

## Offshore education

### Offshore education in the wider context of internationalisation and ICT: experiences and examples from Dutch higher education

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## Preface: Offshore education, a sample of Dutch initiatives

This report presents a study on offshore education conducted by a consortium of Dutch higher education researchers and commissioned by the Digital University (DU). The study explored the extent to which Dutch higher education institutions are involved in offering their educational services abroad (offshore education). After thoroughly embedding offshore education in the wider contexts of internationalisation and ICT policies, the study particularly explores the practical experiences with a number of real-life offshore activities of Dutch higher education. As a warm-up to this report, a few interesting cases are briefly touched upon below.

The research team is grateful to the Digital University (DU) who commissioned this project and created a stimulating, supportive and reflective environment. Particularly the support and feedback from Peter Fest is highly appreciated. We also owe many thanks to the review committee for this project, consisting of Bas Cordewener from the Stichting SURF, Henk Frencken from ICLON (Leiden University) and Soehirman Patmo from the NUFFIC. Finally we would like to give our gratitude to all respondents for their willingness to contribute to this study through the web-based questionnaire, telephone interviews and face-to-face interviews. We are convinced that all of this resulted in a report in which many can find valuable information for their own purposes and we hope you will read this with great interest and joy!

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### Christelijke Hogeschool Nederland (CHN)

Since years CHN has gathered much experience in offshore activities. For reasons of growth and their Christian mission they are focused on the international 'market'. Since the early nineties they had intensive staff and student exchange with institutions in countries as Lebanon and South Africa. This developed over the years into joint courses in these and other countries. Nowadays they have several branch campuses all over the world. Students that start their education on one of these campuses can join the Grand Tour programme and follow parts of their education on one or more of the different locations in the world. During this time, staff and organisation have been professionalised. Also the number of students has increased. Besides this economic success, there's also an educational and ethical success for students that follow a programme at CHN.

CHN works with the didactical concept of Problem Based Learning (PBL) and currently ICT plays a minor role in the offshore activities (podcasts, Skype). There are plans for more extensive use of an LMS as Blackboard.

The Dutch master programmes are accredited by the NVAO, but the accreditation of the Dutch diploma abroad turns out to be complicated. Local laws and differences between them make a common policy for validating diplomas for CHN and her international partners difficult. Another problem is the measurement of the quality of the international partners and the English level of the student. Some lessons learned have been identified. An important one is taking time with your international partner to design a joint strategy that focuses on the strong point of each partner and that benefits both.



## **INHOLLAND**

INHOLLAND University of Professional Education tries to distinguish itself by a high level of ICT facilities, cooperation with professional organisations and with many international higher education institutions. This is also reflected in its general mission and strategy in which it is stated that electronic learning environments and an international dimension, either internationalisation “at home” or abroad belong to its focal areas.

INHOLLAND integrates internationalisation in all its programmes. A first internationalisation strategy is to stimulate mobility, both of students and staff. This provides a life experience of other programmes and cultures. The second strategy is internationalisation at home. As 85%-90% of the students do not go abroad, all programmes include some international dimension, which is often in the form of international projects in close cooperation with partner institutions. Also 12 programmes are fully taught in English, which enables many international students to come and study a full programme or parts of it at INHOLLAND and as such also provide an international environment to the regular Dutch students in these programmes. The third strategy concentrates on international networks. INHOLLAND has signed contracts with about 350 international partner institutions. In recent years the focus has changed from widening the group of international partners to intensifying the relationships with a more limited number of international institutions that are equally willing to invest and benefit from cooperation. This resulted in the fourth type of internationalisation policy: strategic cooperation with partners in order to explore and reach synergetic effects which resulted in a few offshore education projects in which joint educational activities are developed.

The first offshore activity is that four of the economic bachelor programmes of INHOLLAND are offered at the Stichting Hoger Onderwijs Surinam in which the private division of the Anton de Kom Universiteit in Paramaribo (Surinam) cooperate with the private division of INHOLLAND. Local lecturers, annually trained by INHOLLAND staff, teach the complete INHOLLAND programmes leading to an official INHOLLAND degree. Many, mostly Dutch-Surinam, lecturers teach in a part of the program. Only 4 years after its start in 2001 these programmes now collectively attract 385 students whilst this number is still growing steadily. The programmes fully depend on tuition fees. The Dutch Ministry of Education did not object to this initiative which is regarded as an eminent example of Dutch-Surinam cooperation by many public officials.

The second offshore activity concerns intensive cooperation between INHOLLAND and Shanghai Normal University in China. This project consists of a phased approach to jointly develop parts of study programmes in international Leisure Management with the aim to extend that into a full joint degree program. Gradual increasing staff exchange generates mutual understanding and trust, essential for fruitful cooperation. The experience in Shanghai will be used to expand activities with other partners. Other links are with UADE and Belgrano in Argentina and London South Bank University.

## **Saxion Hogeschool**

Saxion has been active in international activities for over ten years. Their activities have steadily grown from one partnership with a university in Vietnam to two more partners in China and Indonesia and an international population of ten percent of all students. Saxion uses the 3+1 concept which means that students take their final year in the Netherlands. Not all of these students come from the three partner universities, every student that is eligible can join the final year. Together with the partners Saxion has created a curriculum that enables the students to enrol for their final year in the Netherlands.

The final year for the student is taught in international classrooms, with students of at least five nationalities including Dutch students. In such a classroom students learn to work in an international environment. The activities evolved out of the internationalization activities of Saxion who wanted to offer their students international experience. It was a small step from an international semester with exchange students to an international final year.

Other offshore activities were either put on hold or cancelled due to problems with Dutch regulations that state that students have to be in the Netherlands in order to get a Dutch diploma.

One of the problems one encounters in the partnerships is the different style of education. Especially providing applied programs is a problem for countries that do not know multidisciplinary courses. Other problems that arise are language problems especially in China and Vietnam and the low penetration rate of broadband internet for online courses. Lessons learned include: hard entry qualifications for language, a multilevel partnership not only including education provides more stability and the fact that teachers have to be educated to teach in the correct way.

### **University of Twente**

From the University of Twente two partner scenarios are discussed. One is in the area of business studies focusing on China and the other in teacher training mainly focusing on Europe with some African countries participating. Both projects are in the early or initial stages of development. Based on two interviews with the two respective program leaders, the following presents some first experiences as well as views of how the chances for success can be enhanced.

On the basis of both partner scenarios the following general observations can be made.

1. Offshore education is not a simple a 'selling' product. It is crucial to have good partners who are reliable and who are prepared to develop the envisaged program on a jointly basis.
2. Both projects make use of ICT and particularly the infrastructure which is available at the University of Twente and applications like Teletop are indispensable. Some extension is needed, particularly in the technical support for video conferencing, but this is expected not to be a major hindrance. Technology, however, is no substitution and therefore not a sufficient condition for success. The educational process has to be changed as well, both in terms of organisation and didactical approaches by creating a real digital learning environment.
3. It is important to take the cultural differences between the participating countries into account. For the project in China this means involvement of Chinese colleagues in all stages of the project. In the project on Teacher Training national contexts are very crucial and are factors for success or failure.
4. The aspect of recognition deserves more attention as well as national legislation. Arrangements between providers in different countries should be clear in terms of accreditation or validation. Especially the project in China learns that local authorities attach much value to programs that are accredited on the basis of international standards and criteria.
5. It has brought forward that a project does not stop after the project period is over. It is important to go beyond the project phase and to move into a ramp-up phase with implementation and evaluation. It is suggested that SURF offers assistance through an advisory board to assist institutions in developing the (funded) project further towards the implementation phase.



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## 1 Introduction

The *Digitale Universiteit* (Digital University, DU) requested the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) and its partner organizations to study and report on offshore education with a special focus on the use of ICT. Such a study links the areas of internationalisation and the role of ICT in education to each other. Key issues concern general processes of internationalisation, e-learning, and the use of ICT in higher education.

More specifically, this study and report focus on various topics related to offshore education. In the framework of our study, offshore education is defined as education that is (partly) offered on location abroad (for fee-paying students, either with or without scholarships). The issues related to offshore education being discussed in this report first concern the general developments in internationalisation and ICT. Second, the specific position of offshore education as a sub branch of internationalisation will be indicated and the major international developments in this area will be described. Third, the market for offshore education will be touched upon based on the secondary analysis of existing sources. It particularly focuses on the potential for “selling” Dutch higher education services abroad. Fourth, we will explore the experiences and wishes of DU institutions with regard to offshore education, both through a survey and case studies. Finally, there will be a dissemination seminar/conference for a selected group interested contacts in Dutch higher education.

### 1.1 Objective of the study and research questions

The main objective of this study is to explore the potentials of offshore-education for Dutch higher education. Offshore-education is one of the trends in internationalisation of higher education. One could call it a next step in the processes of mobility of students, mutual cooperation and international recognition. Offshore-education basically comes down to bringing education to the students rather than students coming to the education providers. In this study we will focus on the opportunities, advantages and disadvantages of offshore education, how ICT applications can be of use to it and how (Dutch) higher education could go about all of this. To further explore these objectives, the following research questions are formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the general developments in internationalisation of higher education and what is currently the role of ICT applications with regard to internationalisation? Answering this question provides a basic framework in which the tendency to offshore education can be placed and embedded. This question is being addressed in Chapter 2.
2. How can offshore-education be defined within the context of internationalisation? In order to focus our analyses, offshore-education will be precisely defined in terms of models and typologies one could expect to see in practice. This question will be addressed in Chapter 3.
3. What are the international policies and experiences with regard to offshore education? Dutch initiatives to explore the potential of offshore education are not fully new. Other countries and individual higher education institutions already developed policies and strategies to “sell” their educational products abroad. Such policies and practices can form a framework to position and direct Dutch initiatives. This question will be addressed in Chapter 4.
4. What is the market for Dutch higher education services? Though the trend towards offshore education is interesting in itself, it of course is also relevant to explore a bit the potential market for Dutch higher education abroad. If one tries to develop tools for offering Dutch higher education services abroad, one has to know whether one can be of interest to specific target groups. In Chapter 5 this question is being addressed by looking at potential interesting countries and disciplines.

5. What are the current practices and wishes of Dutch higher education institutions with relation to offshore education? This question will be particularly addressed by a survey among DU-institutions which will be reported on in Chapter 6 (later stage of the project).
6. What can be learned from good (and bad) practices in the area of offshore education? In Chapter 7 a few case studies that are selected on the basis of the survey results will be discussed.
7. Finally, the project deals with the question whether the institutions that participate in this project can be helped in applying some of the gained knowledge for the further development of some specific offshore initiatives (partner scenarios). Based on the surveys and internal contacts such partner scenarios will be identified and selected for further analysis and support to be reported on in Chapter 8.

## 1.2 Research method and structure of the report

The issues addressed in this report to a large extent are covered by desk research. Particularly the study into the developments in the area of internationalisation, defining offshore education, international experiences and the market analysis heavily draw on the analysis of national and international policy documents, prior research and other relevant information available through books, academic journals and internet sites.

The institutional experiences and wishes are explored through a web-based survey among educational directors of study programmes and further telephone interviews with representatives of promising cases. Based on these interviews a number of cases studies and partner scenarios were selected through which interesting examples and initiatives are analysed in greater detail in order to indicate potential problems, solutions, failure, success and just the day to day practical issues of offshore education. The case studies and partner scenarios are conducted by face-to-face interviews with representatives who are strongly involved in the respective initiatives.

The report is structured as follows. The preface introduced some interesting examples of offshore education as a sort of warm up to the report. The developments in the internationalisation of higher education, e-learning and lifelong learning as well as their (potential) impact on the use of ICT for teaching and research are presented in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 offshore education is being defined and explored in greater detail. Following the definitions, Chapter 4 presents an overview of the international state of the art with regard offshore education. In Chapter 5 the market potential for offshore education activities will be discussed.

Chapter 6 starts the empirical exploration of the major developments and wishes in the area of offshore education by Dutch higher education institutions through the presentation of the major outcomes of a web-based quick scan survey among educational directors of the DI-institutions and some other Dutch higher education institutions that are very active in the area of internationalisation. This chapter also provides an overview of the results of short telephone interviews with representatives of interesting offshore initiatives, investigating the major reasons, successes and failures of such activities. Chapter 7 explores four interesting cases in greater detail, reflecting in depth face-to-face interviews with representatives of CHN, INHOLLAND, Saxion Hogescholen and the ITC. Main issues are the organisation of the offshore activities, the way in which ICT is used, problems and solutions, the results and lessons learned. Chapter 8 provides some insights in offshore activities that are still in the developmental stage, which are called partner scenarios. These look at the organisation, problems, ambitions and future directions of starting offshore activities.

The report ends with Chapter 9 in which the major conclusions of the study are drawn.

## 2 Internationalisation and ICT: general developments

This chapter provides an introduction to internationalisation and ICT in higher education. Attention is given to conceptual issues, developments, current practices, and the opportunities and consequences for higher education and higher education institutions. As such, this chapter provides a framework and context in which offshore education can be further defined and elaborated. Offshore education can be seen as a sub-branch of internationalisation in which ICT applications and e-learning may play an important role.

Internationalisation and ICT are much discussed as two separate topics. They are not necessarily connected and virtual education is not by definition international, neither is international education virtual. In the development of electronic learning environments (ELO) as developed in many higher education institutions, ICT-applications are meant primarily for the own students and, therefore, an international dimension is not necessarily present. Similarly most non-traditional providers of higher education mainly in the private sector offer e-learning for the national market and are not operating in an international context at all (for example, NTI, LOI). Moreover, education provided transnationally through ICT is as such not international. The fact that the source of learning is in another country, and delivered in English is not a sufficient condition to qualify this learning as being internationalised (Wächter, 2002). This would require an internationalisation of the taught content or of the learning experience which is not necessarily provided by virtual learning.

