

# INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME: POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PERSPECTIVES FROM THE GLOBAL NORTH AND SOUTH

## INTERNACIONALIDADE EM CASA: POLÍTICAS, PRÁTICAS E PERSPECTIVAS DO GLOBAL NORTE E DO GLOBAL SUL

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**Abstract:** *The internationalization of higher education has become a criterion of quality in the evaluation of higher education institutions, and it has been linked to mobility, focusing on the exchange of students and academics, as well as on bilateral agreements seeking to promote joint-doctoral programmes and research networks. In 2018, a Brazilian university, the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) was the recipient of resources to implement actions focusing on improving its internationalisation levels from a specific funding line called CAPES-PrInt, which was implemented by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education, Brazilian Ministry of Education and Culture. It is within this context that a comparative research collaboration has developed between PUCRS, Brazil and Newcastle University, United Kingdom. In this article we report on a process and methodology to review and revise current policies, practices and perspectives at PUCRS for Internationalisation at Home, developed during a research partnership with Newcastle University.*

**Keywords:** *Internationalization at Home. Mobility. Capes-PrInt.*

**Resumo:** *A internacionalização do ensino superior tornou-se um critério de qualidade na avaliação das instituições de ensino superior, estando associada à mobilidade, com foco no intercâmbio de estudantes e acadêmicos, bem como em acordos bilaterais que visam a promoção de programas de doutoramento conjunto e de redes de pesquisa. Em 2018, uma universidade brasileira, a Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS), foi uma das receptoras de recursos para implementar ações com foco na melhoria de seus níveis de internacionalização a partir de uma linha de financiamento específica chamada CAPES-PrInt, que foi implementada pela Coordenação de Melhoria do Ensino Superior, Ministério da Educação e Cultura do Brasil. É dentro desse contexto que a colaboração em pesquisa comparativa tem se desenvolvido entre a PUCRS do Brasil e a Universidade de Newcastle do Reino Unido. Neste artigo, são discutidos processos e metodologias para revisar as políticas, práticas e perspectivas atuais desenvolvidas na PUCRS para Internacionalização em Casa em parceria com a Universidade de Newcastle.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Internacionalização em Casa. Mobilidade Acadêmica. Capes-PrInt.*

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## Introduction

The internationalization of higher education has become a criterion of quality in the evaluation of higher education institutions, and it has normally been linked to mobility, focusing on the exchange of students and academics, as well as on bilateral agreements seeking to promote joint-doctoral programmes and research networks. However, Morosini, Corte and Guilherme (2017) analysed the scenario of HE in Brazil and established that only 2% of the 168,000 graduates in 2013 had an international experience while studying. Thus, the socioeconomic conditions of Brazilian students present a serious challenge to opportunities the internationalization through mobility, requiring a reconceptualization of how achieved in the country, and indeed in other countries in the Global South.

It is within this context that the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) has pursued actions to encourage and improve its levels of internationalisation, such as through Internationalisation at Home (IaH) and Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC). IaH has been recognised as a means to enable all staff and students, particularly the non-mobile majority, to have an internationalised university experience by the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the academic and social experiences offered at the university (ATIAH, 2018).

PUCRS is located in the capital, Porto Alegre, of the most southern state in Brazil, namely Rio Grande do Sul, bordering Argentina and Uruguay. The city of Porto Alegre has a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.805 (2010) placing it in the highest tier of the Human Development Index, above Brazil's overall HDI of 0.765 (2020), which places the country in the second highest tier.

As already mentioned, PUCRS has invested continuously in the internationalisation of its postgraduate programmes, and this has been done mainly by way of developing research projects in cooperation with institutions abroad, and through academic mobility (i.e. staff and students). PUCRS has the best evaluation for postgraduate courses in the country according to the national body responsible for this (i.e. CAPES - the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education, Brazilian Ministry of Education and Culture).

However, in the case of undergraduate students, investments for mobility are very scarce, and today less than 0.5% of PUCRS undergraduate students have access to such opportunities. Between 2011 and 2015, the Brazilian Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Technology had a research and mobility programme, which awarded more than a hundred thousand scholarships to Brazilian students to spend a year abroad. This programme was cancelled in 2015. Thus, since 2016 and given that mobility is not a favoured option, PUCRS has sought to implement actions that promote Internationalisation at Home (IaH) so as to provide its students with an international experience.

