

IDEAS WITHOUT FRONTIERS

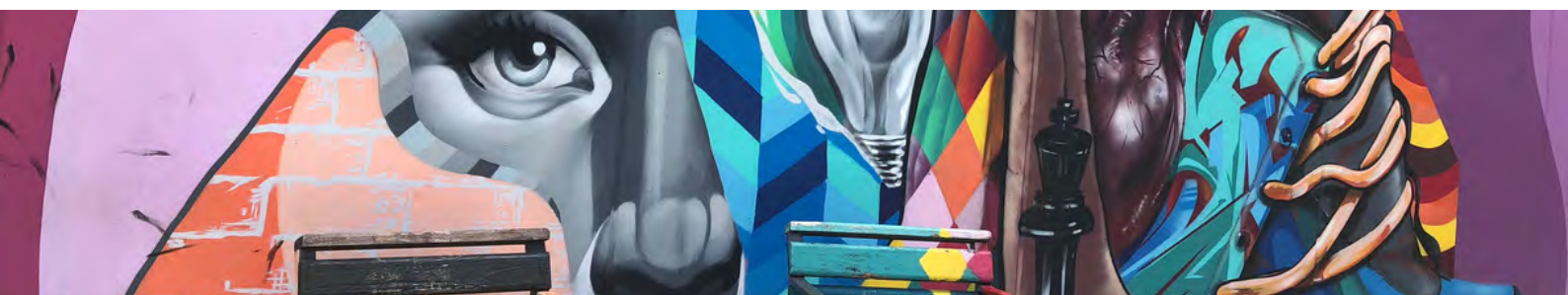
# REVERSING THE GAZE: CO-CREATING A NEW APPROACH

## *Sessions Concept and Delivery*

This report is a compilation of the ideas shared at two virtual co-creation sessions held on 20th and 21st of March 2024. The theme of both sessions was identical – “Reversing the Gaze: How can we make Internationalisation more equitable. The participants were asked to offer their ideas under six perspectives: Societal, Economic, Institutional, Research, Teaching, and Individual. Other than that, the conversations were unstructured.

## *Introduction*

In compiling this report, I have been continually aware of the challenges in reflecting each and every thought whilst also conveying the spirit and overarching direction of our parallel conversations. Some topics dominated more than others, and the importance of each of the individual opinions is ultimately subjective. It is as though I have pulled out the various threads and now attempt to weave them together into a single tapestry. Every note has been included, and I have not rejected any ideas, but in grouping them together, I may have distorted the nuance of what has been expressed. It is the intrinsic nature of any creative endeavour that the final piece is never precisely what the authors intended!



## SOCIETAL PERSPECTIVES

The first and most intense of the discussions revolved around internationalisation at a society level – exploring internationalisation as a policy tool, the importance of giving the Global South a voice, cultural identity, the effect of technology, and the importance of Justice, Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity and Accessibility.

### *Internationalisation as policy tool*

Given the very nature of Internationalisation and its cultural norms and business models, there is an increasing need to embrace a wider culture of “internationalism”. The overriding benefits of internationalisation need to be recognised inwardly and characterised more effectively and communicated to the broader community, including to governments and policymakers. Internationalisation approaches applied effectively can create a culture of mutual understanding, contributing to peace and security in the world and the cross-fertilisation of ideas that resonate beyond the campus.



### *Giving the Global South a voice*

In order to overcome the inequities between the Global South and North, the South needs to be listened to more and given the authority and responsibility to lead projects, not just partner on them. In fact, even the debate taking place within the Co-Creation sessions were skewed by the predominance of privileged voices, and there is a danger of perpetuating the North's tendency to prescribe solutions. Perhaps even the terminology is inappropriate, and it would be more accurate to talk about the Global Rich and the Global Poor since socioeconomic power is shifting and many countries in the Global South find themselves rapidly transitioning with a greater degree of influence within their regions and beyond. Nevertheless, the stories of poorer countries need to be more widely shared, and more role models identified. Internationalisation needs to focus more on looking at local issues and building societal impact, aligning the local with the global, understanding their respective relevance and relationship between one another. The best people to solve a problem are those that actually experience it.

