

gests that the full potential of these programs is not being realized and that much work is needed to publicize TNE opportunities in the host country.

#### **TNE GRADUATES HIGHLY SKILLED BUT NOT NECESSARILY IN LINE WITH LOCAL NEEDS**

All target groups believed that TNE graduates are better equipped than locally educated graduates across a varied set of specific skills—such as problem solving, critical thinking, and international outlook. Thus, while TNE graduates are perceived as relatively skilled, the research suggests that TNE may be only “moderately” addressing skills gaps in the local labor market. Specialized TNE courses covering niche topics were felt to have a positive impact on addressing local skills gaps, but overall, many TNE providers are offering programs already available locally.

---

**The results paint an overall positive picture of the impact of TNE in host countries, especially in terms of TNE providing increased access for local students to higher education.**

---

#### **OUTLOOK FOR TNE**

Respondents were generally optimistic about the outlook for TNE and indicated that both the number of new programs and the capacity of existing programs will continue to grow over the medium term. In terms of helping to build the local knowledge economy and producing collaborative research output, TNE looks well placed to play an increasing role in the host country. Economic considerations, such as the capacity of TNE to attracting foreign-direct investment and improve local infrastructure, appear less pronounced and will largely depend on host country government policy and country specific circumstances.

The results paint an overall positive picture of the impact of TNE in host countries, especially in terms of TNE providing increased access for local students to higher education. But, there is very little concrete evidence to back up these opinions, as few TNE receiving countries have the capacity or will to gather enrollment data on all TNE operations in their country. An important challenge is the collection of data by host countries on the number and type of TNE operations in their country and the aggregate enrollment of local students, expatriate students living in the country, and international students enrolled in all TNE operations.

For further information see: British Council and DAAD (2014). *Impacts of transnational education on host countries*. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/ihe/knowledge-centre/internationalisation/impacts-transnational>. ■

---

## Mobility Matters: the ERASMUS Impact Study

**UWE BRANDENBURG, OBDULIA TABOADELA, AND MIHAELA VANCEA**

*Uwe Brandenburg is Managing Partner, CHE Consult, Berlin, Germany. E-mail: [Uwe.brandenburg@che-consult.de](mailto:Uwe.brandenburg@che-consult.de). Obdulia Taboadela is associate professor of Sociology, University of A Coruña, Spain. E-mail: [obdulia.taboadela@udc.es](mailto:obdulia.taboadela@udc.es). Mihaela Vancea is research fellow, Department of Political and Social Sciences, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain. E-mail: [mihaela.vancea@upf.edu](mailto:mihaela.vancea@upf.edu). This article is based on the Erasmus Impact Study (EIS) ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf)) and the memo© project (<http://www.memo-tool.net>).*

Europe seems to experience a significant mismatch between the skills employers require from graduates, and the skills students acquire in higher education institutions (HEIs). There are 5.7 million unemployed young people in Europe, including many higher education graduates, at the same time as one third of employers cannot find employees with the right skills on the labor market. An analysis of the obvious mismatch between what employers demand and what young adults in general, and higher education graduates in particular, supply, may effectively inform policymakers in labor market and education policy areas. This was one of the reasons for the European Commission to initiate an analysis of the Erasmus program, with a special emphasis on employability.

#### **MOBILITY AND THE LABOR MARKET**

From 1987 until the end of 2012–2013, over 3 million students from more than 4,000 higher education institutions participated in Erasmus mobility. Erasmus is the largest mobility program in the world, financed by the European Commission. It is especially designed to promote the mobility of students in higher education. Therefore, an assessment of the contribution of this program to employability might shed some light on the general issue of employability of higher education graduates. Research tells us that mobility in general and therefore probably Erasmus in particular,

might be a solution for the mismatch between employers' expectations and employees' competences. Previous studies have found that young people who study or train abroad, gain knowledge in specific disciplines and strengthen key transversal skills. Very often, though, studies on the effect of mobility have so far relied on hearsay, assumptions, or at best perceptions.

On the other hand, even if mobility could be a solution for the problem, stated above, this could only be true for a minority. It is an illusion to think that everybody can be mobile. Mobility seems to be related to social status. Several studies have compared mobile and nonmobile students, and revealed substantial socioeconomic differences between students participating in mobility programs and students not going abroad. Apart from notable differences in socioeconomic status, students who plan to go abroad tend to score higher on measures of intercultural communication skills. Mobile students appear to be intrinsically motivated, they value international experience as a whole and not so much in terms of immediate outcomes. The Erasmus Impact Study (EIS) also provides some new insights on this aspect.

No study, so far, has linked the aspects of social selectivity, mobility, and impact on employability with relevant personality traits, except for the relation between predisposition for study abroad and personality traits. EIS represents an innovative approach in a number of ways. It addresses all five relevant target groups simultaneously: students, alumni, staff, HEIs, and employers. Moreover, it goes beyond the classical issue of intercultural and language skills. It introduces the new element of psychometric-related analysis of the real personality traits of individuals, using a selection of six factors that stem from the memo© (monitoring exchange mobility outcome) project. Further, it brings together these personality traits and their changes through mobility, with perceptions. In other words, it compares what people *think* is the case with what can be measured *objectively*. Not the least, by including alumni over a range of decades, EIS analyzed the short-, medium-, and long-term effects of mobility—not only in relation to employability skills, but also in relation to real career and employment outcomes, as well as social life and relationships.