In this part we explore the potential relationships and mutual accelerating effects of ICT and internationalisation. As such, we will particularly discuss why ICT applications can be useful in higher education and what its added value can be for internationalisation.

### 2.1 Internationalisation

#### 2.1.1 The concept of internationalisation

Although universities have always been regarded as inherently international institutions and embedded in an international context, the issue of internationalisation has become a major issue since higher education became part of the European agenda. From an initial focus of European policies on mobility, exchange of individuals, and networking at institutional level, the emphasis gradually developed to enhance cooperation at curriculum level, harmonisation of the architecture of HE systems in Europe, as well as policy-developments at international and national level. Higher education institutions themselves are increasingly becoming key players in this process of the emerging global knowledge society. In addition to the mobility of students and staff, higher education institutions are driven by economically oriented rationales, which may be related to improve their international competitiveness, or to enhance the international competitive position of the national economy. In achieving these aims approaches range from European-wide cooperation to straightforward international competition, with many forms of interaction between the two. Regulatory frameworks are being adapted and the international dimension is gaining importance in national policies for higher education. The Bologna Declaration has an undeniable impact on this process with a certain convergence as a result.

In empirical and theoretical studies several terms are used to indicate some of the important challenges that higher education institutions are facing in the contemporary world, namely internationalisation, globalisation and Europeanization. However, a precise demarcation of these concepts is not clear and these terms are often used in an inconsistent way. In the framework of this study the term internationalisation seems to be most simple and convenient. Internationalisation assumes that nation states continue to play a role as economic, social and cultural systems, but that they are becoming more interconnected and activities crossing their borders are increasing.



Cooperation between nation states is expanding and national policies are placing a stronger emphasis on regulating or facilitating border-crossing activities (Huisman and Van der Wende, 2005). We use the term "internationalisation of higher education" to cover all policies and activities of governments and higher education institutions aimed at making higher education (more) responsive to the challenges of internationalisation, Europeanization and globalisation. As the analysis of national policies shows (Huisman and Van der Wende, 2005), there are very important shifts in the concepts of internationalisation, compared to earlier years. One tendency was the change from (cultural) cooperation to more competition-focused rationales, in some cases wholly substituting the cooperative paradigm by a competition-grounded logic. More recently the cultural development perspective gains ground again.

Both elements, increased competitiveness on an international scale as well as international initiatives focused on co-operation are two sides of the internationalisation process. In the following discussion on the connection between internationalisation and ICT both elements will be taken into account.

### 2.1.2 European developments: Bologna, Lisbon, Bergen

Internationalisation in the European context has gradually moved beyond the concentration on academic mobility (Erasmus, Socrates and Tempus programmes) and inter-institutional co-operation towards policies to internationalise higher education on a much broader scale to the level of higher education systems. The Bologna-Declaration, signed in 1999 by the European ministers, expresses the political desire to create one European Higher Education Area by 2010, in which students can choose where and what to study. The general objective is to realise a common structure in higher education throughout Europe and come to a general higher education structure into three-cycle degrees, the bachelors, masters and doctoral level studies. Basic idea is that this should create a better and more open world of learning, with enhanced international mobility, transparency, transfer and recognition of qualifications.

The Bologna-process stresses the European wide international collaboration to improve the performance of higher education throughout Europe. The Lisbon conference integrated the international collaboration with the overall strategic goal for Europe to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

In the subsequent communiqués from the ministerial conferences in Prague, Berlin and the latest in Bergen (2005), the ministers stressed their commitment to continue the Bologna process and underscored the central role of higher education institutions, their staff and students as partners in this process. With the necessary legislative reforms largely in place, these stakeholders have to implement the European higher education area (EHEA).

In Bergen (2005) a mid-term stocktaking report was presented. The Working Group on Stocktaking concluded that substantial progress has been made in three priority areas for realising the EHEA:

- *The degree system.* The overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA comprises three cycles (including the possibility of intermediate qualifications), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles.
- *Quality assurance.* Almost all countries have made provision for a quality assurance system based on the criteria set out in the Bergen communiqué and with a high degree of cooperation and networking.
- *Recognition of degrees and periods of study.* This concerns the Lisbon Recognition Convention according to which institutions should accept a student with foreign qualifications unless the institution can prove that this is not responsible.



These priority areas are considered as instruments to foster European collaboration aimed at realising a high-quality education, strengthening of research and innovation and the synergetic relationships between the higher education sector and other research sectors. Another priority area is to further embed lifelong learning in higher education. This involves creating opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, including procedures for the recognition of prior learning. Although the Bologna process is considered as a necessary condition for the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA, this is less pronounced compared to the Lisbon strategy and international cooperation between institutions, intercultural understanding and respect, element throughout Europe seems to prevail.

### 2.1.3 Internationalisation of Dutch higher education

The international competitive element is more pronounced in the reaction of the Dutch ministry on the Bergen conference and the jointly published state of affairs regarding the implementation of the so-called internationalisation letter Higher Education "*Koers op Kwaliteit*". The Dutch State Secretary claims that Dutch higher education should be internationally attractive for talented students and researchers. The quality of foreign students in Dutch higher education should be stimulated in order to meet the demands of the Dutch knowledge economy. In order to enhance the international positioning of Dutch higher education to attract the best students from abroad, a number of instruments exist which are quite fragmented and need more coherence. Instruments include the Huygens scholarship programme, further development of 'knowledge scholarships' for institutions to strengthen the international profiling of a university or HBO, the creation of 'Centres of excellence', the Netherlands Education Support Offices (NESOs), the links with Dutch economic support offices (EVD) abroad, and a 'code of conduct' to handle and communicate with international students.

Another important instrument is 'image branding' (*'beeldmerk'*). In supporting the competitive position a communication strategy is needed on the basis of the 'unique selling points' of universities and HBOs. The Ministry aims to develop a homogenous national communication strategy.

The government's policy on internationalisation fits into the developments at the institutional level and the promotion of individual institutions should result in a recognisable and appealing image of Dutch higher education. Many Dutch institutions are expanding their international activities and aim at increasing international student enrolment. The motivations are multiple and are related to both academic and economic concerns:

- Programmes take a mutual understanding approach to the internationalisation of higher education, although they also have academic, socio-economic and political objectives.
- But there is also a revenue-generating approach to the internationalisation of higher education such as increasing the size and quality of an institution's student pool. Especially at the postgraduate level where courses are increasingly taught in English.
- Another important institutional policy is to recruit researchers from abroad, especially in those faculties where shortages are occurring.

For researchers there is a longer tradition to interact with colleagues from different institutions for the advancement of scientific knowledge. International recognition has become the standard for assessing the research and scholarly quality of research groups. For the research funding of institutions the international reputation of the researchers involved is increasingly becoming the dominant pattern, although the intensity of this varies among different disciplinary areas.



## 2.2 ICT in higher education

In this part we explore the conceptual issues, role, current practice, challenges and potentials of ICT in higher education. As such, we will particularly discuss why ICT applications can be useful in higher education with a view on its potential added value for internationalisation.

### 2.2.1 ICT and e-learning in higher education: virtual versus traditional learning

In recent decades, many ICT applications have been introduced in higher education with regard to the educational delivery and support processes (Boezerooij, 2006). The crucial question is whether ICT and especially online distance education fundamentally altered or alters the delivery of courses and degree programs. The implementation of ICT tools has mostly been a bottom-up process leading to incremental change through which the use of e-learning is integrated in old and existing practices (Collis & Van der Wende, 2002).

What is most important here is that the use of ICT makes higher education less dependent on time and location and therefore enables higher education to cater for larger and different groups of students. In terms of internationalisation, this means that international co-operation among HE institutions in research and teaching is facilitated. E-mail certainly intensified interpersonal contacts whereas e-mail and internet provide access to much more information within only a fraction of time as was the case a decade ago. The fact that now most information is digitally available speeded-up interactivity tremendously. Internet as such made national borders vanish in terms of information flows and partly in terms of contacts between researchers, teachers and students.

From a student perspective the use of ICT can to a large extent replace physical mobility and face to face education, thus internationalisation at home based on blended learning. This reduces or replaces the physical student mobility which may have a price in terms of a reduced impact of intercultural exchange and personal development. A living experiencing and studying in a different social and cultural environment were among the main objectives of the EU student mobility programs like Erasmus and Socrates. This can be set off through blended learning whereby a stay in the host country is alternated with distance education and e-learning. In short, ICT applications are argued to have the following benefits in education, particularly in a context of internationalisation (including offshore education):


- Overcoming physical distance
- Solving time or scheduling problems
- Expanding the limited number of places available
- Accommodating low or dispersed enrolments
- Making the best use of the limited number of teachers available
- Dealing with cultural, religious and political considerations

This list of advantages indicates that higher education institutions and programmes can gain from introducing ICT application in the educational processes. This process of the introduction of ICT technologies in higher education is said to follow a change pattern with the following 3 stages (Collis & Moonen, 2001):

1. Pre-initiation and initiation stage in which activities are mainly bottom-up experiences
2. Implementation, in which a more strategic approach is developed
3. Institutionalisation, in which the change becomes institutionalised and becomes an integral part of the processes in higher education institutions

As e-learning and the use of ICT in higher education often may be still characterised as being in the initiation or implementation stage in some higher education institutions, one can say that many other institutions (or parts of it) are in the transition from initiation to implementation or even





institutionalisation of ICT applications. For example Smith (2005) states that “a fundamental shift away from individual innovation to a systematic and politically-driven model of online education is highlighted. There is also evidence for an increasing systematisation”. In addition to that, the OECD (2005) indicates that universities increasingly employ institution-wide strategies for online or e-learning. Nevertheless Collis & Van der Wende (2002) state that a complete institutionalisation of ICT requires:

- An institution-wide technological infrastructure;
- A rich pedagogical use of this infrastructure;
- Strategic plans to use ICT for different target groups.

Though often the technological infrastructure is in place, the pedagogical use of this infrastructure in most cases is in a development stage and strategies with respect to various target groups are not made explicit yet.

A further step is to look at the ways in which ICT application are used in higher education, one can distinguish three stages that show increasing complexity:

1. Substitution, which suggests that ICT applications replace previous educational tools or methods without changing the structure of the educational process. ICT applications repeat existing practices or make them more automatic, like using CD-rom instead of books.
2. Transition implies that with the use of ICT applications also the educational process is changed in terms of organisation and implementation. One can think of the use of distance learning and virtual class rooms.
3. Transformation concerns the situation in which the educational process changes so dramatically that one could hardly speak of any similarities with respect to previous situations in terms of organisation, content and outcomes.

In most cases, ICT applications are closest to be in stage 1, substitution. But educationists particularly strive for a situation of transformation in which the whole educational process becomes different. As a result many institutions are actively involved into a further integration of ICT in the educational processes. Some are more advanced than others as one can for instance see at conferences that focus on ICT and higher education. Often far-reaching ICT applications are being used at a small scale still.

Taking the various perspectives together one can conclude that most higher education institutions in western countries are in the processes of developing and implementing institutional strategies for ICT applications and of integrating these ICT initiatives more into the whole of the study programmes (transition or even transformation of the educational processes). This transition stage in which many higher education institutions struggle with developing a more coherent way of integrating ICT (and internationalisation) in their basic educational structures offers a lot of seeding ground to which the current project can contribute. The aim to explore potentials, wishes, needs and good practices of offshore education and the potential benefits of ICT and e-learning in this area can provide educationists as well as national and institutional policy makers with valuable information to take their initiative a step further.

Current practice shows a wide spectrum of the ways in which ICT is implemented in traditional and e-learning programmes. Rather than considering e-learning as replacing existing practices or radically changing the traditional modes and roles, there is a clear tendency towards blended forms of complementing traditional modes of educational delivery with electronically delivered components. This means that there can be a wide spectrum of programmes that contain e-learning components to programmes that are fully online-based. In other words, there is need for



differentiation and profiling, whereby the better of two worlds are taken together. Already in traditional distance learning programs, one can distinguish programs that differ in the extent to which there is (face-to-face) contact between students and teachers. Some programs solely consist of independent study with little or no contact, but most use the computer to communicate in a virtual classroom or plan face-to-face meetings next to this (blended learning).

As blended learning appears to be the most common way of integrating ICT in higher education it is important to add that there is some evidence that different student types (by age, profession) show differential preferences for online versus classroom experiences. Thus different target groups need to be approached in different ways. Especially online courses are attractive for employees in companies and for professionals who want to update their knowledge and skills. The market in this area is developing fast, especially if the information these professionals need can be packaged in ways that are accessible, flexible, and convenient (Tomlinson-Keasy, 2002). The 2003 e-learning readiness ranking (The Economist Intelligent Unit, 2003) observes high growth rates on the corporate e-learning market, indicating an increasing demand for quick, adaptable training options for company's employees.

In the context of offshore education, it is interesting to explore the potential use of ICT applications. Because higher education institutions that provide education abroad are likely to use local teachers and all kinds of tools that can make the education process more efficient and can facilitate the contacts between students and teachers (at and from the home institution). As one can expect, the use of ICT in higher education can be expected to be most far reaching in distance education. As such we provide some examples of the use of ICT in distance education in the following section.

### 2.2.2 ICT in distance education

Independent distance study programs have existed since before long. They use self-study materials that can be studied at home with little or no contact with a tutor or students. In the early days, everything went by post. Nowadays, modern tools are used such as a virtual learning environment and e-mail. The learning materials can be of a written nature, but also contain computer assisted instruction programs or simulations.

Distance education programs with virtual classrooms use technology such as videoconferencing and a virtual learning environment to simulate a real classroom. These tools afford the exchange of experiences between both teachers and students and among students. Technology based programs differ in the extent to which they use technology.

Blended distance education programs combine distance approaches with face-to-face meetings. Face-to-face meetings are used to get acquainted with each other and to exchange experiences. Students work at home on assignments and conduct self-study.

One can easily imagine that modes of distance education can also be used to further extend internationalisation of higher education. Either to keep in contact with international students who followed part of a program by being physically present, or to teach students fully without the need for face-to-face education.

