

## Trends of internationalization. Sept 23<sup>th</sup> 2021

### **SPEAKERS**

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Ahmad Al Addous, Rector's Delegate for Arab Countries, University of Bologna

### **Riccardo Mussari**

I take the opportunity to say hello, first and second to thank very much Ahmad and Filippo for their contribution. It will be the first time that we will give part of our speech in Arabic, and this is something really important for our audience. I wish to stress the feature of speaking in Arabic because I'm completely sure that it will be appreciated; almost all components of our traditional audience are able to understand English and to speak, of course. But listening in our language is something always important and useful. And so, this is something for which Bologna deserves as a special thank; It means to have a particular care for our partners. Something very, very appreciable. Thank you very much.

### **Paulo Resende da Silva**

Okay, thank you. Good morning everyone. Welcome to this our webinar, it will be the fifth of the six of the webinars that exist in our plan. In this particular webinar we are going to focus on internationalization of the universities, some models and trends on this particular area. Our two speakers come from Bologna University: Filippo Sartor, that almost all of you know because we met in Siena and he also participated in some virtual meetings, and we have also an invited professor, Professor Ahmad, that also works now in Siena University. Me and Nazar, from Iraq, appreciate a lot and we are grateful for both of you to participate in this webinar and share with us your knowledge and your contents about this particular topic. Some short presentation of both speakers.

Ahmad Al Addous is a research fellow in Arabic language and literature at the Department of interpreting and translation of the University of Bologna, Campus of Forlì. His research activities are span from the poetic production of classical and contemporary Arab authors to the theatre as an educational tool for the learning of Arabic literary language and on the collections of the Arabic manuscripts (Marsili fund) of the Bologna University Library. He is involved in research projects and author of many publications.

Filippo Sartor, head of the Unit managing higher education projects and cooperation in the following regions: Latin America, Africa, Middle East and Western Balkans. He graduated in Economics at the University of Trento and was awarded a master's degree in education planning at the Bocconi University. He has been working at the International Relations Department of the University of Bologna for 15 years. His main expertise is the management of higher education international projects focusing on student mobility, joint degree development, ECTS and the implementation of the Bologna process. He has been chair of the Coimbra Group Task force for Development Cooperation for 6 years (2014-2020).

Good morning Filippo and Professor Ahmad. This webinar will have two short presentations, after with some questions and comments. But before we begin, I give the word to Ahmad.

**Ahmad Al Addous**

Okay, thank you very much. For now, I just want to welcome my Iraqi colleagues in Arabic.

[Greetings in Arabic].

**Paulo Resende da Silva**

Thank you. Now I give the word to Filippo, that you have a presentation with the title “Trends in internationalization of universities and the impact of covid-19 pandemic”.

**Filippo Sartor**

Today we are going to cover two main issues with you that are quite interconnected. One is called “trend in internationalization of university and the impact of COVID-19”, we want to discuss a little bit with you on how much internationalization of universities has changed or is going to change according to what we learn in the last two years with COVID. Of course, COVID impact many University dimensions, but in particular internationalization, because, of course, mobility was mostly blocked everywhere in the world, so people could not move anymore, and so the impact was definitely important. And then in the second part, we are going to discuss, and we are going to connect more with this idea of these webinars of working package 2, we are going to talk about governance, but not in general terms for the university level, as we have done in the previous webinars, but in particular dealing with internationalization. Which is model which are the models of internationalization governance within our universities? how they can be effective? how they can relate with the rest of universities? And we are going to deepen a little bit a case study from University of Bologna, where our Rector decided to appoint a special delegate for a specific geographic area. And Ahmad is going to talk to us about his experience as a delegate for the Rector exactly for Arab region. So something very much connected with Iraq and the rest of the Middle East and, overall speaking, the Arab region. So let's start talking about trends.