### *Cultural identity*

Partnerships with media, the arts, creative researchers and related groups can be used to strengthen the exchange and positioning of "human" perspectives within different geographies. We need to avoid the stereotypical gaze, introducing ethnic cultural activities that force a certain perspective by cheapening and commercialising it. We need to shift our focus and highlight local solutions and learning practice. We also need to reverse the conventional approach to North-South relationships where by the Global North students are presented as "saviours" volunteering within Global South communities.

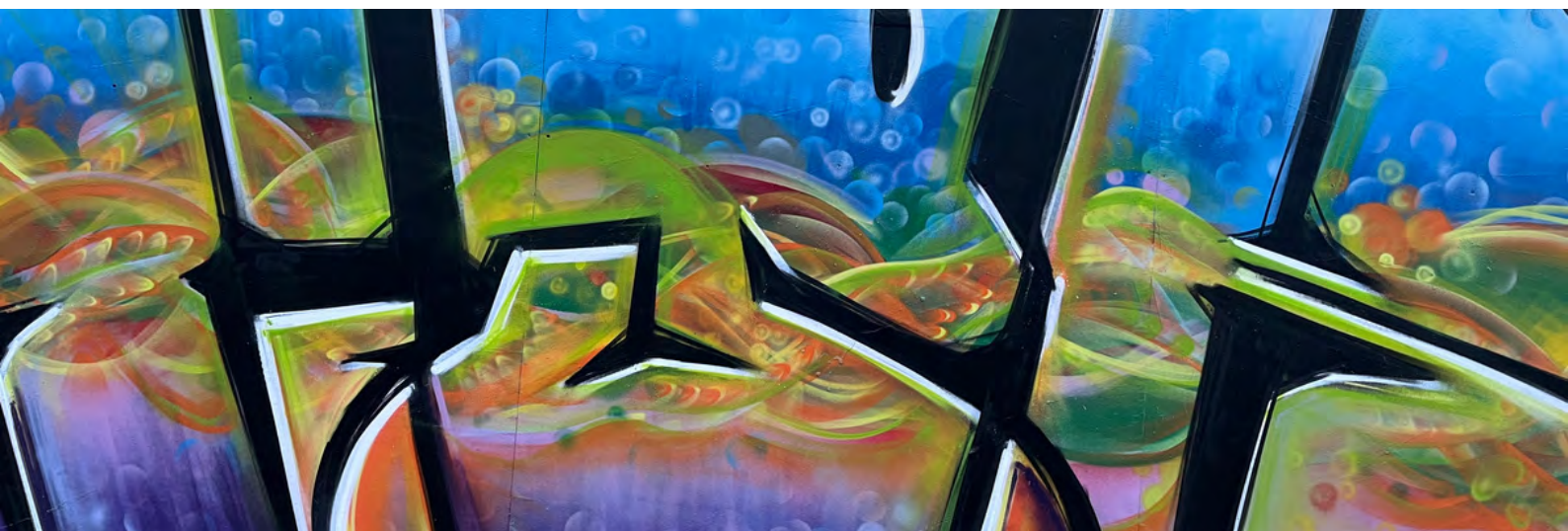


### *The effect of technology*

The world as we know it is changing beyond recognition and with the Anthropocene era presenting a time of great uncertainty, the nature of leadership, authority and power is also changing. Younger generations have become more aware of notions around diversity – largely thanks to technology – but does this directly translate into a more positive attitude? How can we ensure that there is a truly inclusive community where everyone (student, educator, community) is willing to speak up and contribute to a constructive outcome? More than ever, we need to question our assumptions and over-simplification of the world around us. We need to reassess our entire way of thinking, even the very notion of having a plan at all.

### *JEDIA*

Justice, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (JEDIA) are core values which need to be applied within Internationalisation, and form part of foundational training of colleagues. More diverse voices and perspectives should become prevalent among IE sector professional staff, including in leadership roles and representation on committees. Nevertheless, there is some debate as to how much having specific rules or quotas to support accessibility is necessarily the right approach. Instead, institutions should involve local communities and their own unique approaches on how to achieve JEDIA. The Māori term "Manakitanga", for example, refers to hospitality, care, and respect for others, promoting an inclusive and supportive learning environment that welcomes students from all cultures. More respect needs to be given and more emphasis placed on local wisdom and the contribution it can make to intellectual discourse.



## ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES

A more precise examination of economic perspectives, revealed five overarching concerns: Funding and Impact, Private Finance, Combatting the challenges of financial exclusion, the Impact of technology, and Tackling Financial Imbalance.

### *Funding and Impact*

Ultimately, the challenges faced by the Global South are economic. Cost inequities, mean that access to funds becomes more challenging. Donors determine how and on what to spend the funds, but if this becomes a box-ticking exercise, its impact is limited. We need to understand the broader outcomes and shift the focus from short term solutions. Financial investment enables outcomes to be achieved, but it should not become an outcome in itself, at least not at a universal level. We need to change the frameworks that determine delivery, bringing to the forefront, what is really needed by beneficiaries.

### *Private Finance*

Access to public funding is severely limited and an attractive alternative may be to develop partnerships with international companies. We need to identify and provide incentives for the private sector in the global south to provide funding. We need to advocate for emerging country funders to form consortiums to fund research.

We need to highlight and celebrate leaders in creating economic opportunities.

### *Combatting the challenges of Financial Exclusion*

It is easy to underestimate the pervasiveness and impact of financial exclusion. It is most commonly the rich students that travel abroad, and they tend to have a particular view on society based on their socioeconomic backgrounds. At the same time, our aspirations for universal quality education are hobbled by costs. Affordable, accessible, quality education is the holy grail. Can we achieve this through online delivery of Trans-National Education? We need to find a cheaper way to connecting people, striking a balance between online and offline and creating a broad scale of opportunities and choices - not only limited to urban-to-urban exchange, for example but also exchange within rural areas.

### *Impact of Technology*

While virtual interchange is not a substitute for in-person engagement, it does provide a more equitable means of access. Technology has helped the challenges and implicit financial costs faced by people living in remote areas. At the same time, with the rise of AI, the nature of employment is going to radically change and we need to embrace the advantages that technology offers.

### *Tackling Financial Imbalance*

It is also important to underline the vicious circle created by financial imbalance. One solution might be to require the same daily rates for equivalent North and South teams on research projects particularly for ODA funding. Another radical idea might be to create a "Fair Trade" quality label for education?



## Institutional

At an institutional level, Equitable Engagement, Institutional Cultures, and Changing Institutional approaches, figures as the predominant topics of conversation.

### *Equitable Engagement*

There needs to be greater incentivisation for engagement among a more diverse group of partners representing all areas of the globe (North and South). Interaction needs to explore and address areas of tension. Collaborative programmes and exchange agreements should be designed to foster more equitable exchange between institutions with the co-development of programme proposals. It is increasingly common to have a team of flying faculty from Global North to Global South locations. Whilst this supports a diversity of programme presenters within these locations, it is much rarer to see the approach reversed, whereby presenters are brought from the Global South to Global North locations, which would go a long way in developing more equitable engagement.

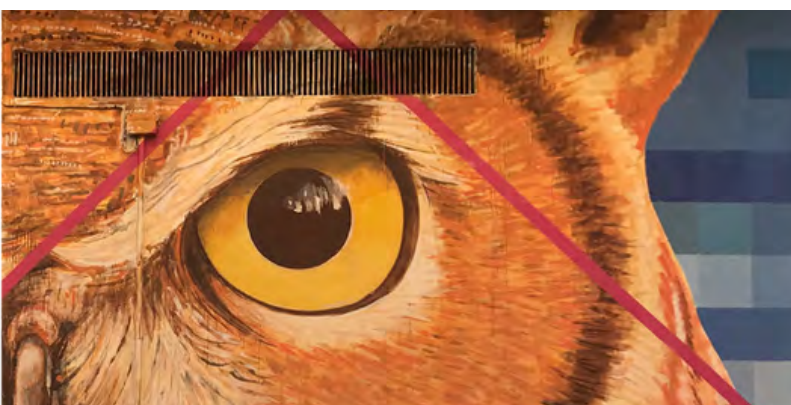
### *Institutional Cultures*

All institutions adopt a predominant “cultural” logic but how do we ensure that this culture is more embracing? They need to be diverse from the outset. They need to hire more people coming from different cultural backgrounds. They need to translate it into the way their Schools and Faculties select students to join programmes / initiatives balancing equity and resources, with portfolio and background.