To be more explicit, a number of interesting applications can be mentioned, such as initiatives in joint distance learning programs, a wide use of e-mail, portals, chat-sites, central databases (blackboards), video-conferencing and development of international competencies. Jager *et al.* (2004) mention a number of good practices such as the development of software and lifelong learning in an international network. One of US most prominent research universities (MIT) makes available virtually all its course materials through the web, free of charge, including lecture notes, syllabi, and even video lecturers. The MIT's OpenCourseWare initiative is followed by several other institutions whereby lecture notes, problem sets, syllabi, simulations, syllabi, and even video lectures will all be available (cf. SAKAI Educational Partner Program focused on open source





learning environment components). The Council for International Exchange of Scholars organised a virtual conference using DVC technology, so that Fulbright lecturers in Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan could compare their experiences and learn from each other how to improve their effectiveness in teaching in an Asian context. Initiatives have been launched to create virtual universities which offer a portal to courses at affiliated institutions, with the aim to broaden access and possibly to reduce public costs for expanding enrolment. Also Google's objective to bring the university libraries (from Harvard, Stanford, Oxford, and Michigan) online (at least part of the content of the publications) illustrates how source material can be made widely available for a larger public. Regarding research the Open Access movement is worth mentioning which aims to make research material directly available across institutions both to colleague-researchers and to a larger public. For the Netherlands initiatives have been taken to make research data and results digitally available through a network of repositories (DARE: *'Keur der Wetenschap'*) and Data archiving and networked Services (e.g. DANS).

### 2.2.3 ICT in Dutch higher education

The general aspects and developments in the area of ICT are now being explored briefly for Dutch higher education. In the Dutch government's discussion paper 'e-learning in higher education' it is argued that a considerable step is needed for utilisation of ICT educationally and strategically. The attention within higher education should shift from 'learning to use ICT' towards 'to use ICT for learning'. To move from individual initiatives to e-learning as a component of 'mainstream'-education is a major challenge for administrators, teaching staff, ICT-personnel and students, also requiring strategy and a cultural shift within the institutions. In its policies, the Dutch government links to the EU-Lisbon strategy and the European 'eEurope 2005 Action Plan' in which e-learning is one of the focus points to stimulate innovation in higher education.

E-learning is one of the tools to strengthen the international positioning of Dutch higher education, flexibilization of education, attracting new groups of learners like adult learners and those already employed. Particularly international students could benefit from less travelling and following parts of their courses in their own country through being connected through internet and portals of their host institution. In order to stimulate e-learning with an emphasis on learning and a 'sustainable' change of higher education with the help of ICT, a number of initiatives are advocated in the government's discussion paper:

- The extension of (didactical) support and motivation of teaching staff
- Emphasising the 'learning' dimension by including e-learning in the quality assurance system.
- International benchmarks analogous to the 'e-learning readiness rankings (cf. The Economist, 2003).

These steps are aiming to achieve a more sustained position of ICT in higher education and particularly in the learning process.

To date, ICT is mostly used for administrative functions, standard applications, electronic environment and so on, whereas according to the ICT-monitor (Ministry of OC&W, 2004) the use of ICT does not go along with or starts from an educational perspective. ICT is not based on an institution-wide perspective on learning (such as problem-based learning, competency-based learning, learning in teams), assessments or designing individual learning paths.

## 2.3 Implications of internationalisation and ICT for higher education

As one can expect, internationalisation and ICT can (and do) have a major impact on the operation of higher education systems and institutions in terms of objectives, target audiences, quality assurance, financing, organisation of education, course content, facilitation of students, language of



teaching, etc. It has been shown in the above that e-learning is most suitable for internationalisation and it enables to create an international learning setting for interactive and collaborative learning processes. Many institutions nowadays are developing international activities in research and education whereby ICT is increasingly utilised in a structural way. As such one can currently witness how computer technologies are opening new markets for course delivery on an international and global scale. This is manifested in various forms, such as the establishment of 'branch campuses' around the world, experiments with the offshore delivery of courses and providing courses and qualifications world-wide, often in partnership with local institutions. The most prominent form is virtual or online learning, delivered via the internet. New providers such as corporate and for-profit institutions are active on this market, and seem to have a competitive advantage because of their ability to quickly adopt more efficient online instructional technology. But some (public) universities have expanded their courses to serve a global audience as well, turning higher education into an export industry. Particularly the Open University in the UK has by far the largest number of non-UK students enrolled. The success of the British Open University is attributed to the high-quality instruction offered as well as to the multiple opportunities for students to interact with instructors and the available technology. Another example is the UK-e-university which offers its services in a number of countries abroad (see Chapter 4).

The question arises what this all means in terms of linking ICT to internationalisation policies in higher education. Though ICT and e-learning are high on the political agenda, applications for internationalisation purposes are limited in number and scale. Much is to be gained when ICT and education are more intertwined and further translated to the area of internationalisation which is one of the areas where most can be gained in terms of competition, efficiency and access. The potential implications for higher education will be discussed in the following subsections along a number of topics that may be particularly relevant in the context of offshore education.

### 2.3.1 From special projects to mainstream

Most ICT initiatives within institutions have followed bottom-up approach rather than being driven by institutionally-led strategic initiatives (Vd Wende & Vd Veen, 2003; see also De Boer & Boezerooij, 2003). The same has been the case for internationalisation initiatives until recently. Often universities make broad statements of commitment to employing ICT and internationalisation, but the actual practice is to place such efforts in small experimental units which are to some extent disconnected from the institutional policy. Interactive ICT based learning initiatives are focused on smaller groups of students and not so much on teaching mass classes. Of course some distance learning courses are spread on a wide scale, but higher education institutions still have to make the transition towards making e-learning a core business rather than an additional mode of delivery next to their traditional face-to-face education.

But more recently, European policies show a move away from smaller and short-term ICT projects towards larger projects that have an impact on institutions as a whole. For example, the *eLearning initiative* stimulates research on how ICT can be embedded better in the heart of the educational process. This moving away from special projects to mainstream on the institutional level requires a content management system. Commitment from the central management and clear visibility within the whole institution would be an important step forward to facilitate and disseminate the innovative use of ICT.

In the context of internationalisation and offshore education, this means that the focus should be more on implementing ICT a broad, institution-wide scale, and integrate it in the heart of educational programmes. Just like providing more and more education in English to suit international students, ICT and online courses should become more at the heart of institutional strategies if one wants to cater for larger groups of foreign students.



### 2.3.2 Involvement of teaching and research staff

In an environment where ICT is used to rapidly develop new methods and tools to support teaching and research it is difficult for academics to choose among the various (sometimes competing) support tools and to invest the time to make effective and efficient use of them. This implies that members of the academic community must continue to develop their digital literacy. In addition to that, teachers more and more have to get acquainted with the possibilities of integrating ICT in their teaching styles and organisation of the educational process. This requires a cultural shift in which face-to-face education becomes less important.

The involvement of academic staff is a condition sine qua non for the development of innovative learning environments. One of the reasons why the UK E-University failed was that most of the resources were poured into the web-based platform and little in actual course content. Academic staff should have more opportunities to familiarize themselves with ICT-based possibilities and be motivated to use these in their courses. Another example stems from the University of Amsterdam, where particularly older staff were not keen on investing much time and effort in familiarising with ICT applications and reforming their curricula accordingly. A major factor is also the lack of financial compensation for the extra time and efforts involved.

Related to internationalisation and offshore education, the above arguments show that it particularly is the teachers who can make the provision of education abroad a success or a failure. One has to recruit a group of teachers that are able and willing to provide the education on location and that are able to adjust the programmes of the home institution (or develop new programmes) that address the needs of the target audience and that enable intensive contacts with the home institution. This means that staff management should be directed at optimally involve those mostly concerned and as such may enhance the chances for real curricular renewal.

### 2.3.3 Competition, cost-effectiveness and finances

As stated earlier, internationalisation has become a growing area of competition for higher education institution which enables them to enter new markets of students. Offshore education (delivering teaching services on the spot) can be seen one way to do so. Though this can be a good way to bring ones educational services to new target groups, there yet is little known about whether institutions are able to make profits on this enterprise. Most are hoping at best to break even and not lose too much money, and as far as private providers are concerned it turns out that it takes many years before the activities can be profitable. With regard to distance education, one reason is that the current state of software for online courses is still relatively difficult. Designing a course requires a significant amount of expensive technical support and a team of professionals not only to get it up running, but also to maintain its content. Once implemented course content needs to change over time as new knowledge is produced. With regard to offshore education, one has to take into account that tuition fees should cover the full costs of buildings, infrastructure, curriculum development, local staff, and the staff involved at the home institution (including travel). For example, the University of Phoenix, the largest for-profit higher education provider both in the USA and internationally, recently pulled out of the UK and Dutch market because of a lack of student demand (Douglass, 2005).

Nevertheless, the number of institutions offering virtual degrees is steadily increasing as is the number of students that are plugged into the virtual classroom. Regardless of the advantages of virtual learning experts doubt to what extent virtual learning replaces the traditional modes of internationalisation, such as the physical mobility of students and staff. The physical encounter of students of different nationalities cannot be replaced by whatever else. 'Travelling in cyberspace is no substitute for travelling across real space' (Blumenthal, 2002). As there is no reason to assume that ICT will fully banish distance and remove the need for people to meet and work face-to-face,



offshore education can be a viable way in addressing part of the needs of internationalisation and competition for students globally.

Competition and cost-effectiveness are closely related to financial issues involved in ICT and internationalisation. As internationalisation is one of the tools to attract more full fee paying students to increase institutional revenues, one can imagine that higher education institutions and governments have to make decisions on setting their price levels and design scholarship programs to attract students. However, other countries may not use internationalisation for these matters but like to attract foreign students as a way to offer their home students an international study experience. For those countries and institutions that do apply (substantial) tuition fees, these may complicate collaboration between international partners due to differences in tuition fees and differences in students' financial positions. Within the EU, however, tuition fees may not differ between national inhabitants and students from other EU countries. This implies that EU-student populations cannot be used to compete for full fee paying students. Thus also offshore education activities that are used for revenue generation will have to deal with this EU regulations as well as local arrangements. In addition, there is large variety in national and international tuition and scholarship arrangements. This means that institutions or countries must provide very clear information on the financial costs and opportunities for international students (Vossensteyn et al., 2003). A positive development for offshore education is the trend that many international sponsors and scholarship organisations, like for example Ford Foundation (IFP) and Population Council, do no longer require scholars to study in a certain host country.

Another issue is that the implementation of ICT applications requires investments in infrastructure and people to work with it. This particularly applies if one thinks about offshore education, whereas one cannot expect technological infrastructures to be at the same level as in the Western world. Nevertheless, to start up ICT initiatives, there are several national and international funding opportunities. Within the Netherlands, the Digital University and Stichting SURF for example provide resources for promising initiatives. But there also are a limited number of large EU programmes that aim to stimulate ICT in the field of higher education and research, like the EU Framework Programmes, Socrates Minerva, Socrates Erasmus and the relatively small e-Learning Programme. A further description of these programmes can be found in Vossensteyn et al. (2005).

#### 2.3.4 International collaboration and partnerships

A further interesting aspect of internationalisation, and particularly also for offshore education, concerns the cooperation between international partners. One can think of the evolving networks for designing and implementing international projects with ICT, joint degree programmes between foreign partner institutions, and transnational virtual campuses involve international cooperation regarding the design of joint curricula, exchangeability of (course) material, and not least importantly, the exchange and interrelations between staff of participating institutions.

Such international cooperation projects should carefully take into account national and international regulations with regard to establishing study programmes, recognition of degrees and funding arrangements. Furthermore, these international collaborations need to be supported by reliable and matching technology among the partner institutions and thus may require investments in a widespread availability of broadband access, middleware, sustainability of course material (ESP-service) and a common digital learning environment. Problems arise when different partners use different technologies so more (sustainable) standardisation is desirable.

Regarding the development of transnational virtual campuses, efforts are necessary to create and maintain online courses and to seek partners to pool resources and share the risks. The joint combination of forces and expertise of Dutch HE institutions in international networks is timely. Also the collaboration with the private sector should not be avoided. A growing number of corporate



universities are awarding degrees and non-degree certificate programmes in conjunction with traditional universities ('brokers'), paving the way for public-private partnerships. Institutions should not be anxious for this development and seek joint ventures where appropriate.

Although international competition and collaboration seem contradictory, the role of ICT relates to both and has an important supportive function. By utilising ICT great opportunities appear for the internationalisation of higher education institutions, for international collaboration regarding education and research, and more generally the international orientation of institutions, staff members and students.

### 2.3.5 Quality and evaluation

Regarding quality assurance, online learning in an international context easily escapes existing forms of regulation, quality control and accreditation. Since the standard quality assurance systems are rarely adequate for online courses, fraudulent or dubious quality e-learning products are currently entering the market and providers are not easy to detect. Some private HE providers who offer degrees online would not deserve the name. As Middlehurst (2002) notes, a new quality assurance methodology for the field of online learning still needs to be developed. Ministries of education around the world are moving with extreme caution in recognising or approving distance learning degrees. Also course-completion and retention rates are generally lower in online courses than in face-to-face learning.

However, regulation as such is not necessarily a guarantee for quality neither can it be argued that a traditional course is by definition better than a well-designed internet-delivered course. What is clear, however, is that a lack of quality assessment mechanisms will be a major hurdle to international collaboration in this field and that more efforts will be needed to make progress in this field. OECD guidelines in this area as well as the establishment of the European foundation for quality in e-learning (EFQUEL) are steps in this direction.

Looking at offshore education, one has to not only be aware of the above mentioned hurdles but also find a balance between the quality assurance criteria applicable in both the home and hosting country.