I just want to mention and suggest you to have a look to this newsletter, the University Word News, maybe you know it, and this newsletter come up every week. And you can subscribe for free. And it's quite interesting, because it provides a very updated view about the organization of universities all over the world, and particularly about internationalization. And here you have some titles that came up in the last year: “Will covid 19 pandemic kill off internationalization of universities?”; “United States: COVID-19 vaccine quandary for international students” (there is a very big issue now related to mobility and vaccination); “New Zealand: University hope partnerships will build foreign enrolments” (so they need to rise the foreign enrollment, and they hope to do so through partnerships with other universities); then “OECD warns UK universities that the fees are too high for online learning” (because most of the international students could not go to UK especially last year, but the fees stayed the same); “New inequalities in internationalization?” (this is a big issue that come up to the agenda of many universities); and then we have the case of Australia, where the University income from foreign students, that was so important for Australia University, really collapsed completely, and that's a big issue for Australia and for those countries that really count on the fees coming from international degree seeking students. But finally, in all these contests the European Union announced the biggest ever program for international mobility, the New Erasmus Plus Program 2021-2027.

So different things are happening when we are talking about internationalization and a very quickly we are going to three documents, survey and article that come up quite recently. One is this article called “International higher education at the crossroads post-COVID”. It came up in June, and it was made by Philip Altbach and Hans de Wit, two big gurus, when we talk about internationalization; then we have “Indian Guidelines for internationalization of higher education, that were published quite recently, in July; interesting because they are from India, so an emerging economy, because usually when we talk about internationalization and guidelines, I always come up from European Union countries or Australia, United States, United Kingdom or some countries with a quite mature education system. In this case it is India, and then we are going to see and focus a little bit on the priorities that can be interesting also for Iraq.

And then finally, we have a report of the University of Bologna, where last June, we analyzed the impact of internationalization in our universities, and we come up with some records and some impact on our institution. So very quickly, we are going to analyze these three documents. Let's start from Altbach and de Wit. Basically, they think that whatever it happens, we are not really talking about an academic revolution. Of course, there were a lot of consequences of the pandemic, but still not so huge to talk about academic revolution. I recommend having a look to this article, you can easily find it online for free, no problem at all. They are insisting that digitalization is becoming an important issue when we talk about the student and faculty mobility, professional development and teaching and learning. So, pandemic really increased the impact on everything dealing with digitalization and internationalization. And of course, they were already some pilot initiatives before but pandemic really identifies digitalization and online learning as a key component of internationalization ever before.

The second is that big mobility partners (and when I talk about mobility partners, I'm talking about the degree seeking students, so students that move to another country as a full student to get a degree), these patterns through during pandemic a little bit changed, and some bigger and traditional movement, for example, from China to UK or to us, decreased quite quickly, even those partner were already showing the authority of decreasing; so the pandemic, somehow arise some effects in these patterns that were already present before pandemic. Then if we talk about the short-term mobility (for one term or two terms, the Erasmus for example), these of course stopped during the pandemic, but it seems that the short-term mobility will gradually move back to normal levels. So the impact of short term mobilities may be even bigger in the short term of pandemic period, but it seems that are going to recover much more quickly than the mobility for degree seeking. Then, this important impact of international collaboration, the research that contributed significantly to find the scientific solution to COVID.

The big concern about the impact and the role of universities in solving big, global challenging, including and more even more COVID19. And finally, that could be interesting for Iraqi, the fact that physical mobility short term was always a problem for developing countries or global South countries, because actually it was very costly, maybe was not worth for short periods. In this case, what we learned in the last year that this virtual mobility opportunities that come up all over the world cannot substitute but can at least give a solution to mobility and to strengthening international intercultural competencies of students everywhere in the world, but especially in those countries that were not so used to short mobility. So just to conclude: we do not anticipate a revolution but definitely we do see serious challenges in particular concepts concerning assets and equity. So, these are the results of this article that I really recommend reading.