In 2018, PUCRS was the recipient of additional resources to implement actions focusing on improving its internationalisation levels from a specific funding line called CAPES-PrInt (i.e. Programme for Internationalisation), which was implemented by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education, Brazilian Ministry of Education and Culture.

## Capes-print programme

This programme CAPES-PrInt selected 36 Brazilian universities out of almost 300 applications, to implement projects to develop and improve their internationalisation levels. These universities are ranked top in the country and will share R\$ 300 million (about 50 million euros at current exchange rates) over a period of 5 years – originally, the programme was meant to last for 4 years but due to very recent budgetary constraints it was expanded to 5 years. In connection with this, PUCRS was the recipient of R\$ 25 million (about 4 million euros at current exchange rates).

Baeta (2018), the former president of CAPES, affirmed that “the great advantage of the PrInt is that the institution receives the funding and has all freedom to define on how to use it: if it will implement fellowships, if it will send academics abroad, if it will attract visiting scholars, and the events it will organise”. PUCRS has developed a comprehensive internationalisation strategy and

its website publicises open-calls to current fellowships (e.g. travel fellowships, visiting professor fellowships) and the objectives of the programme, which are to:

- Foster the construction, implementation and consolidation of strategic plans for internationalization of the institutions contemplated in the areas of knowledge they prioritize;
- Stimulate the formation of international research networks with a view to improving the quality of academic production linked to postgraduate studies;
- Expand the actions to support internationalization in the postgraduate courses of the contemplated institutions;
- Promote the mobility of lecturers and students, with emphasis on doctoral students, postdoctoral students, Brazilian lecturers abroad and foreign lecturers in Brazil, linked to stricto sensu postgraduate programs with international cooperation;
- Foster the transformation of participating institutions into an international environment;
- Integrate other CAPES development actions into the internationalization effort. (cf. PUCRS, 2019)

## Researching the internationalisation process

It is within this context that a strong research partnership has developed between PUCRS, Brazil and Newcastle University (NU), United Kingdom. The relationship between these two institutions is not recent, and contacts and projects have been developing for more than six years.

Two relevant research exchanges took place in the recent past. The first one, in April 2016, with the visit of professors from the departments of education and languages to NU, and the second by colleagues from NU to PUCRS in that same year. Then in 2017, the British Council through its Capacity Building & Internationalization for Higher Education Program awarded Newcastle University and PUCRS with a small grant to continue developing their partnership.

The initiative focused on “Developing an institutional strategy and practical framework for internationalisation of the curriculum”. It involved staff from the Education, Languages and Business Studies courses at PUCRS. As a result of all these encounters and developments, PUCRS has become very interested in IaH, and reflected deeply upon possibilities to provide intercultural and international experiences for both students and staff in Higher Education through innovative curricula but also through the broader university experience.

These visits enabled colleagues from both institutions to co-author articles presented at a symposium at the European Educational Research Association (EERA) annual conference in September 2018, and later published in a special edition of the European Educational Research Journal (Almeida et al, 2019), co-edited by Robson and Wihlborg (2019). The Brazilian team was also present at the final conference for the Approaches and Tools for Internationalisation at Home (ATIAH) project, which took place in Bolzano, Italy, in September 2018.

The ATIAH Project was an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education (2016-1-UK01-KA203-024354) project involving led by Newcastle University, in partnership with KU Leuven, Belgium, and Università do Bologna, Italy. The prime aim of the ATIAH project was to improve the relevance and quality of higher education by developing tools for higher education institutions wishing to review and improve their IaH practices.

Following the implementation of the CAPES-PrInt programme at PUCRS, further opportunities to consolidate the partnership with NU have arisen. In 2019, Professor Sue Robson, who was the principal investigator of the ATIAH project, visited PUCRS for the third time for a period of 15 days, during which a Workshop on IaH took place. Thus, in May 2019, PUCRS and NU jointly promoted the *Internationalisation at Home – I@H: Perspectives for Undergraduate Studies Workshop*, involving 120 academic staff and students from PUCRS as well as from interested parties from other Brazilian universities.

The workshop and ensuing dialogue around IaH was considered a success by both PUCRS and NU, so much so that in October 2019, the research team from PUCRS visits NU through the CAPES-PrInt programme, to further develop the dialogue and conceptualisations of IaH and to further

consider the relevance of the ATIAH project methodology as a means to evaluate and progress the development of internationalization at PUCRS, and indeed the Global South more broadly.