### 2.3.6 Information provision, dissemination and communication

One of the cornerstones of an effective role of ICT in internationalisation is adequate information which is easily available. A main issue will be to make the academic community and students aware of all opportunities for internationalisation in research and education in connection with ICT applications. Academics that are interested have to be able to find the international networks within which they can develop internationalisation projects as well as they have to know about interesting examples that may serve their needs. Such a task is already partially taken up by expertise centres such as Senter Novum and SURF in the Netherlands, but could be further extended (see next section).

Students will have to know their international study opportunities or how internationalisation elements can be best brought into their specific situation, either being physical mobility or e-learning. This requires central co-ordination of information streams and databases on study programs and distance learning opportunities. Since there is a wealth of opportunities around the world, bringing together (most relevant) opportunities in central webbased information systems with smart search engines could be linked with study information systems such as CHOICE in the Netherlands.

In serving the aspirations of higher education institutions to recruit students from abroad, either for additional tuition revenues or to integrate international students to stimulate internationalisation at home, information about Dutch study programmes have to be easily available. Current Dutch initiatives with NESOs, international study fairs and active information



provision through economic support offices abroad (EVD) may be very helpful. This may also include market research and the set up of good websites for sharing information and reaching new audiences. But most importantly, with respect to internationalisation and study abroad, digital information and websites are the key sources of information for potential students. This means that HEIs have to work very hard on well designed websites that provide the proper information in a simple and attractive way to external site visitors. In addition to that we can also point at the Nuffic database with recognised international Dutch study programmes: <http://www.nuffic.nl/ispacsearch/>. In the case of offshore education, cooperation with Dutch representing bodies as mentioned above can be a critical step towards success.

Virtual learning facilities create a massive explosion in digital information streams and communication processes. Providers of e-learning courses receive large numbers of e-contacts and institutions therefore need efficient and effective mechanisms to deal with the enormous amounts of digital requests and contact moments. Coelen (2005) suggests storing all this information in a student dossier in order to avoid dispersion of communication throughout the organisation. This requires well operating systems and databases as well as and the capacity to work with them and to maintain them.

All these aspects of e-learning and communication with international target groups require a careful structuring of communication strategies, including access to portals and well-designed websites for marketing purposes.

### 2.3.7 Combination of internationalisation and ICT

Above, patterns and forms of internationalisation and ICT have been explored. These can be combined in a multitude of ways, including types of students and modes of delivery. Frencken et al. (2006) developed a relatively simple matrix in which various types of students, modes of study and the use of ICT are combined. This provides an easy and accessible classification to identify various target groups of students with relation to internationalisation and offshore education. See Figure 1 on the next page.

On the horizontal axis one finds students which can vary from regular students (i.e. students from the home institution) to international students (students from abroad). On the vertical axis one can find where students receive their education, at the home institution, abroad or a mixture of these. One can further distinguish between students that are physically present at the institution and those who are not (e.g. when they are abroad). This is reflected on the horizontal band. Finally the vertical band indicates whether regular and international students study together or not. Altogether this leads to 9 cells which indicate different modes of international education.

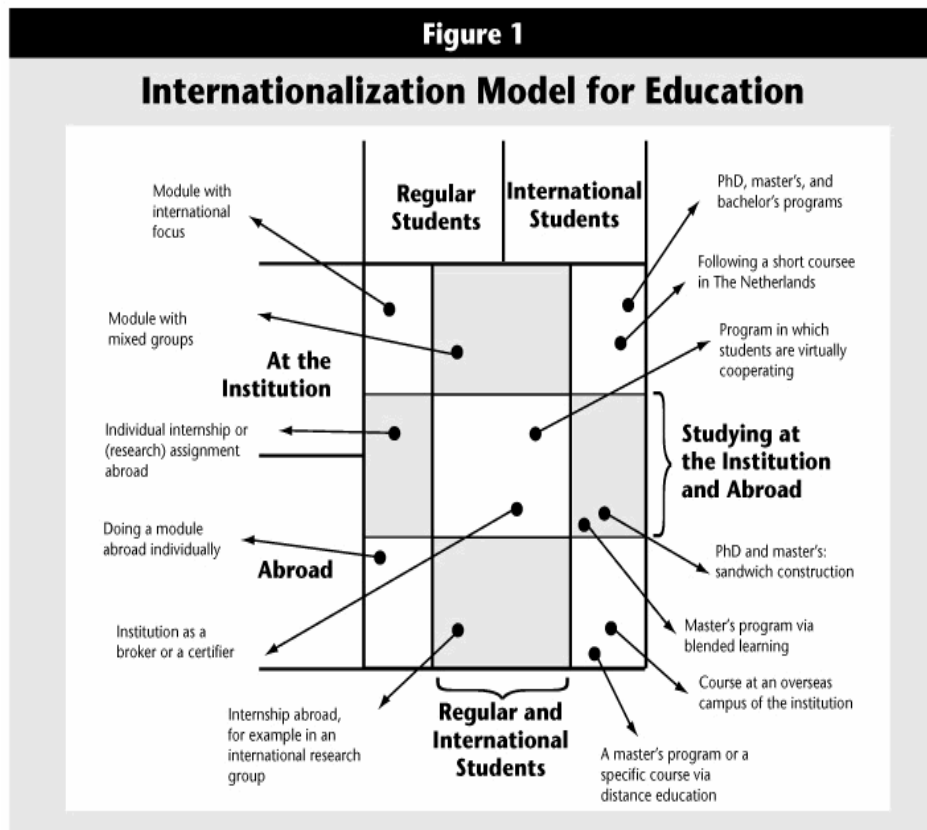
In the context of offshore education we can particularly think of situations where international students are being taught abroad, being the lowest right side cell. Nevertheless, one can also think of regular students following part of a programme at a location abroad, and international students taking parts of the programme through online courses. As we will further explore in the next Chapter, offshore education can show up in various forms that fit within this matrix.

This matrix also shows a number of opportunities for ICT applications to support various combinations. ICT applications may be most useful in cases where students are not physically present at the institution where they follow their courses. Either to stay in contact with their home institution in cases they take some courses abroad or follow parts or to follow courses at a foreign institution without going there. One can think of an active use of video conferencing or blackboard to organise the contacts with teachers or fellow students. Advantages of such an organisation are a relatively efficient organisation of teacher-student contacts. It heavily saves on travel time for either students or teachers. These advantages can be substantial in individual cases, but long-distance contacts may be more difficult when it involves larger groups of students. Disadvantages can be the





absence of physical interactions, particularly when students are confronted with different teaching styles or content demands as they are used to without the opportunity to communicate in a face-to-face situation about such issues. A major factor still may be that students but also teachers are not yet ready or used to use relatively new technologies to communicate at a distance. From the ICT practices we learned that blended learning is still dominant. ICT applications are gradually integrated in predominantly face-to-face instruction methods. Real ICT applications for internationalisation therefore cannot be expected to take over the role of face-to-face education. Nevertheless, ICT can facilitate the interaction processes and reduce the required real contact moments.





### 3 Offshore education: definition and forms

Though a definition of offshore education has already been presented in the Chapter 1, the introduction, the current chapter further explores the terminology related to offshore education as well as the various types of education one could cluster around that.

#### 3.1 Terminology

Offshore education often refers to the provision of education services abroad. Within the area of internationalisation, there however are a number of related terms and concepts that closely relate to offshore education. In this chapter we explore the various terms and concepts and come to a definition of offshore education suitable for the purpose of this study. When we look at the available literature there are several other, more or less similar definitions regarding higher education offered outside the country of the host institution: transnational education; borderless education; and cross-border education. Garret (2003) for example uses the term “transnational higher education” which means higher education provision from one country offered in another. Education provision where the student travels abroad is excluded from this definition. Borderless education refers to the blurring of conceptual, disciplinary and geographic borders traditionally inherent in higher education (Knight 2003).

According to Knight (2003: 71) the use of the term offshore education is arguably decreasing due to the more recent introduction and popularity of the term cross-border education. Offshore education is used to denote education delivered abroad. The term offshore originates from the fact that Britain and Australia are islands and therefore every activity abroad is either overseas or offshore (Witte 2001). Cross-border seems to be emerging as the more widely used phrase and refers to the movement of education across a jurisdictional or national border (Knight 2003). The term cross-border education is used in all the recent OECD publications. In spite of this development towards the term cross-border education, particularly in the Dutch policy context, offshore education still is the dominant term when people refer to educational activities that are offered abroad.

There can be several possible reasons why institutions choose to go abroad. The OECD (2004b: 232) gives four rationales for cross-border education

- Mutual Understanding (development aid)
- Skilled Migration (recruitment of talented people to host country)
- Revenue Generation (foreign students generate income)
- Capacity Building (emerging economies need HE capacity)

Offshore education used to be an activity guided by the mutual understanding rationale. Offshore education was often a part of development policy or driven by political and cultural motives. This has changed during the last decade. Offshore activities were seen as an export article with revenue generation mind. Offshore education is now considered as an entrepreneurial activity, an academic enterprise (Witte 2001). International education was seen by institutions in the UK and Australia as a way to make money when government funding was lowered due to budget cuts. Foreign students could be charged full cost tuition fees. Because of a growing demand for higher education, especially in the South East Asian Region, the HEI were able to market their courses offshore. These for-profit activities are seen as “Trade in education services” by most educators but others (e.g. economists or the trade sector) also include non-profit activities (Knight 2005). In either way, education and especially offshore education is a target of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which defines four ‘modes’ to describe trade of services. Knight (2002) applies



these modes of trade in services from GATS to the Higher Education sector. There are four modes of supply:

1. Cross border supply
2. Consumption abroad
3. Commercial Presence
4. Presence of natural persons

For our purposes mode 1 and mode 3 are important. Cross border supply contains the provision of a service where the service crosses the border. Examples given by Knight are distance education, e-learning and virtual universities. Mode 3, commercial presence, means that the service provider establishes, or has presence of, commercial facilities in another country in order to render services. Examples of this are local branch or satellite campuses, twinning partnerships, and franchising arrangements with local institutions (Knight 2002: 8-9).

Based on these notions and the developments in terminology, this study focuses on offshore education. In the framework of our study, offshore education is currently defined as:

***Offshore education is the (partial) provision of education on location abroad (for fee-paying students)***

For the purpose of this study this definition can be extended with two dimensions. First of we focus on offshore education that is offered outside the EU, because it is targeted at full fee paying students and within the EU this is impossible due to the tuition regulations with regard to EU residents. Second, we particularly look at offshore education initiatives in which ICT applications and e-learning play a (prominent) role.

### 3.1.1 Forms of offshore activities and mobility

Knight (2003 73:74) has developed a framework to describe offshore education activities because the trade framework from GATS is too limited in her view. The OECD (2004b; 2005) has used this framework and differentiates between different forms of offshore education:

1. People mobility (students or faculty)
2. Program mobility
3. Institutional or provider mobility
4. Service mobility

People mobility occurs when students go abroad to study (for example a full academic year) or when scholars go abroad to do work (for example research or teaching activities). Program and institution mobility often go together and one is not often found without the other. Offshore students studying in their home country concern forms 2 and 3 of offshore education and can be categorized as follows (OECD 2005: 61):

- Students taking courses at a branch campus/centre of a foreign institution (institution mobility)
- Students taking courses at a local partner organisation of a foreign institution (program mobility, with perhaps some people mobility)
- Students studying on a distance education programme offered by a foreign institution (program mobility)

Offshore mobility of programs can be described as 'the movement of individual education/ training courses and programs across national borders through face-to-face teaching, distance learning or a combination of these modes. Credits towards a qualification can be awarded by the hosting



provider or by an affiliated domestic partner or jointly'. Franchising, twinning, double/joint and other articulation models are the more popular methods of cross-border program mobility (Knight 2005).

Offshore mobility of providers can be described as 'the physical or virtual movement of an education provider across a national border to establish a presence to provide education/training programs and/or services to students and other clients.' The difference between program and provider mobility is one of scope and volume in terms of programs/services offered and the local presence (and investment) by the foreign provider. Credits and qualifications are awarded by the foreign provider (through foreign, local or self-accreditation methods) or by an affiliated domestic partner or jointly. Forms of offshore provider mobility include branch campuses, mergers with or acquisitions of domestic providers, independent institutions, study and support centres plus other types of innovative affiliations. A distinguishing feature between program and provider mobility is that with provider mobility the learner is not necessarily located in a different country than the awarding institution (Knight 2005).

### 3.1.2 Typology of offshore Mobility Modes

Knight (2005) sees an expansion in number and types of entities that are providing education courses and programs across borders which is causing confusion and chaos. She proposes a classification system or typology in order to make sense of the new 'playing field' of cross-border education. This typology includes the following ways of program mobility and provider mobility:

- **Franchise:** An arrangement whereby a provider in the source country A authorizes a provider in another country B to deliver their course/program/service in country B or other countries. The qualification is awarded by provider in Country A. In a lighter arrangement, a franchise arrangement licenses a local provider to offer a foreign degree. This type of construction can include the so-called "flying professors". In the flying faculty model a university offers a program abroad whereby the teachers are "flown in" to teach the course in a certain, short, time period. All the academic activities are handled by the university; they only need a local partner for housing and perhaps marketing (Schreiter & Witte 2001).  
 Arrangements for teaching, management, assessment, profit-sharing, awarding of credit/qualification etc. are customized for each franchise arrangement
- **Twinning:** A situation whereby a provider in source country A collaborates with a provider located in country B to develop an articulation system allowing students to take course credits in country B and/or source country A. Only one qualification is awarded by the provider in source country A. IN practical terms a twinning programme can include that a student is enrolled with a foreign provider and taught from a foreign syllabus, whereas part of the course is followed in the home country and completion of the course in home country of institution (OECD 2004b)  
 Arrangements for twinning programs and awarding of degree usually comply with national regulations of the provider in the source country A.
- **Double/Joint Degree:** An arrangement whereby providers in different countries collaborate to offer a program for which a student receives a qualification from each provider or a joint award from the collaborating providers.  
 Arrangements for program provision and criteria for awarding the qualifications are customized for each collaborative initiative in accordance with national regulations.
- **Articulation:** Various types of articulation arrangements between providers in different countries permit students to gain credit for courses/programs offered/delivered by collaborating providers.  
 Allows students to gain credit for work done with a provider other than the provider awarding the qualification



- **Validation:** Validation arrangements between providers in different countries which allow Provider B in receiving country to award the qualification of Provider A in source country.  
In some cases, the source country provider may not offer these courses or awards themselves.
- **Virtual/Distance:** Arrangements where providers deliver courses/program to students in different countries through distance and on line modes. This may include some face-to-face support for students through domestic study or support centres.