Let's move to India. That's interesting because here you can see a list of the main policies of the guideline for internationalization of higher education. And it's quite interesting because actually, most of the policies are quite well-known, such as internationalization at Home, credit recognition and short mobility; Global Citizenship Approach (an attempt to create these global citizenship approach in our classroom in order to offer to our students this possibility to learn how to deal not just locally but at the global level); then we have Academic and Research Collaboration at international level, we have a Brand Building Abroad, that means: let your country known abroad, let your institutions known abroad; and then we have the role of Alumni: it means mainly alumni students, or people that work everywhere in the world, but with the citizenship of your country that can be a good ambassador of the education system of your country and provide a lot of linkages. I leave one behind that is ICT based Internationalization: ICT based internationalization is becoming an important part of the agenda of internationalization plans of countries like India, and that's I think could be interesting. And maybe we would have not seen the ICT based internationalization four years ago before pandemic. Finally, just to conclude, the report of the impact of COVID pandemic on internationalization of university Bologna. Just some figures in 2020-2021, so last academic year, the student outcoming mobility short term was less than 60% of the previous year, for the year before pandemic, and this is quite a big concern because Bologna's mobility in Europe has always been growing in the last 30 years, so that was the first year that mobility registered a big fall. And of course, everybody knows why. Even if we are proven more flexible rules for mobility, so for example, the possibility to stay less than three months in the partner universities and the possibility to mix virtual and face to face mobility. The same is for incoming mobility. Less than 60% of students coming from Bologna for one or two terms. And I would say that we managed to come to Bologna, mostly from Europe. If we move outside Europe, it was almost zero.

For example, with Erasmus plus international credit mobility we didn't host any student for one year, including academic stuff. No one managed to come to Bologna, with some exception from Western Balkans, that anyway is still Europe. So big stop of all mobility flows. This is quite interesting. At least Bologna students decided to substitute physical mobility with virtual mobility experiences when the host University offered this opportunity (it means following online classes from the university the student were supposed to move). Students were and are looking forward to start moving again. This is very clear. In fact, we have a boom of application for Erasmus in 2021-2022, this academic year. So really students when we talk about the short mobility, credit mobility, they really want to start moving again. In any case, we started to offer some of the for mobility programs. And we decided to do some special program to include in our classroom students, for example for Africa, that were not used to come to Bologna mobility before, mainly due to economic opportunities. And those students so full of our classes online, and the results were quite satisfactory; for example, we had very few incoming students for Africa for a mobility, short mobility, and we definitely increased this number last year. Some group of academic and students join some online international collaborative learning initiatives. Some groups and some students have the opportunity to do some activities online that were not just following classes of other universities, but it was more collaborative: work together with our students, work together with our professor. It was mainly summer school or hackathon events. And we think that the result of this initiative was extremely satisfactory. All the services for students moved online, so we don't have anymore physical international desk; all the meetings, all the seminars and welcome events were done online, and they were, generally speaking, appreciated by the students, even those that come to Bologna.

When we talk about projects, like this, INsPIRE, Erasmus plus capacity building, all the mobilities of these projects were stopped. Only me and some professors start to move again, in partner countries, not before, even if we know that our professor managed to come to Iraq, actually, during the last academic year; anyway, all your project continued, and what we were quite satisfied because we managed to translate online some of our interactive activities that we were used to do physically. So online is not just follow webinars, but it can be also very interactive, and in some cases, we managed to practice this approach. And finally, if we move to degree seeking students, so students that from abroad come and enroll to university of Bologna, we didn't register a big collapse, the number of degree seeking students from abroad stays the same. And of course, maybe some of them didn't manage to come to Bologna, and they followed online from their own country, but they are enrolled for Bologna. And generally speaking, they did not have the same consequences of those country where degree seeking students are extremely important, also as an income or revenue (I'm talking about Australia, UK, United States, even because our fees are not so high, so students decided to enroll and pay those fees, even they were not able to come to Bologna, but just Follow online). So that's all, I just wanted to give you a picture of some impacts of the pandemic on internationalization. Maybe now we have just five minutes for some question and comments, and then we move on to the second part of the presentation.