### *Changing Institutional approaches*

We are faced with a world where physical barriers (e.g. visas) are actually increasing, creating further imbalances. To counter this, top management needs to become more aware of the issues, and they need to get better at aligning the practices within their institutions with the policies and values that they proprot to support. We need to re-think our formal statements around our internationalisation priorities emphasising the rationale for being inclusive, equitable and world-changing, aligning them the aspirations of the leadership. JEDIA considerations need to be embedded within business process analysis and process mapping. We need to look at equitable opportunities that don't just benefit the rich, or exclusively draw on a notion of “academic excellence”. Many young people across the world who are not academic high achievers may equally become successful entrepreneurs, if they are able to access appropriate educational resources.

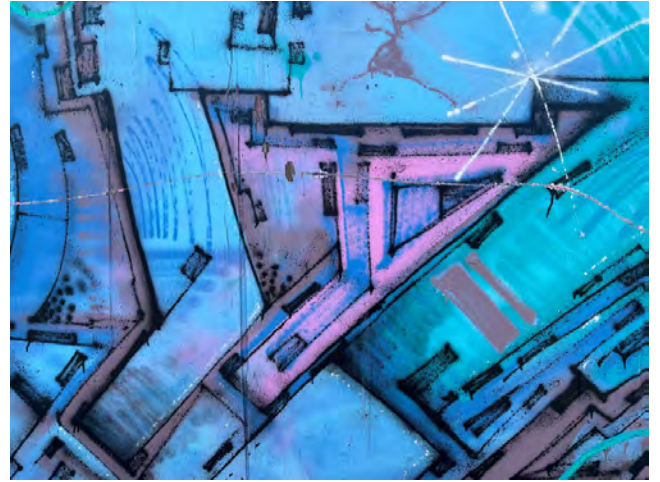


## Research Perspective

For research a major priority was seen as tackling research inequality, and in so doing, optimising impact.

### *Tackling Research Inequity*

Research across the world is almost exclusively being carried out by initiatives led by the Global North. There needs to be more grants offered that encourage collaboration with greater equity in research partnerships, even requiring global south participation. But a more effective shift would be to actively support projects led by the Global South. We need to develop funding that eliminates borders and boundaries and encourages a more eclectic set of perspectives. One way of doing this would be to incubate joint research teams outside project-based collaborations. This would enrich the relationships and allow partners to gain a greater understanding of each other's needs beyond the achievement of limited project results.



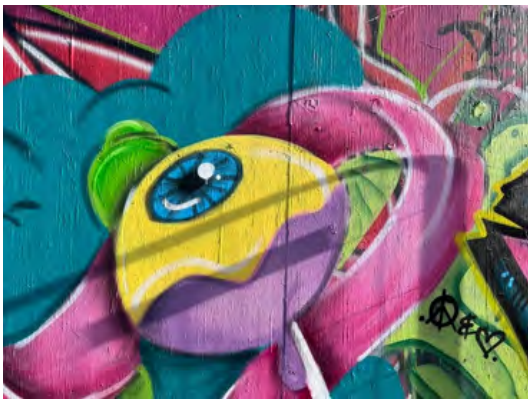
### *Optimising Impact*

The notion of carrying out research "about" the Global South without engaging with the Global South is not acceptable. We need more "south" perspectives in research, not only more data from the developing countries, but more points of view. The process of research should take into account the "so what?" of research outcomes, and also focus on determining the best way to communicate its findings to the general public and to policymakers (going beyond advocacy). We need to procure practitioners to carry out research - it is not a domain exclusive to academics. There needs to be more joint, collaborative and action-oriented research projects, designed to improve people's lives at the grassroots level. We should also be exploring ways in which research from the Global South can be applied to the global north. We need to introduce robust, valid and reliable assessment models to ensure that projects are making a real impact?



## Teaching Perspective

In Teaching, Collaboration was seen as key, changing teaching approaches and decolonising the curriculum



### *Collaboration*

We need to create teaching grants for classroom collaboration that does not require additional travel. We also need to encourage more faculty and staff exchanges, both for teaching and research purposes. We need to create networks of educators to share and learn from each other. But we also need to consider who among our teaching staff are genuinely concerned about inequity in internationalisation.

