

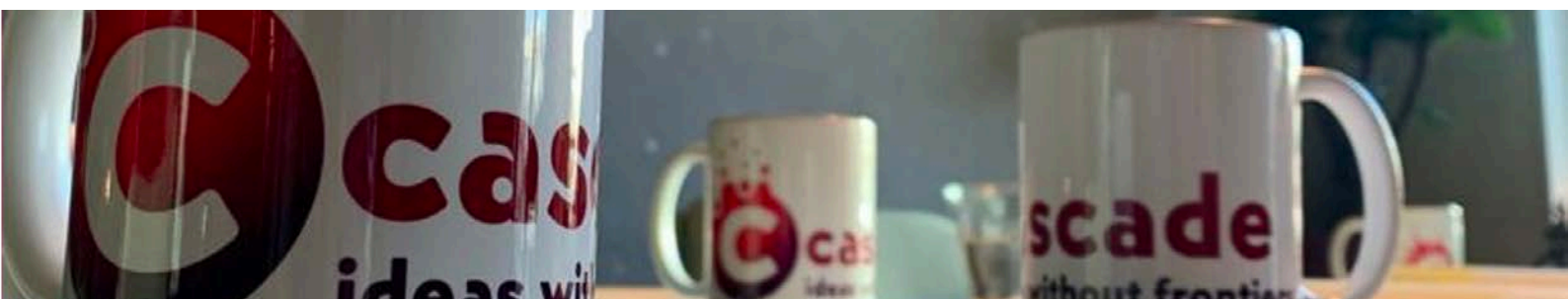
IDEAS WITHOUT FRONTIERS

DREAMWEAVERS: MAKING IT HAPPEN

Sessions Concept and Delivery

The [Cascade Foundation](#) was launched in 2023 to address the inequities in international education and to help organisations and individuals become more globally connected. Following the *Visionary Voices* series of [podcasts](#), the Foundation held a co-creation event with thought leaders working in the field to co-develop a [new approach to internationalisation](#) and 'reversing the gaze' between the Global North and Global South. As a result of this co-creation session we developed a concept for a new type of Summer School - *Dreamweavers*. The Summer School is designed for high-calibre students from the Global South who don't normally get the opportunity to travel, to bring them to Europe for two weeks, to work alongside their peers to find solutions to societal challenges through social innovation, intercultural competence training and ideation techniques.

The [sessions for co-creating the concept and content of the Dreamweavers Summer School](#) were held with professionals working at the coalface of international education - *Cascade Champions* - particularly representatives from institutions in the Global South, to interrogate what the Summer School should look like, how it could redress the balance and really benefit a cohort of students who would not otherwise have the opportunity to travel. These sessions were followed by a Co-Creation Session that asked in much more practical terms how we would deliver Dreamweavers. The participants of the sessions represented three distinct groups: institutions from the Global South who might be prepared to send students; institutions from the Global North that might be interested in hosting; impact investors and philanthropic organisations that might consider supporting such an initiative.



Question 1: How do we select the institutions that will send students to participate in the Dreamweavers Summer school?

- What should the profile be of these institutions?
- How does their profile resonate with Cascade?
- Do their institutional values align with the values of the Foundation?
- How can we ensure that the students also share the values of Cascade?

Selecting the right kind of student

Above all, the sending institution should share the principles of Cascade, offering their students the opportunity to become "Future Leaders" in the Global South and help them "weave their dreams". These students should not normally have the opportunity to travel, but the institution itself should have participated in some international leadership and exchange programmes before, preferably with an understanding of the importance of intercultural importance and experience of delivering social entrepreneurship and social innovation in response to local/global environmental and social challenges. The institutions will need to ensure that the students selected are suitable with proficient language abilities to allow them to carry out the programme, whilst also offering appropriate gender balance. A preference should also be given to students that have a direct experience of local community projects. Whatever the profiles of the different students, a member of staff or representative will be needed to accompany them and carry out pastoral duties.

Offering their students the opportunity to become "Future Leaders" In the Global South and help them "weave their dreams".



Identifying institutions

There are two ways of recruiting students: directly through the individual institutions themselves or to broaden the recruitment through international educational associations. In terms of the latter, it would be useful to have conversations with Global Education Leads such as the British Council who are working on a number of global programmes focussing on mutual learning, accessing institutions through Social Entrepreneurship/Social Enterprise umbrella bodies e.g. [Social Enterprise World Forum](#), [RaiSE Singapore](#), [Yunus Network](#), the [Future Leaders' Network](#).