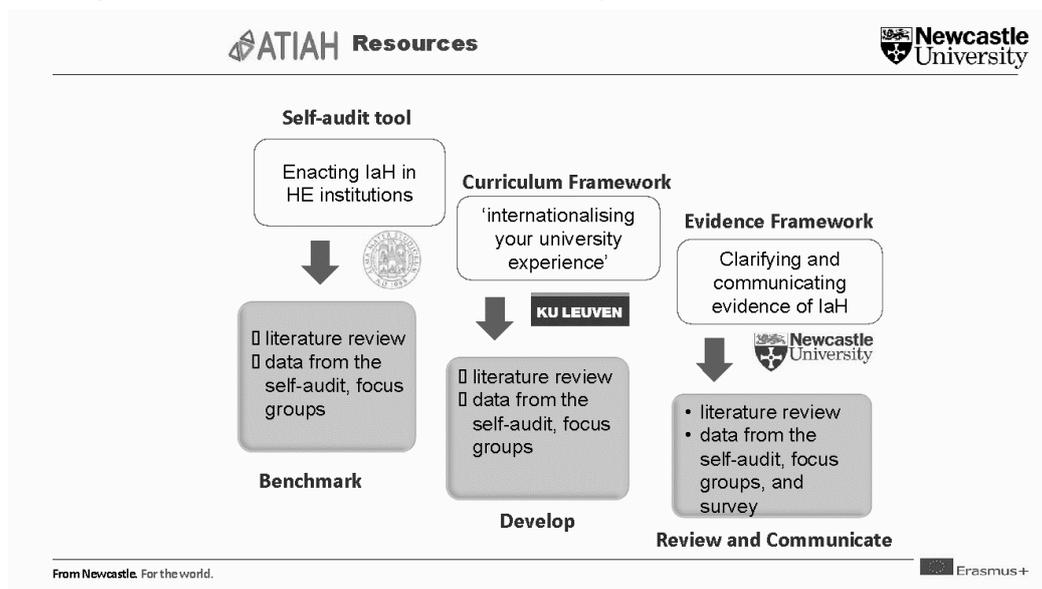
## Methodology: ATIAH

The methodology developed in the ATIAH project was designed to assist educators, students, staff development and professional service units, and those in leadership positions in HE institutions to review and improve their IaH practices (ATIAH, 2018). The rationale behind ATIAH is that the benefits of an internationalised university experience should not be limited to the internationally-mobile minority. The goal is to provide inclusive internationalized university experiences that benefit all students, and, to provide a stepping-stone to institutional agendas that promote internationalization for all (DE WIT & JONES, 2018, cited in ALMEIDA at al., 2019). This might be achieved by:

- Exploring and developing ways of integrating a global dimension into curriculum design and content;
- Auditing institutional policies and practices for IaH;
- Evidencing and communicating/celebrating innovative IaH practices and experiences.

It is important to emphasise that the ATIAH tools (Figure 1) are not intended to be prescriptive, but rather that they were designed to support the identification and promotion of priorities for IaH development to meet local needs.

**Figure 1.** ATIAH Resources – Newcastle University



Source: ATIAH (2018).

## Reference document for the internationalisation and interculturality of undergraduate curriculum

It is important to note that PUCRS had already developed strategies for internationalisation at undergraduate level, presented in the document “*Documento de Referência para a Internacionalização e Interculturalidade nos Currículos de Graduação (DRIICG)*” (i.e. Reference Document for the Internationalisation and Interculturality of Undergraduate Curriculum), whose objectives are:

- Promote the planning and implementation of an internationalised curricula in undergraduate courses at all PUCRS academic units.

- Establish guidelines for the creation of an international curriculum academic activities.
- Align international curricular academic activities with the University's strategic projects and other practices already developed by PUCRS's academic and administrative units.
- Disseminate good internationalization practices in order to provide intercultural experiences for all undergraduate students and not just those who have individual experiences abroad.

DRIICG describes various ways of implementing actions focusing on the internationalisation of undergraduate courses, which are described in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.** International and Intercultural Activities for Undergraduate Curriculum at PUCRS



Source: DRIICG (2017).

### Workshop internationalisation at home – cases from pucrs

the workshop at PUCRS facilitated the sharing of experiences of internationalisation practices for undergraduate courses, with dialogue and reflections on each case through the lens of IaH that contributed to the developing conceptualisation of IaH at PUCRS. The Table 1 compiles all the cases discussed at the workshop.