### 3.1.3 Typology of offshore Provider Mobility Modes

Likewise, it is also possible to distinguish between a number of types of cross-border provider mobility modes (Knight, 2005):

- **Branch Campus:** Provider in country A establishes a satellite campus in Country B to deliver courses and programs to students in Country B. (may also include Country A students taking a semester/courses abroad). The qualification awarded is from provider in Country A. Example: Monash University from Australia has established Branch campuses in Malaysia and South Africa. University of Indianapolis has a branch campus in Athens
- **Independent Institution:** Foreign Provider A (a traditional university, a commercial company or alliance/network) establishes in Country B a stand alone HEI to offer courses /programs and awards. Example: The German University in Cairo, Phoenix Universities in Canada, the Netherlands and Puerto Rico (Apollo Group).
- **Acquisition/Merger:** Foreign Provider A purchases a part of or 100% of local HEI in Country B. Example: Laureate (formerly Sylvan Learning Systems) has merged with and/or purchased local HEIs in Chile, Mexico and other LA countries.
- **Study Centre/ Teaching Site:** Foreign Provider A establishes study centres in Country B to support students taking their courses/programs. Study centres can be independent or in collaboration with local providers in Country B. Example: Texas A&M has a 'university centre' in Mexico City. Troy University (US) has a MBA teaching site in Bangkok
- **Affiliation/Networks:** Different types of 'public and private', 'traditional and new' providers from various countries collaborate through innovative types of partnerships to establish networks/institutions to deliver courses and programs in local and foreign countries through distance or face to face modes. Example: Partnership between the Caparo Group and Carnegie Mellon University to establish a campus in India. Netherlands Business School branch campus in Nigeria in partnership with African Leadership Forum (NGO)
- **Virtual University:** Provider that delivers credit courses and degree programs to students in different countries through distance education modes and that generally does not have face to face support services for students. Example: International Virtual University, Hibernia College, Arab Open University.

Witte (2001) differentiates between different models of offshore course provision. The models focuses on the parent institution and the amount of responsibilities they delegate to the foreign partner. Responsibilities can be divided into "support" activities such as marketing or student support on the one hand and on the other hand the academic responsibilities such as curriculum development and academic teaching. Two basic models appear: collaborative arrangements (CA) and non-collaborative arrangements (NCA) where in a NCA the parent institution is only a "facilitator" and in a CA the parent institution is involved in the content of the activity. This typology is mainly connected to British and especially Australian types of exporting higher education. Major forms of CA are: "flying faculty" and "offshore campuses". Major forms of NCA are: Validation; franchising, joint programs (Witte 2001)



Finally, with relation to e-learning it can be stated that this refers to the use of information and communications technology (ITC) to enhance and/or support learning in tertiary education. E-learning refers to both wholly online provision and campus based or other distance based provision supplemented with ITC in some way (OECD 2005). The OECD differentiates between five types of online presence:

- None or trivial presence
- Web supplemented (e.g. course outline and lecture notes online, use of email, links to external resources)
- Web dependent: students are required to use the internet for key “active” elements in the programme but without significant reduction in classroom time
- Mixed mode: students are required to participate in online activities as part of their course work which replaces part of face-to-face learning.
- Fully online

This typology assumes a campus based institutions and a conception of e-learning tied to the internet or other online network.

### 3.2 Actual practice in offshore education

If we look at offshore education, we start by asking the question what types of offshore education are used, how they are used and what the experiences are with this type of education.

In 2004 the OECD issued a report on internationalisation and trade in higher education which shows that there are three major players in offshore education through programme and institution mobility: the US, the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia. In the UK and Australia most cross-border education is provided in partnership with a local provider. Most foreign owned branch campuses or universities are from the United States. There are three major regions where cross border education is provided: the Asia pacific region which has seen the most rapid growth, Eastern Europe and South America. According to the OECD (2004b) program mobility often occurs through franchise arrangements and twinning programs. Institution mobility has two main forms: foreign branch campuses and foreign owned institutions.


The biggest “costumers” of offshore education are Asian and Latin American middle income countries (Altbach and Knight 2006). Data from the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (Garret 2003) gives some information on two of the greatest markets for what they call transnational higher education: Hong Kong and Singapore. Below is a short summary of the activities in these two countries.

In Hong Kong some of the foreign institutions operate their programs themselves, some have chosen to make franchise arrangements for some of their programs and some are offering all their programs through another, usually local institution.

Foreign institutions offer mostly masters and bachelor programs. If the programs are offered together with local partner institutions, postgraduate programs have the second biggest share, before bachelor programs. The most popular discipline is business, science and the humanities come after that.

In Singapore all local partners are private sector, non university bodies. Partners can be both non-profit and for-profit. More then half of the programs offered are at the Masters level (57%); programs at the Bachelors level come after that (28%). In Singapore the business subjects are most popular.

Garret (2003) also gives some interesting information on these two important markets. These results greatly resemble a survey from the OECD which focused mainly on E-learning. The



OECD (2005) uses a small qualitative survey and uses data from the Observatory on Borderless Education for comparative purposes. This study concluded that: "In most campus-based institutions, the growth of e-learning to date has not challenged the centrality of the face-to-face classroom setting. Distance online learning in general and cross-border e-learning in particular have generally failed to emerge as significant activities or markets to date" (2005: 12).

A small number of respondents in the OECD survey reported significant general offshore enrolments. In most institutions this form of activity is small-scale, peripheral and poorly tracked centrally. Remote international delivery is typically left to small-scale, department led experiments.

Business and IT are the most cited disciplines which uses e-learning in mixed mode or only online. Overall, Australian institutions are developing online capacity across a wider range of disciplines. An interesting difference between the two leading offshore providers in the OECD sample (2005) was the target study body for offshore students. The University of Maryland University College targets "domestic or home students abroad". The online environment allowed the university to move beyond the traditional state market to reach a broader national and international audience of part-time students. The University of South Australia on the other hand targets "local (foreign) students abroad" through partnerships with local organizations. Some examples of online offshore delivery reported by the OECD respondents were either:

- fully online,
- asynchronous/synchronous delivery with a combination of foreign and local support,
- a combination of online and face-to-face delivery.

In this report the OECD (2005) concluded that cross-border distance learning is in the large majority of cases supplemented by face-to-face courses provided in local learning centres (blended learning), generally in partnership with a local institution. Independent foreign branch campuses exist but represent a small share. Partnerships with local institutions remain the main vehicle for offshore education delivered through programme and institutional mobility (OECD 2004b).

What is interesting from the case of Singapore (Garret 2003) is that most programs come from Australian or UK institutions but that there is only one joint UK-Australian programme. There seems to be little international cooperation in cross-border education. This could be seen as evidence that most offshore programs have revenue generation as a primary motive.

Almost no respondent portrayed offshore online delivery as a major proposition in the short term, the focus is still department led and small scale (OECD, 2005). The report also addresses some problems related to offshore delivery of online courses:

- "Unreliable or poor quality technology can quickly lead to student/faculty frustration, which can undermine perceptions of the programme. "
- "Many offshore students live in countries without widespread and reliable internet access; this is a problem for integrating e-learning into cross-border programs."
- The language of instruction can be common to the offshore region, but the curricula, teaching content, and support must be tailored to local needs.
- Partnerships are seen as way to enhance "branding" (make a trade mark) in offshore markets, understand local regulation, overcome language barriers and facilitate student support.
- Advertising the course fees using US dollars as currency when targeting offshore students for some institutions.

This list shows that online, but most likely also face-to-face offshore provisions encounter a number of problems.

Another example showed that quality assurance regulations may lead to potential problems for offshore education activities. For example, when the American University of Suffolk set

up a branch campus in Spain, it turned out that the campus in Spain had to be accredited twice, both by the relevant American and Spanish institution (Croxford 2001). More in general, quality criteria frequently are different, overlapping and imposed by the different bodies. This often means double work and greatly increases the time and costs that have to be taken into account.

Heffernan and Pool (2004) point at factors that are crucial to maintain a good relationship between offshore education partners, such as communication, trust, and a shared vision. In addition, they mention that one has to take care of internal commitment within the institution, to identify the key roles and responsibilities of the partner; to establish win/win relationships; and to prevent the departure of key personnel.

Regardless of these examples, a major conclusion that can be drawn from international literature is that detailed information on the success and failure of offshore education is hardly available. There were no publications found that deal with the day to day practice of offshore education.

The empirical part of the current study envisages to gather and explore offshore practices from Dutch higher education institutions, including problems, good practices to overcome problems and wishes with regard to requirements needed for the further development of offshore initiatives.

### **3.3 Opportunities and limitations for Dutch HEIs**

It is currently not possible in the Netherlands to issue Dutch diplomas abroad or to offer a joint diploma after finishing a joint degree program. Basically, students cannot be given a Dutch higher education qualification if they did not study for at least a year at the awarding Dutch higher education institution. Moreover, the Dutch accreditation system does not support these activities (OCW 2004). The accreditation and the physical location are coupled to each other and it is therefore not possible to issue a diploma somewhere other than the university where the program is accredited. There are some HEIs who are investigating the possibilities to offer education abroad in cooperation with a local partner which will lead to a Dutch diploma (Kluijfhout et al., 2005). In the upcoming new law on Higher Education the Ministry wants to make this possible by giving HEIs more leeway for handing out Dutch diplomas either abroad or for joint degrees. Programs (or parts of the program) that are offered abroad have to meet the same criteria that accredited programs in the Netherlands are subject to. These programs abroad will not be funded by the Government. (OCW 2004)

Those HEIs from the Netherlands that are active in offshore education have found some ways around these limitations. How this is operated will be discussed in further detail in the case studies.

## 4 International policies with regard to offshore education

In this chapter we explore the most important policies addressing offshore education from a number of countries in which some higher education providers are particularly active in offshore education. These countries include the biggest offshore education providers Australia, the UK and the US as well as two smaller providers New Zealand and Germany. The current issues and policies could give some insight in the development of offshore education within the international education framework. Unfortunately literature does hardly show case studies on offshore education discussing major problems and the use of ICT in the context of offshore education.

### 4.1 Australia

Australia is internationally competitive in providing high quality education and training for overseas students both in Australia and offshore. More than 20% of Australia's *international* education is delivered offshore, and this is increasing (CHEPS Monitor 2006: 11).

Australian Education International (AEI) is the international arm of the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). The Australian government, mostly through the AEI, is active in several international organizations, some are global such as UNESCO and the WTO and some are specific for the regions in which Australia is active:

- South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)
- Asia-Pacific Education Ministers meetings (inaugural meeting April 2006)

The Australian government uses Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) in education and training to form and formalize partnerships with relevant countries. Australia currently has MoU's with<sup>1</sup> countries from Europe, Asia, the Americas and the Middle East. These MoU's are developed by the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and education ministries in foreign countries. A MoU usually includes a broad statement about an intention to promote co-operation in education for the mutual benefit of both parties. Some of the areas of possible co-operation which are often mentioned are:

- Development of institutional links between education and training systems;
- Recognition of qualifications and credit transfer;
- Development of twinning programs.

The AEI recognizes that the international education industry is underpinned by government involvement both within Australia and through government-to-government engagement offshore. In the AEI's Strategic Directions for 2005-2008 there are several measures supporting offshore education (programme and provider mobility). The AEI is providing funding to:

- increase promotion and government-to-government work in emerging overseas markets to create export opportunities;
- develop and implement a strategy to enhance quality assurance for international students studying offshore. (AEI 2005c)

The Australian Government has developed two initiatives to assure the quality of Australian higher education provision in the international market:

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1

<http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/GovernmentActivities/GovernmentRelations/BilateralRelationships/Default.htm>



- The Australian Government provided \$A1.4 million towards competitive grants to assist universities to develop good practice models for quality assuring offshore delivery. Fifteen projects have been funded to examine issues including:
  - equivalence of onshore and offshore education delivery,
  - selection of suitable offshore partners and agents,
  - guidelines for developing and training staff in offshore delivery; and
  - teaching in languages other than English.<sup>2</sup>
- On 17 November 2005, Ministers of Education and Training across Australia agreed a Transnational Quality Strategy (TQS) framework. The Transnational Quality Strategy aims to assure the quality of Australia's transnational education and training to contribute to sustainable growth in the benefits derived from delivering education and training to international students transnationally.

The TQS uses the following definition of Australian Transnational Education:

Australian transnational education and training, also known as offshore or cross-border education and training, refers to the:

- marketing;
- enrolment processes, and
- delivery and/or assessment

of programs/courses in a country other than Australia by an Australian-approved provider, where delivery includes a face-to-face component. The education and/or training activity may lead to an Australian qualification or may be a non-award course, but in either case an Australian-approved provider is associated with the education/training activity.

The Transnational Quality Strategy framework is based on four principles

1. Australia's quality assurance arrangements should be **well understood** and **well regarded** internationally;
2. Providers and consumers should be able to clearly understand the **accountabilities** in the delivery and quality assurance of transnational education and training;
3. Quality assurance functions should be **effective and efficient**; and
4. Courses/programs delivered within Australia and transnationally should be **equivalent** in the standard of delivery and outcomes of the course, as determined under nationally recognized quality assurance arrangements. (AEI 2005, bold by original author)

The TQ Strategy focuses on action in three areas:

- Better communication and promotion of Australia's quality arrangements to all stakeholders, within Australia and internationally;
- Increased access to data and information about Australia's transnational education and training; and
- A strengthened national quality framework, in order to ensure the quality of Australian education and training delivered transnationally.

