Copenhagen
Khatharya UM, UC Berkeley