#### **Paulo Resende da Silva**

We have a question from Rafa Albadawi: "how we are going to convince our students to go back to the traditional learning (classroom) after Covid 19 get over?"

#### **Filippo Sartor**

We just started our new academic year this week and all the classes are available in face to face, so students came back to Bologna, and the same classes are always available also online: student can also not go to class and follow the same lecture online streaming, in life. Actually, the first impression is that students are coming back to class. Maybe even more than class, they are really looking forward to coming back to university life. And it seems that things are working. Maybe this year was also an opportunity for academic staff to reconsider the way of teaching not necessarily online, but also in class. So, we are quite optimistic that this return to class will be effective, even if the student can still continue following online.

**Paulo Resende da Silva**

Also, we began our school year last week, and here it's only traditional, so all students come to the class. So, no video, no streaming sections nowadays here.

**Riccardo Mussari**

May I have a really fast comment to the question? Well, we have everywhere this kind of problem because there are economic, social and other variables involved. However, what we are discussing, at least here in Siena (I'm just giving a personal experience, a contribution based on personal experience), we're trying to think about the obvious segmentation of the market of students. So, probably there could be some academic products that can be produced and proposed online or in a mixed form; there are others for which these opportunities should be eliminated. Of course, this is not a problem that can be managed only by a single University. This is a governance problem. So it's a problem for the Minister, for the country, because of course this could be used in terms of competition. So, there could be a possibility that some universities use the opportunity of promoting only online courses in order to attract more students, disadvantaging other universities. So my impression is that these are general problem, everywhere in the world, and certainly there must be managed at two levels: central level, in order to guarantee a fair competition among University, and at the local level in order to understand if and to what extent some specific products can be produced also online.

**Paulo Resende da Silva**

It's always good to have additional information about what happened in different situations, and also this more general perspective. But when you look to our international student we are receiving, since last week, our Erasmus mobility of international students, we have student from South America they're going back again to the mobility process and they are now recovering a little bit to the pre-pandemic situation. We have some studies here in Portugal that demonstrated that student wants come back. They are tired to have lectures in virtual ways, they don't have the contact with colleagues, they need to have this social contacts with the colleagues and we of course, with professors also.

**Filippo Sartor**

Before the presentation of Ahmad, just some tips related to the governance and organizational models when we talk about internationalization of universities. There is an issue within the university that requires a certain degree of governance as a part of the overall governance system of the university. So when we talk about of governance of internationalization, maybe we can rise three questions. The first: which are the leading actors promoting and implementing internationalization strategies at university level? Of course, they can be many, and each University has its own solution. Second, in the definition and implementation of internationalization strategies, which role and function do the leadership play? And finally, which are the key features that a leadership for international must have? So when we talk about internationalization, of course, we have to deal with the governance and we register different governance model in Europe and all over the world.

Now, very quickly, we would like to give you some tips. And then we will take the case of University of Bologna. Which are the key decision that we have to take? Of course, when we talk about internationalization, governance depends on the university strategy and the internationalization strategy, and it is usually part of the overall strategy of the university. And we have to define a governance with a certain degree of autonomy; but this governance must be accountable, in particular to the rector and to the Council of the universities; we cannot figure out internationalization as a completely autonomous process within a university; it is part of the overall governance and strategy of the university. Then when we talk about internationalization, we have the central level, but we have also the faculty departmental level. So a government of internationalization must should combine all these elements: autonomy, accountability, central level, decentralized level.