**Table 1.** Workshop IaH – Cases from PUCRS

Activity	Department	Case
Discipline offered in English	Creative Writing	1. Creative Writing beyond borders: undergraduate and online courses
Taking part in International Academic Competitions	Law	2. International Arbitrage Team representing PUCRS
	Business Studies and Engineering	3. ActinSpace: international interdisciplinary experience - space application hackathon
	Engineering	4. Eco Racing e Ximango Aerodesign: reduction in fossil fuel consumption
Interaction with Professionals in non-Brazilian contexts through the use of digital technologies	Business Studies	5. Becoming acquainted with business models in Brazil and the world: the experience of students of the discipline Digital Business
	Teacher Training	6. Experience of IaH: Non-formal spaces in Education
Interaction with Visiting Scholars from Abroad (in loco)	English	7. Experience of IaH in the Department of English
Presence of international students at PUCRS	Cinema	8. Experiences of Spanish speaking students in the discipline of Audio-visual production.
	Various departments	9. Programa G-PG (i.e. Programme Postgrad-Undergrad), enabling undergrad students to do postgrad disciplines.

Interaction with students from partner HEIs through digital technologies	Public Relations	10. Elaboration of plans for press releases for International NGOs: This is a partnership between PUCRS and British universities.
Short courses taught by international visiting scholars	Gastronomy	11. Harmonising Wine, Cheese and Chocolate. Taught by an Italian Institution.
Promotion of Summer and Winter short courses aimed to international students.	Medicine	12. Internationalisation at the School of Medicine. Attracting Latin American students to Summer and Winter courses at PUCRS.
Interaction with Alumini in the discipline International Careers (in loco)	Engineering	13. Conversations with Alumini in the course of International Careers

Source: Workshop I@H PUCRS, 2019.

All these cases are very interesting, and we could discuss them at great length. However, among them, the following stand out because of the direct involvement of international partners and HEIs in undergraduate courses at PUCRS: i. consideration of global problems by way of discussing disputes between international companies and arbitration processes in the area of Law; ii. the synchronous participation of local students in international hackathons, as promoted by the French Space Agency, with countries of five continents, which was described by the Engineering and Business departments; iii. the activities with guidance of international lectures by videoconference in the area of education; iv. short courses taught by international visiting scholars at the Department of Gastronomy.

## Case 2 (Table 1)

This case presented by PUCRS International Arbitration Team from the Law school involved a team of students study concepts and processes of international law and business law through the perspective of arbitration. Students discussed real cases involving disputes between international companies and simulated arguments for the case from the perspective of all involved, as well as envisaging the role of the referee to facilitate the construction of possible agreements. In order to participate in international competitions, students receive the cases, the rules and prior agreements governing the relations between the companies involved in the dispute; they are also ascribed the role of representing a particular company in the competition. Students formulate their arguments from studies and discussions with their local lecturer and mentors from partner universities in the United States. In these international competitions, PUCRS students have the opportunity to interact with other students from various universities from around the world.

## Case 3 (Table 1)

This case highlighted PUCRS' participation in the international Actinspace event, which presents global problems and provides patents from the European Space Agency (ESA) and French Space Agency (CNES) for the creation of space technology solutions. The event takes place simultaneously at accredited venues in 35 countries. Student form small teams, providing local students with the opportunity to engage in global problem solving, utilising new technologies to develop solutions. PUCRS' Business Studies, Computer Science and Engineering students have participated of this event in past years. The best placed team in each country has the possibility to participate in the world final in France.

## Case 6 (Table 1)

This case referred to the Non-Formal Spaces in Education undergraduate course, offered in the Department of Education. The course provided students with the opportunity to discuss the issue of school dropouts in contexts of social vulnerability, and argued that global problems need to find local solutions to improve access to and retention of children in schools. Students in this discipline interacted by videoconference with a Colombian artist. These students had access to dropout data from a rural rose-growing region in Colombia, which engaged local children in flower production, an intervention that sought inspiration in the book “Little Prince”, where the main character cares for a rose. By interacting with the Colombian artist and learning about the processes developed with the Colombian rural community, Brazilian students discussed proposals for interventions to promote alternative means to enhance learning that value local cultures and respond to relevant issues in local communities.

## Case 11 (Table 1)

This case presented extension courses in the area of Gastronomy, highlighting classes taught by internationally certified professionals, in agreement with the Italian Center for Sensory Analysis - CIAS Innovation. These courses introduced students to the characteristics of food products’ regions of origin. They learned about the impacts of geographic and cultural issues on food production and international harmonization techniques associated with specialized foods and their consumption systems. Discussions about the implications of product availability in global markets and their distribution logistics are also present in the course, expanding the students’ view of importing specialized products.