## 4.2 United States of America

The most common way for USA institutions to participate in the global student marketplace is by enrolling international students in campus based programs in the USA (Eckel et al. 2004: 304). US institutions are less active in offshore education than institutions from Australia or the UK. There are

<sup>2</sup> source: [www.aparnet.org/documents/8th\\_session\\_country\\_reports/country-report-Australia.pdf](http://www.aparnet.org/documents/8th_session_country_reports/country-report-Australia.pdf)





a few U.S. universities with offshore branch campuses yet these are only partly targeted toward foreign students, most are targeted towards Americans living abroad (Altbach 2003:8-9). Private universities seem the most active in offshore education initiatives. The last few years the US has seen problems in attracting the same level of international students; with a 2.4% decline in the number of international enrolments from 2002/03 to 2003/04 and a 1% decline from 2004/05 to the previous year.<sup>3</sup> Eckel et al. gives several reasons for this decline;

- the expense associated with studying in US institutions,
- increased obstacles in obtaining visas (see for example Anderson 2005) and
- growing competition from other nations.

US institutions may increasingly turn to bringing education to the student as an alternative to bringing students to their campuses (Eckel et al. 2004: 304). This prediction seems to be correct when we look at what the Chronicle of Higher Education calls the “rapidly growing number of American colleges and universities who are setting up shop, from single graduate programs to entire campuses, in foreign students’ own countries.” An example of this is the University at Buffalo which opened a branch campus in Singapore in 2003 and has more plans for going offshore (Chronicle of Higher Education of February 17, 2006).

There seems to be no consistently implemented “internationalisation policy” for higher education on the federal level in the United States, the primary actors are campus stakeholders (OECD 2004: 73). The lack of a national policy on international education has been criticized of late by a joint policy statement of The Association of International Educators (NAFSA) and the Alliance for International Education and Cultural and Exchange who criticize the US government for not having a “comprehensive policy for marshalling the vital resource of international education for national purposes” (NAFSA 2006).

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), within the US Department of State, fosters mutual understanding between the United States and other countries through international educational and training programs. Its major endeavours are the government funded Fulbright Program which sponsors educational exchanges and the International Visitor Program. Also within the US Department of State, *Education USA* promotes U.S. higher education abroad, supports overseas advising centres, and collaborates with U.S. educational organizations to strengthen international exchange. Furthermore, there are several non-profit organizations involved in international higher education. Most well known is the Institute of International Education (IIE) which promotes educational links between the US and other countries and administers the Fulbright program (AEI 2004).

### 4.3 United Kingdom

The UK is one of the biggest exporters of higher education in the world, together with Australia and the US and has a long history in exporting education overseas. The export of British higher education has a strong economical motive (Vossensteyn 2003).

In November 2004, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) released a strategy to build a world-class system of education by paying more attention to international issues. The strategy, ‘Putting the World into World-Class Education’, seeks to integrate international considerations into mainstream policies and existing programs. The strategy aims to work with international partners to maximize the contribution of the education, training, and university research sector to overseas trade and inward investment (AIE 2005: 5).

The new Prime Minister’s Initiative 2006-11 (PMI) for International Education is a part of this strategy. The PMI follows the PMI 2000-5 and is a new five year strategy for UK international education delivered both in the UK and overseas. The strategy sets out four interconnected strands designed to build on the success of the PMI:

<sup>3</sup> Data from <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/>

- UK Positioning: – marketing and communications strategies to position the UK as a leader in international education and to increase the number of international students engaged in UK education. The Education UK brand was primarily a student recruitment tool during the first PMI. The brand will be extended to provide a common platform for the wider international education activities, (e.g. offshore education) in which the UK is engaged.
- Ensuring the quality of the student experience
- Building strategic partnerships and alliances: This can be done by ministerial-led export missions to key countries and building on existing initiatives such as the UK-China Education Initiative and British Degrees in Russia Project
- Priority countries: diversification and consolidation (PMI 2006-11)

Currently the quality of some courses that are offered offshore are being attested by the Quality Assurance Agency or the Adult Learning Inspectorate. There is of yet no systematic application of Quality Assurance for offshore courses, but the DfES stated it will encourage this (DfES 2004: 17).

An example of a recent partnership is the UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) which was launched in September 2005 by the Prime Ministers of the UK and India. This program is meant to strengthen the educational relationship between India and the UK. The two main objectives of the initiative will be promoting research partnerships connecting centres of excellence and developing joint and dual course delivery in further education and higher education. In the documentation we found the design of the project was not complete but likely vehicles are: scholarships, faculty and student exchange, joint delivery of program and joint research (British Council 2006).

The PMI aims to diversify the number of priority countries (in terms of Partnerships as well as attracting international students). The United Kingdom Trade and Invest (UKTI), which is a government organization that supports companies in the UK doing business internationally, gives the current markets where the UK has substantial programs of activity: Brazil, South Africa, China, Hong Kong and Malaysia. Markets where there is some activity are: Saudi Arabia, UAE, India, Vietnam, Mexico, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Japan, Pakistan, Thailand, Egypt, Spain, USA, Libya and Nigeria. Markets with potential for future activity are: Turkey, Indonesia and the Baltic states (UKTI 2006).

It is intriguing to learn the experience from the establishment of UK e-University (UKeU) as a major new government (e-learning) initiative to significantly expand access to higher education, both in England and internationally. Both UK institutions and government view globalisation as a tremendous business opportunity for exporting British educational services. However, enrolment levels were low and far below the targets, and therefore the scheme was stopped. The reasons for the inability to attract a sufficient number of students are twofold. First, the preference of students and partner universities in 'blended' courses rather than pure online provision. Second, the venture poured most of its resources into the UKeU web-based platform and little in actual course content (Douglass, 2005).

A government inquiry by the Education and Skills Committee of the failing led to the same conclusions: UKeU failed largely because it took a supply-driven, rather than demand-led approach. There were three main areas where the consequences of such an approach led to failings. Firstly, UKeU pursued a narrow concept of e-learning (wholly internet based e-learning) and did not adapt this initial concept in light of existing research evidence that found that a more blended learning approach was needed (where internet based e-learning is undertaken alongside other, more traditional, learning methods). Secondly, there was a distinct lack of marketing and use of market research—in such new and emerging markets this was a key failure. Thirdly, the project was

technology-driven rather than learner-centred focused, with too much emphasis being put on the development of the technological platform. (ESC 2005: 13)<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.4 Germany

Since the beginning of the nineties the DAAD has cooperated in establishing academic programs (taught in the German language) in amongst others Turkey, Bulgaria and China. These programs were often carried out from the perspective of development policy. Since 2001 the DAAD supports the "export of German degree courses" programme which is funded by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF). The "Export of German degree courses" programme provides German universities with start-up funding to offer commercially-planned transnational and cross-border study programs abroad. Projects range from summer schools via the collaborative establishment of study programs developed in Germany at a partner university (University of Göttingen in Indonesia and Chile, TU Ilmenau in Russia) and the foundation of faculties and training centres within the scope of existing university cooperation agreements (University of Bochum in South Africa, RWTH Aachen University of Technology in Thailand) right through to the foundation of a self-contained university – such as the "German University in Cairo" (Universities of Ulm and Stuttgart) or the "German Institute for Science and Technology in Singapore – GIST" (TU Munich).<sup>5</sup> At the moment there are four models of offshore education in Germany (Thimme 2005):

1. Development policy oriented
2. Participation in foreign campus
3. German course offshore in participation with foreign provider
4. Branch campus

In the „Drittes Aktionsprogramm des DAAD 2004-2010“ the DAAD states that the program aims to establish a catalogue of 75 German courses abroad with at least 15.000 students by 2010. Currently there are 29 supported programs with Asia being the biggest target region with fifteen programs. In the winter semester 2005/06, there were 5314 students studying in supported programs.<sup>6</sup> The program had several requirements in 2004<sup>7</sup>

- Recognition of degree both in Germany and host country. Quality control by German universities. Aim at accreditation at the end of project. Clear accountability by German Hochschul-Konsortium.
- The course has to have some relationship with Germany for example by using German lecturers or doing practical courses in Germany
- Every accredited German course can go abroad. Lifelong learning and E-learning courses will be supported as well, but costs for example software development are not supported by the program.
- The course can be given in every country which is not in the European Union. Because of the low level of activity of German universities in some regions and countries the program has the following target countries: India, Japan, Korea, Turkey, Iran, Mexico and Serbia and Croatia.
- The projects have to be entrepreneurial and will have to become independent of the grant after a maximum of four years.

Thimme formulates the following goals of the program (Berning, Schitzner 2006):

- Positioning German universities on the international education market

<sup>4</sup> Third Report from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2004–05, *UK e-University*, HC 205

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.daad.de/portrait/en/1.2.3.html>

<sup>6</sup> C. Thimme *Studienangebote deutscher Hochschulen im Ausland, Bildungsexport in der Praxis*. Update of march 2006 <http://www.gate-germany.de/6.1.1.html>

<sup>7</sup> [www.daad.net/de/download/export/ausschreibung2004/ausschreibung.pdf](http://www.daad.net/de/download/export/ausschreibung2004/ausschreibung.pdf)



- Trying out different models and organizational schemes for exporting education
- Promoting and funding of entrepreneurial aspects of positioning universities in international education market
- Getting good students/researchers into German universities, cooperation with science in other countries

In addition, the program is expected to provide the following benefits:

- intensifying existing cooperation and partnerships with foreign universities
- Utilization of the cooperation as a platform for research activities
- Strengthening the internationalisation strategies of German Universities so that their reputation/status improves
- Getting good researchers attention

#### 4.5 New Zealand

New Zealand has 137 courses and programs (a 64% increase over 2003) that were offered offshore in 2004 (Catherwood 2005:6). New Zealand has, when compared to its main competitor nations, a heavy weighting towards onshore delivery of international education, which means students coming to New Zealand (EEIP 2005). In 2004 government announced a budget package called "Moving Forward in International Education". This included several initiatives supporting the international education sector of New Zealand which focus on building quality, developing and maintaining partnerships, innovation in offshore education and strategic marketing.

A part of the budget packet was the "Export Education Innovation Programme" (EEIP).<sup>8</sup> This program was introduced to encourage innovation in international education and to encourage a greater exploration of offshore activities. The program provides funding for two categories of activities. The first category consists of activities to improve capacity and capability to engage in offshore education activities, and reduce associated risks, across the sector. Examples of this are developing research, facilitating communication and collecting statistics and other information. The second category provides funding, on a 50/50 cost sharing basis, for directly supporting the development of innovative services and products. The first four years of the program will focus mainly on supporting offshore activities where the target regions will be China, other Asian markets and the Gulf States.


On 19 April 2005 the Education Minister provided additional funding for the so called "Education Diplomacy" initiative which was part of the 2004 budget package and provides funding to:

- Establish up to seven education counsellor positions in order to strengthen long-term education partnerships with key countries and regions. The first four positions are in Beijing, Washington DC, Brussels, and Kuala Lumpur (early 2006).
- Put more resource into education missions from New Zealand and the hosting of visiting foreign education delegations here, increasing education liaison with other countries.
- Support New Zealand's education related work with multilateral agencies and international bodies.

#### 4.6 Offshore education and ICT: opportunities and limitations

This research project started with the idea that offshore education and ICT applications are natural partners and that offshore education is likely to be a forerunner in the area of educational ICT

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.educationnz.org.nz/innovation/guidelines.htm>



applications. Offshore education not only has to bridge the physical gap between the home (degree granting) institution and its students, it also has to find solutions for the limited opportunities to send its own staff abroad to teach. Therefore, ICT applications like e-mail, video conferencing, blackboard, and further technological applications in all day education activities seem to be a perfect solution for overcoming any problem that arises from the physical gap between students and teachers or between teachers themselves.

ICT applications can enable students to contact their teachers and supervisors at the moment they need it and they also easily provide teachers the opportunity to respond at moments that are convenient to them. This can lead to more tailor made services and even more efficient contacts. Various ICT platforms offer great communication opportunities; one can even work together on shared documents through videoconferencing.

However, ICT applications hardly take into account the human interactions, spontaneous reactions and body language. Though people can take more time to formulate their questions or reactions as in a face-to-face conversation, the opportunity of direct actions, questions and mutual understanding may reduce the wealth of information passed on in a conversation. E-mail does not express facial expressions and the like. In addition, ICT applications may be difficult to address larger groups of students at one given time. So it often can be better serve one-to-one relationships.

Another issue concerns the cooperation between international colleagues. Cooperation requires trust and dependency which are difficult to build and provide by email. In offshore education, if institutions want to develop joint activities of programmes, one has to invest in mutual human trust, which takes a lot of physical time.

Altogether, it looks like ICT can very well facilitate institutional and personal contacts, but these also require a lot of human investment in terms of getting to know each other, supervision and coaching.

#### 4.7 Synthesis

Looking at the policies and activities of offshore education providers there are four main areas of interest:

- Quality Assurance,
- Promotion and Marketing,
- Cooperation and Partnerships and
- Facilitating New Initiatives

Some of the major offshore education providers, Australia and the UK, particularly focus on the promotion and marketing of their services in current and new markets. Furthermore there is a trend towards better assuring the quality of the offered courses and programs. The quality of the programs is seen as crucial now the international market for higher education services is getting more competitive. Australia is most active in this respect with their Transnational Quality Strategy. The USA seems to be getting more active in offshore education as more institutions are now going offshore with programs or branch campuses. There seems to be little government involvement on the federal level in this respect.

New Zealand and Germany are providing funding to get more of their institutions on the offshore market. Both countries are offering institutions funding to explore (innovative) entrepreneurial offshore possibilities, thus facilitating new initiatives in this area.