And when we talk about key features, Jane Knight (this is another guru of internationalization already in 1994) tells us that, according to our leadership in internationalization must be effective, enthusiasts committed. And I want to focus especially on “enthusiastic”: if you are the leader of internationalization within your university, you must be enthusiastic and involve many people, even within your institution and outside your institution. So you really need to believe in it, you really need to be committed, and to be curious towards your institution. Let’s see what is happening in Europe when we talk about the leadership of university or referring to internationalization. We can have a model where we have a vice Rector for internationalization, that refers directly to the Rector (which is the case of University of Bologna, I think it's also the case of University of Siena). But we can also have a vice Rector, for example of Academic Affairs of our research, and then maybe just for delegates for internationalization. That is not referring directly to the director, but to the vice Rector. In Italy it’s not so common. We usually have a vice Rector for international relations. And finally, instead of a Rector, we have a sort of senior manager at the International Relations Office; sometimes he is a professor that decide not to teach anymore, so it's fully dedicated to internationalization, but works full of his time for internationalization. So he became a sort of practitioner of internationalization. If you tap in and see some institutions, for example, in Germany, some institutions are led in this way, it's not really a vice rector, but he's a senior manager with previous academic background. When we talk about internationalization, let's see what the components could be.

So we have already said that we have a vice rector or head of a unit, generally speaking appointed by the rector or by the University Council. But then we have also other components: we can have an international relation unit, but then we need also committee and I want to stress two kinds of committees. Maybe we need a committee made by representatives of the faculties to come back to this idea of Central decentralized level. So it's very important that the vice Rector (the head of the unit of international relations) is regularly consulting who is in charge of internationalization or generally speaking who is in charge of the management and the policy or the faculty or departmental level, because when we're talking about internationalization is always a combination of top down and bottom up: top down means policies that are coming from the central, that should be embedded in the faculty or department, or initiatives that start at departmental level, but somehow must be connected with the overall policy of the institution. So very important, create committees, where they can be a sort of consultation of the faculty from the department. And then we can have also other kinds of committees made by delegates appointed for a specific issue. So we imagine a model of internationalization where the vice Rector is not alone, there is a unit for the management, but there are also other academic staff involved that can support the vice rector. Very briefly, what about the international relation unit? Of course, what I just want to say that they can be extremely different and move from one-two people to 40-50 people with sub-units and very specific roles. And in some European countries that include our academic staff, they work part time or even full time for internationalization.

I just want to mention that there are two opposite situations that are very much structured with a vice Rector and head of International Relations Office, and then we have an international relation office with subunits, so very much structured, or we have very simple situation where we have a vice rector of our head of the unit, just one, and then a very few stuff, sometimes even Academy stuff did work for internationalization. And I realized that most emerging countries or developing countries are more similar to the second rather than the first model. And finally, and now I will leave the floor to Ahmad, when we have also the possibility to create committees.

For example, delegates of internationalization for specific issues that are appointed by the vice rector or by director. So we have a model where we have a delegate for a specific issue of internationalization like the delegate for student mobility, the delegate for agreements, the delegate for internationalization at home, they work together with the vice Rector that are appointed to take care of a specific topic issues of internationalization. This is the case, for example, of the university La Sapienza of Roma. If you go into the organigram of la Sapienza, you will see this structure. But then we have also another structure. It is a model based on geographic specialization. So we have the vice Rector, and then we have the delegate for Europe, the delegate for Middle East, the delegate for United States, the delegate for Latin America, the delegate for Australia; it depends, of course, on the strategy of the university. And now we want to really to focus on this model, because it's the model of University of Bologna, where the vice Rector works together with delegates for specific geographic area. And we want to show the pros and cons of this decision and why our delegates, for example for Arab countries as we have, an Ahmad is the delegate of director for our country, can be useful in order

to strengthen the relation between our institution and institutions of those specific geographic areas. So, thanks a lot and I'll leave the floor to Ahmad.

#### **Ahmad Al Addous**

Thank you very much. As you know my short presentation and is in Arabic language.

[ARABIC PRESENTATION]

#### **Paulo Resende da Silva**

Thank you Ahmad. And I think it was very important to have this opportunity to use Arabic in this our webinar because it increases the communication process and because we are working for our colleagues from Iraq.