These cases illustrate how students at PUCRS are provided with international and intercultural learning experiences across a range of disciplines. They are examples of the development at PUCRS of more equitable opportunities for an internationalised learning experience for the non-mobile majority of students.

These cases were presented by staff leading the various courses, providing them with an opportunity to reflect on and share their approaches to curriculum design, and their pedagogies and practices through the lens of IaH. To expand the dialogue around IaH at PUCRS, postgraduate students were also provided with an opportunity to contribute their views, as outlined in the following section.

## Strategies for iaH at pucrs: student perspectives on atiah

Following the workshop, a short course for postgraduate students was involving PUCRS and NU researchers. The course was called: Strategies for IaH at PUCRS: The Perspective of Students by ATIAH. The objective of the course was to engage students in dialogue on their perceptions of internationalization and propose strategies for the further development of IaH at PUCRS.

The methodology for this course encompassed both the participation in the already mentioned workshop on IaH, a presentation of IaH concepts, an overview of the Brazilian context concerning the issue of internationalisation, PUCRS internationalisation policies and actions, and the presented cases. The evaluation was conducted through Moodle (e-learning system) and involved a questionnaire incorporating items on the students’ backgrounds and courses, and open-ended questions (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Workshop IaH – Evaluation.

### Part 1: Personal reflection on interculturality

**Goals:**

1. Reflect from 'real-life' experiences.
2. Broaden your awareness about other cultures.
3. Reflect on your own culture.

**Activity:**

- Report experiences you have had with groups from other cultures or communities, highlighting the learnings you have developed.

**Space for personal response** (use 20 to 30 lines).

**Part 2: Proposing strategies for internationalization at home****Goals:**

1. Synthesize the discussions held at the Workshop.
2. Recognize the challenges of internationalization in the university context.
3. Propose viable strategies for internationalization at home at PUCRS.

**Activity:**

- Make a synthesis of the Workshop, from the speeches of the guests and the debates held, using, if necessary, materials available in Moodle.
- Reflect and record, based on the experiences and discussions established in the Workshop, on the challenges of internationalization in universities and their expansion strategies.
- Consult complementary materials, such as articles and university websites on the topic and, in a reasoned and argued way, propose three to five viable strategies to promote institutional advances at PUCRS in relation to internationalization at home.

Space for personal response (use 40 to 60 lines):Source: Workshop I@H PUCRS, 2019.

Participants, n=19, were all doctoral students at the School of Humanities, PUCRS. We conducted a content analysis of their answers (QUIVY & CAMPENHOUDT, 1992), and the results are presented in a section below.

**Results**

The analysis of PhD students' responses (n=19) from the School of Humanities yielded the following results. These results focus on suggestions for actions seeking to implement and encourage IaH at PUCRS; however, we believe that this could serve as a general platform to other Brazilian Higher Education Institutions. Thus:

1) *Development of a culture of internationalization*: i. diagnose the current understanding, awareness and needs of teaching staff, students and support staff to motivate them to implement IaH processes; discuss the concept of internationalization and its forms for institutions in emerging contexts; encourage innovative actions in the creation of strategies for IaH; ii. promote events such as: meetings; work groups; discussions about good practice. In the specific case of teaching staff, develop capacity building courses focusing on providing an understanding and awareness of Internationalization at Home.

2) *Development of a languages programme* based on international cultures, highlighting the incentive to master a second language, including immersion activities and expanding the offer of subjects in foreign languages. Develop partnerships and projects with schools aimed at multi-lingual and multilingual awareness to contribute to the formation of global citizens since teenagerhood so to take advantage of these intercultural skills when entering Higher Education.

3) *Development of an internationalized curriculum* adoption in the basic and complementary bibliographies of disciplines of theoretical references and other didactic materials in foreign languages (respecting the level of linguistic appropriation of students) so to expand the acquisition

of academic and sociocultural skills in students.