Most countries are active in creating partnerships or cooperation in target countries. A good example of this are the Memoranda of Understanding Australia has with several countries or the national partnership between the UK and India. The "education diplomacy" initiative of New



Zealand is another good example of building partnerships and at the same time creating a marketing mechanism.

Offshore education is becoming increasingly important as on the one hand more and more people are looking for a higher education degree and on the other hand HEI have need for fee-paying students. For this reason countries and institutions want to be “in” the offshore education market. Higher education is seen as an entrepreneurial activity, an export product. In all countries, except the US, there is a clear government policy supporting offshore education in one way or the other.



## 5 The market for higher education services

This chapter explores in a bird's eye the international market for higher education services. Recognising it is impossible to give a detailed overview of the demand for higher education services, it is possible to bring together some information on the current state of affairs with regard to the global demand for higher education services and to indicate a number of priority areas if particularly Dutch higher education institutions are interested in bringing their educational services to other countries. Priority areas can be defined in terms of geographical areas or countries but also in terms of specific disciplines or study programs. In this chapter, we heavily rely on market research performed by the Nuffic which provides educational country profiles on countries that appear to be of interest from a higher education market perspective. In addition to that, we rely on online information that various international organizations provide on (potential) education activities abroad, such as from the British Council, the DAAD, etc.

### 5.1 Major outcomes from the Nuffic country profiles

This section provides information on 11 countries which are indicated by the Nuffic as potentially interesting higher education markets for Dutch higher education institutions, either for recruiting students, for cooperative educational initiatives and for setting up local education facilities. Though most profiles have been composed a few years ago, they still can be regarded as the most recent market inventories for Dutch higher education. The countries will be discussed in alphabetical order.

#### 5.1.1 Brazil

Brazil has a population of 174.5 million people. Currently Brazil's economic position is weak. The country has a large public debt, slowing growth rates, increasing inflation, and sluggish consumer demand. Nevertheless, Brazil is the Netherlands' most important trading partner in South America. In 2000, the Netherlands invested EUR 5 billion in Brazil, which makes it the sixth largest foreign investor in Brazil. The Netherlands is the third-largest recipient of Brazilian exports. Brazil's major human resource issue is the low rate of enrolment in higher education: only 15% of the relevant age group, compared with 36% in Argentina and 32% in Chile. Increased demand for tertiary education cannot be met by Brazil's own education system due to a lack of public funding required to expand the system. If this situation continues, Brazil's competitive position will worsen. Although English proficiency is generally weak, English language skills are considered essential for anyone who wishes to progress academically or professionally.

Admission to higher education is based on the results of an entrance examination. Because the secondary schools were proving incapable of preparing students to pass this exam, unofficial one-year courses for this purpose emerged to fill the gap. Public universities are the most prestigious and competition for admission is fierce. The majority of students at prestigious institutions are from the highest income groups. Students who have completed the undergraduate level are awarded a Bacharelado, a Licenciado, or a professional title. Only a small number proceed to postgraduate studies. Degrees awarded by an institution of relatively good standing can be considered comparable to degrees awarded in the English-speaking countries.

According to rough estimations, between 80,000 and 90,000 Brazilians are studying abroad which indicates a strong demand for foreign higher education services. The main study-abroad destinations for Brazilians are the U.S., the U.K. and Canada. Brazilian students intending to study abroad first choose a country and then a field of study. A reason could be that Brazilians take future emigration into consideration. The most popular field of study is Business, which is the choice of nearly one-quarter of the Brazilian students studying abroad. Most of the major study-abroad countries have set up representative offices in Brazil and hold frequent education fairs.





Although the Netherlands is quite well known in Brazil, it is not known for its quality international education and Dutch degrees have not yet gained much status among Brazilians. The official recognition of Dutch degrees could be a time-consuming procedure, since Brazilian universities play a major role in the procedure and they are not always cooperative. This could make offshore education activities difficult. At an institutional level, some Dutch higher education institutions enjoy a good reputation, however. Due to the current economic situation in Brazil, Dutch institutions planning to enter the education market at the moment should proceed with some caution. They are advised to focus on specific regions such as the southeast of Brazil and to concentrate on marketing. Promotional activities on a large scale will be needed to raise awareness.

(Nuffic, 2002)

### 5.1.2 Chile

Chile has a population of 15.8 million people that are relatively young; with 25% below the age of 15. The enrolment levels for higher education have expanded since 1990 and are expected to continue expanding. Chile has had one of the strongest economies in Latin America in the past decade and has a policy of economic openness, with active participation in GATT and many free trade agreements with countries from Europe. The Netherlands is an important investor in Chile and most large Dutch multinationals have an office in the country. The national language of Chile is Spanish and the quality of English proficiency varies; students from public schools tend to have a low level of proficiency. There are a limited number of students from Chile studying in the Netherlands. English speaking countries like the USA, the UK and Canada are most popular study destinations followed by Germany, Spain and France. These countries are represented by special offices in Chile. The most popular areas of study for students studying in the USA in 2001 were MBA, engineering, natural sciences (including agriculture, biology and environmental science). Also popular were graduate law, economics, political science and public policy /administration programs.

Chile is a tradition based society and much emphasis is given to reputation and ranking. Chileans are therefore impressed by rankings and desire to study in highly ranked schools. Meanwhile more and more students, often with more modest means, place a greater emphasis on the quality of the program, quality of life benefits and reasonably priced tuition. There is a growing demand in Chile for higher education at a reasonable price. Dutch institutions could have a chance on the Chilean market if they emphasise typical Dutch courses like water management and the reasonable costs of Dutch study programmes.

(NUFFIC 2004)

### 5.1.3 China

China is booming. An estimation of the annual growth of the Chinese GDP is reaching more than 7% over the coming five years. Entering the WTO also underlines that China is opening up to foreign nations. The Chinese people have become more and more open minded as well. More and more companies want to do business with China. Dutch companies do not lag behind in that perspective. What to think about the fact that there are at least 100 Dutch companies registered in Shanghai alone. Apart from the embassies there are an additional 8 business support offices throughout China to facilitate just that.

The average literacy rate among adults reached an average of 94 per cent and in China there are over 6 million university students. Education and R&D have become priority in China. China is no longer the country which produces merely cheap and therefore cheap quality products. More and more high quality products enter the international markets. China also represents a huge consumer market with over 1.3 billion consumers, and it seems every country is eager to get a piece of this market-pie.



The way Chinese communicate with each other and with foreigners is typical "Asian" and learning how to communicate with Chinese people can certainly be helpful if one is planning to work with or in Asia. Choosing for a study in China will enable to view things from a Chinese perspective. Combining the knowledge and views of both East and West will certainly give one an advantage when working in Asia.

Studying in China has become more and more attractive. China and the Netherlands both mutually recognise diploma's of secondary education. Moreover, since our educational reform, introducing the Bachelor/Master system provided us with a system that is generally recognised worldwide, students in many cases are able to follow a part of their education at a foreign institute, and continuing their studies at their own institute afterwards.

Small as it is, the Netherlands is one of China's 10 most important trading and investment partners. Sino Dutch relations have had a long history and tradition. Chinese-Dutch ties are good, which is being reflected in the fact that the Netherlands are China's third largest trade partner within the EU. The bilateral trade volume jumped 44.3 per cent last year. 7.48 billion US\$ has been invested by Dutch enterprises into 824 projects in China. As a newborn saying goes: "Dutch people are the Chinese in Europe and Chinese are the Dutch in Asia": both are doing good in business, and doing good in business with each other.

Next to the good business relationships, also the NESO Beijing supported the development of strong educational relationships between the two countries. In most recent years, the number of mutually mobile students has grown rapidly and Dutch higher education is starting to compete for Chinese students. One of the ways to do so might be to establish joint programs, to cooperate more strongly or to even establish branche institutions in China.  
(NESO, 2006)

#### 5.1.4 India

India is one of the most highly populated countries in the world (1,046 million inhabitants), second only to China. The country has some of the lowest human development indicators in the world, particularly in rural areas. At the other end of the scale, India also has a large number of highly qualified professionals. Although there has been a healthy increase in Indian-Dutch trade in the past decade, the level of bilateral trade between the two countries is still only a fraction of Dutch global trade. Major areas of Indo-Dutch bilateral trade are in the fields of telecommunications, including mobile telephone services; the services sector; food-processing industries; and the fuel sector, mainly in oil refinery.

Over the last 50 years, the country has built up an extensive education system. Higher education has expanded dramatically, and India has one of the largest university-educated populations in the world. However, higher education in India is also in serious financial difficulties, with escalating costs and increasing demands on the one hand, and shrinking budgetary resources on the other. In the academic year 2002-2003, 8,821 million students were enrolled at 13,427 higher-education institutions. The field of private higher education is growing rapidly. Around 75 per cent of the higher-education colleges and around 26 per cent of all higher-education institutions are private.

Corruption affects many areas of life in India and the education sector is no exception. There has been a significant increase in the numbers of institutes of higher education that do not employ any system of quality control, particularly in the fields of medicine and engineering. There are three principal levels of qualifications within the higher-education system in the country: bachelor, master and doctorate. The higher-education institutions can be divided into universities, so-called 'deemed universities' and institutions of national importance, which are university-level institutions funded by the central government.



Current estimates indicate that over 85,000 Indian students are studying abroad. The majority of these students are enrolled at institutions in the United States, but Australia, the United Kingdom and Canada are also popular study destinations for Indian students. Most students are registered for business, administration and economics programmes. Students who study abroad predominantly register in programmes in business, science and engineering. English is the official second language of India. In truth, only about 3 per cent of Indians have a firm grasp of the English language.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of twinning arrangements and offshore campuses set up by institutions from the UK, the US, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia in association with local partners. Most of the major study destinations have set up representative offices in India and actively employ marketing strategies designed to encourage Indian students to take up study places abroad. The Netherlands embassy and the consulates help to promote Dutch higher education in India.

Knowledge about the Netherlands is not very great in India amongst the population in general. However, among certain sections of the population, including the upper-middle classes, awareness of the Netherlands is high. The academic reputation of Dutch institutions is good and the cost of living is recognized as being low. Some international institutions are well known to Indian students working in particular fields.

The verification of birth certificates and the processing of visa applications continue to be the biggest hurdles to the promotion of Dutch higher education in the country. Dutch institutions interested in moving into the Indian education market may contact the Dutch representative network in India and Nuffic in the Netherlands for more market information. Institutions may also contact Nuffic for information about the reliability of Indian diplomas and about visa application. (Nuffic, 2003)

#### 5.1.5 Malaysia

Malaysia has a population of 24.5 million people with 5 million in "school age". About 92% of all students continue to upper secondary education, which hints at an enormous potential for higher education students. During the past 30 years Malaysia has industrialised rapidly to manufacturing and services. Education, training and HRM are regarded essential to Malaysia's "Vision 2020". One element to achieve a higher level of education is to invest in technology, science and to increase the capacity of public higher education institutions. The government also encourages study abroad and plans to sponsor students to do so in engineering, ICT, medicine and sciences.

Private education is important in Malaysian higher education and English is widely used, being the recognised second language. Higher education programs are structured along the bachelor, master and doctorate levels.

The number of Malaysian students abroad was about 119.000 in 1999. Most important destinations are the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and India. Malaysian students consider cost factors extremely important in selecting their destinations, but also education quality is very important. Students going abroad often select business, commerce, marketing and engineering programs.

There are many international and expatriate primary and secondary education schools and some foreign universities have already set up branch offices and twinning programmes in Malaysia. However, Dutch higher education is still fairly unknown in Malaysia, except for IT, water management and agricultural postgraduate courses.

The demand for high quality higher education at relatively low cost could give Dutch HEIs good opportunities to explore this market potential. However, Malaysians are very unfamiliar with the Netherlands and its higher education study opportunities. In order to create viable opportunities

for Dutch higher education institutions, it is thought first to create awareness about Dutch higher education as a whole among Malaysian students and their parents.  
(Nuffic, 2003)

#### 5.1.6 Mexico

Mexico is the largest Spanish-speaking country in the world with a population of 103.6 million people. Mexico has a large and strong economy with good relationships with the US and Europe. Mexico, after Brazil, is the second most important trade partner of the Netherlands in Latin America. Over 50% of the population is under the age of 25 and therefore Mexico has a high demand for higher education and will most likely not be able to accommodate all Mexican applicants. The US is currently the main study destination but Europe is popular as well. English is taught as a foreign language from the lower secondary level but the command of English of Mexican students after finishing education may be rather limited. For studying abroad the US, UK, France, Spain and Canada are the main destinations for Mexican students. In 2002 there were 200 students from Mexico registered in the Netherlands.

The most popular fields of study include economics, business administration, engineering, law, fine arts and design and social sciences. The main reasons for studying abroad include the availability of scholarships from the government, the high esteem of the UK/US education system, international experience, and better job opportunities. The Netherlands is relatively well known and the higher education system has a good reputation. A support office from NUFFIC, NESO, is scheduled to open officially in February 2007.  
(NUFFIC 2003)

#### 5.1.7 South Korea

South Korea has a population of 47.3 million people and a strong economy. South Korea is trying to shift from a high-tech economy to a knowledge based economy. Education is valued highly in Korea and about 70% of secondary school students proceed to higher education.

English proficiency is a problem for Korean students; nevertheless there are sufficient numbers of Korean students who have the English proficiency level to attend a study abroad. Nevertheless, in 2002 there were 150.000 South Koreans studying abroad with more than half of them studying in Canada and the US. Other popular destinations are Australia, Japan, China and the UK. The US is becoming less popular and students are favouring Europe, with the UK, France, Germany and Italy attracting the most students.

Business, Commerce or Marketing; Fine and applied Arts, Accounting and Computing, IT or Mathematics are the most popular fields of study for South Koreans abroad. Korean students are becoming more aware of the extra value of a study abroad. One of the reasons for studying abroad is compensating for not getting into the top three Korean universities: students then pursue a Master program abroad. Other reasons include the better quality overseas, the experience of being abroad and pressure from the family.