Now it's time to listen our colleague from Iraq. If you want to express in Arabic with Professor Ahmad, you can express, don't worry about us. Because this webinar is for you, it is not for us. It's time to give some questions, give some comments, it's your time now.

#### **Ahmed Razzaq Al-Manea**

Hello, may I have a question here? I will speak in English. Thank you very much. And thank you, Dr. Ahmed for your information about Bologna University. I think we heard about Bologna internationalization before, but I haven't heard about a lot about it. So, my question is: how we can get in more workshop information and updates, not about just the assurance and quality things, that a cooperation with the staff they say colleagues to do research and scientific cooperation, things like that. So is there any method you can suggest or we can just communicate with the colleagues there for example, an engineering colleagues, something like that. So that we could cooperate in some scientific direction.

#### **Filippo Sartor**

I would say that there was no space during these webinars to discuss about the possibility of cooperation and how to approach colleagues of University of Bologna. So, I will not discuss now, I just want to remind to all of us that there will be a specific working package in this INSPIRE project that is working package 4 that will be fully dedicated to internationalization and how to draft and implement the strategic planning for internationalization. During those activities we will have also the possibility to meet, maybe also you to come to Bologna, I don't remember exactly the structure of the project anymore because the COVID pandemic changed everything. But definitely in this case, there will be also the opportunity to discuss and also to find a way on how to approach international colleagues and also about the best method to be effective in approaching international colleagues in Bologna, but maybe also in other institutions.

#### **Riccardo Mussari**

Thanks Filippo, It is a very important comment you made. Thank you very much. This is just an appetizer. Every one of us should know there is a whole working package managed directly by Bologna University only focused on internationalization. So, this will be a wonderful opportunity for all of us, for those of us who are particularly focused and interested in this kind of topic. With regard to the possibility of establishing or importing relationship, academic or scientific relationship with other international partners in this project, of course, we are all open. Certainly, University Bologna will be our facilitator because they have a specialization in that. And that's why we are particularly grateful to

Filippo and all the staff for having accepted our invitation to join the project. But all European universities and members who are here are, of course, international oriented, otherwise, they would not have been here.

#### **Paulo Resende da Silva**

Additionally, we'll begin in October four workshops. We will have two workshops in October and two in November on different topics. The question of the third mission, the responsibility and internationalization of the university will be in November. The first workshop will be on quality assurance. But now we go a little bit deeper on the topics of the workshops. Of course, in the issue of internationalization, we have a particular working package of which Bologna University is the leader of the working package, and it will support the Iraqi universities to build the international system plan, or something similar like that. But let's go a little bit deeper.

#### **Filippo Sartor**

I can give a final comment to the aim of this workshop. Apart giving just a very quick picture of what is going on nowadays in the world, dealing with internationalization and the impact of COVID, the aim was just to give an idea that even when we talk about internationalization we need a governance model that be linked with the overall governance model of the university and all the issues that have I have discussed in the previous workshop and that I know you're going to deepen in the project. It's not just an issue of mobility, it's not just an issue of a professor that want to find another professor in another university in the world; it is part of the planning and organizational model of the university. And so it cannot be something considered totally outside the debate on governance, even on the role of the minister and government on universities; today we didn't have the time to discuss the way the government and the ministry support or not support internationalization of the local universities, and it may have an important impact on the approach of internationalization of the university.

#### **Paulo Resende da Silva**

We are almost in the end of our fifth seminar. Thanks again to Professor Ahmad and Filippo for your sharing and your time to stay with us this morning. We'll come back for the last webinar next week that will be about university management models. Our invited speaker will be a vice rector of Portuguese Catholic University, and previously she was also vice rector of Queensborough University. She was for a very short period of the time the Minister of higher education in Portugal; when I say very short it's only three weeks because for political reasons they changed the government, a situation that happens sometimes. See you next week, same day, Thursday, same time, 1pm in Iraqi, and pay attention because after next week, we begin workshops. We will send the precise information to all of you in a very few days. Bye, thank you and take care.