### *Decolonisation*

There is a need to decolonise our approaches in teaching and learning, and ensure the curriculum is not just concerned with the local or national context. Reading lists should be widened to include a range of authors from less represented regions/communities.

Through the inclusion of 'different voices' we can begin to recognise indigenous nations' expertise in leadership, sustainability and other areas dominated by Global North institutions. We need to showcase global innovations from the Global South and underline their relevance for the global north.

### *Teaching approaches*

Within the classroom new pedagogical approaches need to be developed that define the kind of learning support that works best for different target groups. Teaching should be more conversational and encourage students to be more confident in sharing their views and perspectives, building in intercultural awareness into the teaching model and enabling a stronger student/voice perspective in the design phase. In order to do this, there is a need to embed indigenous perspectives and voices into International Education professional training. It should place a greater emphasis on how we can work with students and teachers to 'make the familiar strange', understanding different perspectives and stepping out of our comfort zones.



## Individual Perspective

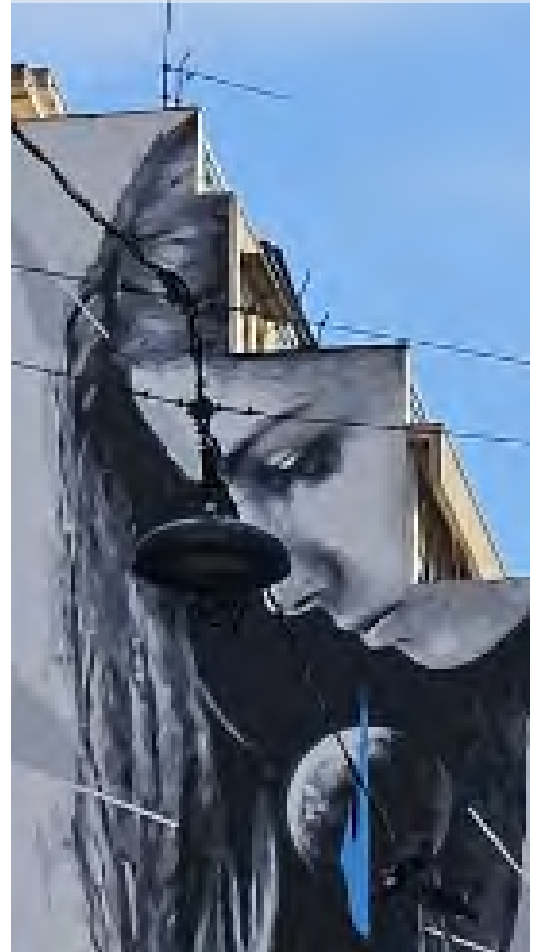
At an individual level, participants emphasised the roles we could play in reversing the gaze and the individual support we could offer our students locally and internationally.

### *How can we as individuals help reverse the gaze?*

We all have agency. Every day we can and do change the world. Every decision we make has implications. As individuals we need to reflect on the current model, which has become too focused on numbers and revenue, and we need to be prepared to change it. We must be prepared to advocate and lobby for our beliefs, but being open-minded is also a must and it serves as a basic foundation of our long term internationalisation efforts. We should be prepared to invest our time into supporting capacity building in less developed education systems through partnerships, focusing on improving curriculum development. We can help train trainers but also need to recognise that expertise is found globally (in different forms) and is not exclusive to the Global North.

### *Supporting our students*

Employability in a globalised market (regardless of sector) is greatly enhanced by intercultural skills and experience - mobility gives people the edge. We need to demonstrate to individuals how they can be mobile across countries through skills building, beyond the limitations of academic achievement. We should be providing cultural and linguistic support / support services for international students, recognising what students really want. Should we immediately exclude students because they do not speak English (or other dominant language)? We should also consider students' re-entry after mobility, to pay attention to how the learnings and experiences are applied when back on home campus. Conversely, the pre-departure development of students from the Global North is equally important. They are both the producers and products of the gaze.





## Participants and Acknowledgements

*We would like to express our enormous thanks to the participants of the Co-creation sessions for the enthusiasm and unique insights. Without their commitment to more equitable internationalisation and generosity in giving their time to these sessions, this report would not be possible.*

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