Students further proposed:

- Cross-disciplinary subjects: the inclusion in the undergraduate curricula of interdisciplinary cross-curricular subjects (one or more semesters), using active and participatory methodologies, in which problems to be resolved by students, within the area of knowledge of the courses, are posed within the global reality, especially the Latin American and Caribbean reality, and how this knowledge can help to establish a culture of respect for diversity concomitant with a shared interaction of knowledge and technology;
- Cross-disciplinary perspectives: actions focused on training for the globalised labour market and the need for knowledge of different cultures and interculturality;
- Providing on-site and distance learning courses and seminars by teaching staff from other countries / cultures. This will encourage dialogue, engagement, group work among participants as well as the development of intercultural / international skills;
- Interaction with students from universities abroad on the IES own campus, providing accounts of and reflections on their experiences, promoting competences related to interculturality.

4) *Cooperation through research networks* as a way of encouraging academics to develop research that may be closer territorially and culturally, and that can provide benefit and stimulate new paradigms and technologies from one's own reality.

5) *Development of a digital platforms program* (e.g. Youtube, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) with in and out mobility experiences, where these are shared with the university community and have a greater reach, not just restricted to student groups participating in the exchange presentation sessions.

6) *Creation of Opportunities in Distance Learning and Virtual Exchange*: i. offering subjects in the initial semester, which are transversal to all undergraduate courses (or areas of knowledge) seeking the development of other internationalization curriculum actions; ii. offering courses in partnership with other universities, enabling the experience of international learning for more students, contact with international teachers and students, without the traditional displacement of mobility programs.

7) *Partnership in Degrees and Diplomas*: creation of a portfolio with guidelines for joint-degrees at undergraduate levels, allowing students who have interest and conditions to obtain the degree at PUCRS and a foreign university at the same time.

## Final thoughts

IaH is an ongoing process of institutional improvement that can be facilitated by maintaining dialogue within the institution and with external partners about how IaH should be enacted. The cases presented here illustrate what is already happening at PUCRS, reframed through the lens of IaH. The data gathered from postgraduate students leads to suggestions on how IaH might be further developed and embedded in PUCRS that may be relevant to other institutions in the Global South.

As a strategy for expanding the concept of Internationalisation at Home, results demonstrate that actions must be highlighted within the institutions so to give actions a better visibility. Drawing attention to these actions also allows for discussions to occur, seeking review and development, and to research and address possible issues related to both staff and students' experiences in disciplines that embrace IaH.

In this respect and in the light of the evidence, results seem to demonstrate that institutional strategies seem to be in good alignment with our students' understanding and expectations of IaH. Certainly, further actions and support are required as the process of internationalisation needs to be reviewed constantly given the various actors that participate in the process, teaching staff, students and support staff.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that the conception of research that had developed between NU and PUCRS aims to move beyond the classic conceptions, such as those of Knight (2012) and De Wit and Jones (2018). Based on Robson's (2017) studies of a transformative kind of internationalization in Higher Education, our understanding is that the internationalization of higher education should seek to improve the quality of education and research for all students and academic staff of the institution, in order to expand their international and intercultural understandings and ability to contribute to society, locally and globally. The conception we are developing at PUCRS is based on Robson's (2017) studies of a transformative kind of internationalization in Higher Education, one that transforms individuals and society.

Faced with the dilemma: can HE systems provide internationalized learning opportunities for all? (ALMEIDA et al., 2019) other institutions may wish to explore understandings of IaH within their academic, professional services, leadership and management and student communities. These understandings can contribute to the process of achieving conceptual clarity around what IaH means and should mean for each institution, providing empirically grounded definitions through a bottom-up and top-down development of the concept (ROBSON & WIHLBORG, 2019).

The NU/CEES/PUCRS network continues to consolidate year by year with mutual benefits. We can mention the study (MOROSINI & KAMPPF, 2020) presented within a symposium for the Internacional Virtual Exchange Congress, held at NU in 2020.i. This symposium explored evolving conceptions of internationalisation illustrating that research partnerships between the global south and the global north contributes to the growing academic debate about the values, purposes and means of internationalization of HE, providing an alternative discourse to the market-driven agendas underpinning internationalization (ROBSON, IVEC, 2020).

In this same direction the network has been disseminating its knowledge in Latin America (MOROSINI, VIERA & WOICOLESKO, 2021), as a study presented at the First Latin American Network conference: COIL - *in and with Latin America at a time of change*, which reported the experience of COIL between CEES/PUCRS and ANEP/UY, during the pandemic period. At this challenging time it is perhaps more important than ever to facilitate the development of the international, multicultural, knowledge, attitudes and skills; analytical and personal abilities and dispositions that underpin an active contribution in globalised, knowledge-based economies (ROBSON, 2020).

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