As much as possible, the different institutions should represent a range of geographical regions and different education profiles (e.g. technical, public administration, law, etc.). Institutions will be responsible for helping define and meet the logistical costs, taking into account of ease of access to Europe and associated visa costs.



Question 2: What is the added value for European institutions to host the event? What challenges will they face and how can we overcome them?

- What specific benefits do European institutions gain from hosting the event?
- How can hosting enhance their institutional reputation?
- What opportunities for academic and cultural exchange does Dreamweavers provide?
- How can hosting foster potential partnerships and collaborations?
- What logistical and organisational challenges might they encounter?
- What financial and resource constraints could they face?
- Are there any cultural and administrative barriers to consider?
- How might they ensure engagement from students and staff?

The proposal represents quite a paradigm shift and the host institution needs to be ready for that.

Familiarity

The host institution should also already be quite open to international exchanges, and perhaps with a more progressive/open-minded approach, with existing community programmes. They should also have a clear and committed sustainability mission (“walking the walk” in terms of turning aspiration into action) and they should be aware of and be prepared to address issues surrounding global South/global North inequity. The proposal represents quite a paradigm shift and the host institution needs to be ready for that. For this reason, it is probably going to be more effective if we target institutions that we already have connections with, at least for the first cohort.

Commitment

Although Cascade will be doing the heavy lifting in terms of the coordination and delivery of Dreamweavers, there will be an expectation that the host institutions will contribute. There will also be the opportunity for some of their students to take part so they probably need to have some internal experience of social programmes and a willingness to innovate.



Funding

Again, in practical terms, the host institution should be prepared to help in finding ways to co-fund the project through in-kind support or helping identify potential sources of funding. In this sense, it is important that Dreamweavers is also tailored to a certain extent to the host's interest. There may be an advantage in co-creating a common theme or focussing on specific markets. Another very practical consideration is the timing of the Summer School, since the host will have to take into account their own regular timetabling, whilst also considering the timetable of sending institutions.

Question 3: How can we work together to attract funding to support Dreamweavers from regional, national and other sources?

- What regional funding opportunities are available?
- What national funding opportunities can we explore?
- Are there international funding opportunities we can consider?
- How can we engage the private sector and secure corporate sponsorships?
- What role can philanthropic and non-profit organisations play in supporting us?
- How can we share resources and expertise to enhance our funding efforts?

Above all, it is crucial that in seeking funding, Cascade emphasises the long term goals of the Summer School.

Consistent Vision

Although there may be potential to have students contribute towards the cost, it would play against the Foundation's intention to attract students that don't normally get the opportunity to travel. A quick win may be through Erasmus mobility schemes such as Cooperation Partnerships and International Credit Mobility, depending on the interests and participation of the host institution. It might also be true that the host institution sees the initiative as an investment opportunity as a way to potentially identify and recruit graduate students. However, again, this might play against the underlying intentions of Dreamweavers to "reverse the gaze", addressing the inequities of international education, part of which is the tendency towards brain-drain.

Partnerships

Overall, the most effective approach would be to fund Dreamweavers through Partnerships. This might be with a corporate partner whose values and mission align with the overall theme and aspirations of the Summer School. As soon as the four sending countries are known, searches for funding can be targeted at the local level, including corporates, foundations and philanthropists. A key funding source may be through philanthropic donations from the diaspora of the sending countries, as well as their embassies from whom specific grants might be available. Funding may well depend on the profile of the participants, their age, ethnographic characteristics, potential leadership credentials, as well as their fields of study, and of course the host country. Other alternative sources of funding might be found at a more direct level – through social media – e.g. Travel Miles donors.

The research work carried out by Cascade will be useful in evidencing the interest and importance of the Summer School. The name of the Summer School evokes the sense of a celebration of new and innovative ideas, although the term "festival" may be misleading in terms of the overall activities proposed. What is crucial is that it should be more focussed on experiential learning as opposed to instructional and it is important to emphasise this characteristic to funders.

Long term goals

However, above all, it is crucial that in seeking funding, Cascade emphasises the long term goals of the Summer School, its sustainability and concept as a long-term project. It might even be interesting to define themes over a period of time, a different theme for each year.



Potential Donors and Funders

A number specific funding sources were identified by participants.

- Development Finance Institutions, especially those with a specific emphasis on social innovation such as the French Development Agency or British International Investment.
- UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office which offers funding for Official Development Assistance programmes focused on Education
- World Bank Partnership Fund for the Sustainable Development Goals
- Social investor and philanthropy networks e.g. Impact Europe, AVPN, AVPA, Latimpacto
- Sustainable Development Goals funding
- Multilateral funding schemes (govt + non-govt / private / foundations)
- British Education Travel Association

Participants and Acknowledgements

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