

# INTERNATIONALISING STUDENTS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES

by **Hendrik Jan Hobbes** (EP-Nuffic)

In February 2015, Nuffic published a report on the potential for offering students an international experience at their host institution in the Netherlands. According to the outcomes, many institutions are currently still exploring the options while their lecturers do not always feel up to the challenge. As a part of the 'Internationalisation at Home' (IaH) initiative, various online projects aimed at stimulating collaboration between students from various countries are currently being established.

International and intercultural competences are a necessity rather than a luxury. This applies to all students, including those that do not go abroad as a part of their studies. In order to address this need, higher education institutions offer a range of 'Internationalisation at Home' activities: English-language components, international curriculum subjects or international projects. A large portion of these activities will already be familiar: the reading of foreign literature and deployment of foreign lecturers and Dutch lecturers with experience abroad.

Internationalisation of the curriculum is less widely accepted. This concerns the joint development of curricula as well as virtual mobility and online projects. The potential of these developments is still relatively untapped, although we are seeing a surprising number of initiatives in the area of virtual mobility. These are generally comprised of two variants: joint education (such as MOOCs) and collaboration on online projects.

Thanks to teleconferencing, students can debate one another from any location, and attend international guest lectures. This method is also used to improve English language skills, and applied in online negotiation and simulation games. Institutions are currently developing a wide range of initiatives in this area. For example, Leiden University organised a pilot to assess the potential of SPOCs (Small Private Online Courses) in 2014. In contrast to MOOCs, these courses are structured on the basis of limited enrolment, pre-selected participants, limited group sizes and intensive supervision.

Other examples include The Hague University of Applied Sciences, which set up a course on online entrepreneurship and marketing in collaboration with two institutions from Finland and Turkey in 2012, based on a mix of blended learning, virtual mobility and physical mobility. Tilburg University developed the 'Link Class' project: students consult and collaborate with their Peruvian counterparts to create a product in virtual teams.

Although the range of virtual mobility formats is still limited, the ongoing initiatives are both innovative and qualitative. These initiatives also tend to be recent, and developments in the field are continuing at a rapid pace. This type of IaH will undoubtedly come to play an increasingly important role in the internationalisation of higher education.

## Further information:

[www.nuffic.nl/nieuws/nuffic-news/kenniscirculatie-over-internationalisation-at-home-van-start/](http://www.nuffic.nl/nieuws/nuffic-news/kenniscirculatie-over-internationalisation-at-home-van-start/)