#### HOW WAS THE ERASMUS IMPACT STUDY DONE?

EIS consists of a quantitative study including 56,733 students, 18,618 alumni, and 4,986 staff members, and for all three groups, mobile and nonmobile individuals. It covers 964 higher education institutions and 652 employers across 34 European countries. To measure real developments in students' and staff's skills after their stay abroad, EIS uses six memo© factors closely related to employability

and considered relevant by 92 percent of employers interviewed: 1) Tolerance of Ambiguity (acceptance of other people's culture and attitudes, and adaptability); 2) Curiosity (openness to new experiences); 3) Confidence (trust in own competence); 4) Serenity (awareness of own strengths and weaknesses); 5) Decisiveness (ability to make decisions); and 6) Vigor (ability to solve problems). EIS also includes a qualitative study that used online and telephone interviews, focus groups, and institutional workshops at HEIs.

---

**From 1987 until the end of 2012–2013, over 3 million students from more than 4,000 higher education institutions participated in Erasmus mobility.**

---

#### MOBILITY HAS A STRONG IMPACT, BUT SO DOES SOCIAL BACKGROUND

EIS shows that mobile students are fundamentally different from nonmobile students even before going abroad. They show substantially higher memo© values and come far more often from families with an academic background. In other words, students with better employability values and starting conditions are also more apt to take the chance to improve their personality through a stay abroad.

After the stay abroad, 52 percent of the students show real improvements on memo© values. On average, Erasmus students present higher memo© values than 70 percent of all students in Europe. The change in their personality traits is equivalent to a change over four years of life. Nonmobile alumni need even more years to achieve the memo© values of an average Erasmus student before going abroad. However, students also tend to overestimate their improvement. About 81 percent *think* they improved, nearly 30 percent more than the quantitative testing confirms. This shows that surveys based only on perceptions cannot fully grasp real effects.

Next to their personality, Erasmus students also think that they improve their language skills, international competences and other transversal key competences, such as knowledge and awareness of other countries and cultures; ability to deal with people from different cultures and environments; and communication skills. This perception is seconded by higher education institutions, employers, and alumni alike.

### MONEY, CAREER, AND LIFE

Between 2006 and 2014, the proportion of employers doubled, who considered international experience important for recruitment and paid higher salaries to employees with international experience.

Erasmus students are half as likely as nonmobile students to be long-term unemployed; five years after graduation, their unemployment rate is substantially lower. Ten years after graduation, Erasmus alumni are considerably more likely to hold managerial positions. They are also far more inclined to take a job abroad than nonmobile students.

In addition, Erasmus influences the entrepreneurial attitude: one third of the students on Erasmus work placements were offered a job by their host company, and nearly 10 percent started their own businesses; approximately ten times the usual rate among graduates.

Another objective of Erasmus is to contribute to creating a European identity among students and graduates. Indeed 80 percent of Erasmus students feel a strong attachment to Europe. This sense of belonging seems to be particularly reinforced by social or intimate ties with people from abroad: 33 percent of the Erasmus alumni stated that they had a life partner of a different nationality, while 27 percent had met their current life partner during their stay abroad. *Erasmus does change a person's life!* ■

---



---

## Countering Campus Extremism in Southeast Asia

ANTHONY WELCH

*Anthony Welch is professor of education at the University of Sydney, Australia, and is a visiting professor at the National Higher Education Research Institute in Penang, Malaysia. E-mail: anthony.welch@sydney.edu.au.*

Extremism has long been part of higher education. The suppression of Arabic and Jewish scholars in Spain during the 15th century, the Nazi persecution of Jewish and communist intellectuals, and the mass murder of scholars in Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge, are potent reminders of the tyranny of intolerance.

Now, Islamic extremism on campus is troubling higher education systems around the world, including many Muslim nations. The storied Al-Azhar University in Cairo—a beacon of Islamic learning founded before Oxford or Cambridge—has just pledged to fight militant tendencies among its students. In acknowledging criticisms that it is fostering extremism, Al-Azhar president Abdel-Hai Azab,

recently ordered the formation of academic committees charged with revising textbooks to purge them of radical jihadist ideas.

### EXTREMISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

In Southeast Asia, too, rising campus radicalism has led to campaigns to curb its influence. But the present extremism did not spring from nowhere. Radical movements in the region are decades old and in some cases linked to the desire for regional autonomy, or to fighting for Islam in far-flung places such as Afghanistan. Hundreds of Filipinos, Malaysians, and Indonesians—an unknown proportion of whom were young university students, volunteered as Mujahadeen warriors and returned radicalized.

---

**Islamic extremism on campus is troubling higher education systems around the world, including many Muslim nations.**

---

Indonesia in the 1980s saw examples of radical Islamist movements, some associated with Hizb ut-Tahrir at universities such as Gadjah Mada in Jogjakarta and Bandung Institute of Technology. Hizb ut-Tahrir is currently banned in countries such as Germany, Russia, China, Saudi, Jordan, and Egypt but legal in the United Kingdom, Australia, and elsewhere, where repeated investigations have revealed no evidence of terrorist activities.

Most recently, a national deradicalization blueprint was developed, with a national terrorism prevention program that focused on the 13 most-affected provinces. It included strengthening the capacity of universities to resist terrorism. Yet, Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict director Sidney Jones pointed out recently that training 575 trainers at Indonesian universities is of questionable value, since campuses have not been a particular target of violent extremists—partly because organizations such as Hizb ut-Tahrir are active in keeping them out—and, since, as well, the details of the training module seem, at least so far, rather vague.

It is also not clear that the recent visit of radical clerics from Egypt to Indonesia, including their involvement in a conference at Universitas Indonesia, had much effect in tempering radicals. More successful have been visits to universities from members of groups—such as the Survivors Foundation (Yayasan Penyintas) and Association for Victims of Terrorism Bombings in Indonesia, who have shared their stories with students and staff.