The Netherlands has many competitors if it wants to enter the Korean market who already established representative offices and marketing campaigns. The Netherlands furthermore has the problem that is perceived as trade country, not a knowledge economy by South Koreans in general. The Phillips-LG merger and the "Hiddink effect", however, have given the Netherlands some publicity in recent years which could have a positive effect.  
(NUFFIC 2002)



### 5.1.8 Thailand

Thailand has a population of 63 million inhabitants and its economy is growing steadily. Though Thai economy is no longer based on cheap labour production only, the shift to advanced technology has not yet been made due to the limited capacity of the education system to deliver skilled labour.

Only 27% of the relevant age group is enrolled in higher education. However, not even 25% of the applicants secure a place in public higher education. This unmet demand led to a rapid growth in private higher education. Thai higher education provides services according to the Anglo-Saxon degree structure. In addition, business recognises the importance of English for international trade.

The major study abroad destinations for Thai students are the USA, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. Most of student mobility is for graduate programs, particularly in business and engineering. Until a few years, most destination countries particularly invested in holding education fairs, not through establishing branch offices.

A complicating factor for Dutch HEIs to become active in Thailand is that potential Thai students are still unfamiliar with Dutch higher education.

(Nuffic, 2002)

### 5.1.9 Turkey

Turkey has a population of 67.4 million in 2001. Turkey has a growing economy with both modern industry and a large traditional agricultural sector. Foreign investment in Turkey is low due to high inflation rates and legislation that is not transparent. The Netherlands is the leading investor in Turkey with 24% of the total foreign investment. Turkey has a young population and recently compulsory education was extended to eight years. This has caused an increase of enrolment and the system is currently unable to meet the demand.

In 2000/2001 there were around 40,000 students from Turkey who study abroad in the UK, the US, Canada and Australia. France and Germany traditionally have good relations with Turkey. New Zealand and European countries are among the favoured destinations for studying abroad as well. Most students require English language training prior to commencing other courses.

There is a widespread perception that future employment is guaranteed following an education abroad. Cost would be a factor in deciding for study in Europe. The Netherlands do not have a big presence in the education system of Turkey but the Turkish market is worth considering.

(Nuffic 2003)

### 5.1.10 United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a population of 3.5 million inhabitants of which 50% is under 18 years old and only 20% are UAE-nationals. The EUS relies on oil and gas and has the highest per capita income in the Arab world. The Netherlands and the UAE have strong trade relationships.

Though the UAE has a strong publicly funded education system, there are expensive private sector education institutions. English is widely understood and spoken.

Regardless of the fact that UAE nationals put high value to national education qualifications, overseas qualifications, e.g. from the US and the UK, are perceived as highly prestigious. The government plans to strengthen its national (higher) education system. Nevertheless, some 3000 students study abroad at public expenses, particularly in the USA, UK, Australia, Germany and Canada. Costs, security, recognition and credibility of the university are the main factors of selection for study abroad. The main disciplines include business, IT and medicine.

In recent years, some foreign universities and colleges have started to offer partial or full degree courses through affiliates in the UAE. Major study destinations set up representation offices and some countries promote study opportunities through embassies and trade organisations.

Regardless of its good trade relationships, the Netherlands is not known for its good quality higher education services in the UAE. Though the UAE has a strong demand for high quality higher education services, student numbers are limited. But the UAE offers opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate programs in a multitude of disciplines.

(Nuffic 2004)

#### 5.1.11 Vietnam

Vietnam has a population of 80.4 million people, of which 60 percent are under the age of 30. Vietnam is continuing to move towards a market-oriented economy which has seen growth in recent years. There is a strong trade relationship between Vietnam and the Netherlands, being the eight largest foreign investor. Vietnam's demand for international education continues to increase. Because the demand cannot be met by the national higher education system, Vietnam is actively seeking to increase the number of students studying abroad. There is less government control on those students who want to study abroad: exit visas are no longer required and passports are much easier to obtain. Attaining sufficient proficiency in English is still a major obstacle for Vietnamese students. The upper-secondary diploma is equal to the HAVO diploma. There is a word of caution on the reliability of certificates and diplomas of students which not always guaranteed.

The main foreign destinations are Australia, The US, New Zealand, Thailand, The UK and France. The most popular fields of study are IT, accounting and finance, business administration, medicine and economics of development. The major strengths of the Netherlands as a study-abroad destination are the various options of English-taught programs, relatively low costs and high quality courses.

Secondary living and learning conditions are extremely important for Vietnamese students, especially female students, since most of them come from a tightly knit family environment. Dutch institutions should pay special attention to assistance in housing and social life to assist Vietnamese students in adapting into the new environment.

(NUFFIC 2003)

## 5.2 NESO experiences with regard to educational market potentials

This section describes the results of a quick scan survey on the experiences of the Netherlands Education Support Offices (NESOs). The NESO offices are the overseas representative offices of the Nuffic, the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education. The main tasks of the NESOs are the generic promotion of Dutch higher education and the enhancement of cooperation between higher education institutions in the Netherlands and institutions in the NESO regions. Their core activities are:

- Information and Promotion
- Matchmaking/Institutional cooperation
- Market Analysis & Development
- Management of Programmes and Projects

The first two NESOs were established in June 2001 in Beijing, China and Taipei, Taiwan. Jakarta, Indonesia followed in 2002 and in 2006 the NESO office in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam has been officially opened. The fifth NESO will be located in Mexico City, Mexico and will officially be opened on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007.<sup>9</sup>

In the quick scan survey the directors of the five NESOs were asked for a short reaction on the international activities and possibilities of Dutch higher education institutions in their respective

<sup>9</sup> [www.nuffic.nl/neso/](http://www.nuffic.nl/neso/) accessed on 22-1-2007



countries. All directors briefly responded, but the Mexico office could not give us any information because they are still starting up their activities and the Vietnam office only opened up a few months ago and could only give limited information.

### 5.2.1 NESO Indonesia

There are short programmes run by IHE, IHS and ITC in cooperation with Indonesian universities. Besides this there are several double degree and joint degree programs currently running, for example:

- ITB-RuG spatial planning infrastructure
- IHE-UGM
- UI-VU
- UI-UvA (just starting up)
- UI-Tilburg (being discussed)
- UGM - ITC, just starting up

These are all joint programmes or double degree programmes and most of them are catering for Scholarship students, mainly co-financed by Bappenas and the StuNed programme.

Besides this there is ITB-RuG Chemical engineering and several other small programmes of which we do not know the actual scope at this time. The success of the programmes is not clear because most of them started quite recently. Most activities have some problems and limitations, often specific to the programme or to the partner university.

There are opportunities for more double / joint degree master programmes and for 2+2 or 3+1 programmes, similar to Malaysia where this is done on a large scale.

### 5.2.2 NESO Vietnam

In Vietnam one can see a trend where institutions tend to go for more controlled recruitment channels. The most important way of doing this is to use one of the many forms of offshore education allowing a foreign HEI to secure a recruitment ground. In the few months the NESO is in operation one could see that higher education institutions look for partners to establish offshore programs. This is true for Fontys en Saxion, the two biggest Dutch players on the Vietnam market.

However these programs are more based on coordination between the two curricula than a form of integration in education delivery. The bureaucratic minefield shies away NL institutes to start offering double degrees or flying in teachers. They rather make sure the partner institute has a certain level in its education to make sure that VN students can flow into a Dutch curriculum. One has not yet seen any of these cooperation's close enough to know how NL HEI go about propping up the Vietnamese partner.

Further, the NESO view is blurred a little bit by the number of ODA funded projects that NL institutions have through, for example, the NPT program. These projects might result in offshore education but the people operating in these projects are little negative about the opportunities for full fledged offshore programs as the regulation are complicate and opaque to say the least.

### 5.2.3 NESO Taiwan

Dutch universities have not yet set up offshore education in Taiwan. However, there is joint cooperation between Dutch and Taiwanese universities on dual degree programmes.

The Taiwanese government has a very strict policy towards offshore education. Taiwanese institutions are rather conservative in taking initiative in this respect. Our feeling is that the time may come when there are a substantial number of Taiwanese students studying in Holland, so there may be a need to establish offshore campus in Taiwan. China is an example, but Taiwanese students prefer to go abroad as the living standard in Taiwan are quite high and people want to

open up their eyes. Offshore education does not seem to offer competitive benefits to students here compared to local education.

#### 5.2.4 NESO China

Though a complete overview was not possible, the Chinese office gave examples of some offshore education programs that are currently running in China.

- TU/e together with North-eastern University has a Biomedical Science and Information Technology Master.
- Maastricht School of Management together with Shanghai Maritime University has a joint program MBA.
- RuG together with Shanghai Fudan University has a joint research centre in Dutch Studies
- University of Twente together with Human University has a joint program MBA.
- CHN has a branch campus in Chengdu, China
- Nyenrode together with China European International Business School has a MBA using Flying professors

### 5.3 Synthesis: major opportunities for the market of offshore education

Based on the first explorations of market opportunities for offshore education by Dutch higher education institutions a number of issues can be raised:

- ◆ There are many ways in which Dutch HEIs are cooperating abroad, mainly using double/joint degree programs run by local institutions. Sometimes flying professors are used. The programs offered are mostly Masters or MBA. Only one institution has a branch campus abroad in a NESO country, namely CHN in China.
- ◆ There are large opportunities in terms of student numbers (many growing markets with limited national higher education capacity).
- ◆ There is an increasing number of potential students that master English.
- ◆ Study abroad is popular because national systems lack the capacity to enrol all students who would like to get a higher education degree and because students regard degrees from high profile western countries as more valuable for future labour market perspectives. In a country like Taiwan, offshore education is not considered as an attractive option because the living standard is high and people want to broaden their worldview.
- ◆ But there also is a substantial segment of students who prefer to stay in the home country as to limit costs and risks. This adds up to a decline in scholarships available to local students to study abroad.
- ◆ Private education is booming, but offshore branch campuses are only developed at a limited scale. The possibilities for offshore education provision however differ per country.
- ◆ Looking at the programmes or disciplines which are most popular for study abroad or which show to be viable in private education often concern business, economics, law and some engineering programmes, rather at master than at bachelor level. This implies that offshore education is also likely to be concentrated on these disciplines and types of programmes.
- ◆ The NESOs indicate some opportunities for offshore education, but they also mention a number of limitations.
- ◆ The hindrances for offshore provision lie mainly in the regulatory field, both in the Netherlands and the host country. For example, to set up joint programs/degrees or branch offices one has to take into account that it might be complicated to get licensed. Other difficulties are that it might require long-term investments to build trust and search for joint opportunities with potential partners.



- ◆ Furthermore it is important to offer quality education and degrees which also are accredited (by the home institution) and receive international recognition.
- ◆ Collaboration with foreign institutions or setting up offshore education provision requires a thorough analysis of and adjustment to the national culture, habits and regulations. In addition it might be considered to organise a strong national lobby to promote Dutch higher education and degrees. Public relations are important.
- ◆ Dutch higher education is not yet widely known for its high quality low cost services. Dutch fees are still low compared to the UK, US and Australia, but this may change rapidly. There still is a lot to do in the area of branding “Dutch higher education”.
- ◆ NESOs can only be successful if the Dutch HEIs really want to do something and are prepared to take (collective) action.



## 6 Involvement in offshore education: a quick scan survey

This chapter provides an overview of the first steps of the empirical analysis of the involvement of Dutch higher education institutions in offshore education. It particularly reports on the quick scan survey held among a limited number of Dutch higher institutions, including the DU-institutions and higher education institutions of which it is known that they are relatively active in the area of internationalisation. The NUFFIC helped in selecting those institutions and as such we contacted the following institutions:

- ◆ Universiteit van Amsterdam (DU)
- ◆ Open Universiteit Nederland (DU)
- ◆ Universiteit Twente (DU)
- ◆ Hogeschool van Amsterdam (DU)
- ◆ Hogeschool Rotterdam (DU)
- ◆ Hogeschool Utrecht (DU)
- ◆ Hogeschool INHOLLAND (DU)
- ◆ Fontys Hogescholen (DU)
- ◆ Saxion Hogescholen (DU)
- ◆ Christelijke Hogeschool Noord Nederland
- ◆ Maastricht School of Management

The main objectives of this part of the study were to provide an overview of the extent to which Dutch higher education institutions are involved in offshore education. In addition it was aimed to get a broad picture of the type of offshore activities taking place as well as to form a basis on which one could select case studies that are interesting to learn about the factors that lead to successful and/or failure with respect to (parts of) offshore education activities. In addition this stage of the study aimed at finding interesting examples of offshore initiatives that are currently being developed and that could benefit from the knowledge built in the case studies.

To reach these objectives, a web based questionnaire has been designed and distributed among educational directors of study programs in the selected institutions. In a second stage the contacts that indicated interesting cases or wishes in the area of offshore education we contacted for a short telephone interview to explore a bit deeper their experiences. The method and results will be presented in more detail in the following sections.

### 6.1 Web based quick scan survey

It was originally envisaged to only include Dutch higher education institutions that are members of the Digital University in this study. However, based on discussions with the review committee it was decided to also include a few other institutions that are highly active in the area of internationalisation. To explore the involvement in offshore education activities, the most logical contacts within higher education institutions are the programme-directors or others who are responsible for the coordination of study programmes. They are the most central persons that should know about potential offshore activities or wishes in that direction.

In order to get the contact information of the programme-directors of higher education institutions, the DU-contacts of each higher education institution were asked to deliver this information. After some attempts this was successful in most DU-institutions. For the other institutions we contacted central administrative offices. For most institutions we received contact addresses to send out our web based questionnaire. For some institutions we only received one or a few contacts. In the following sections the results from the quick scan survey are reported.



### 6.1.1 Response

In Table 6.1 we report on the response to the webbased quick scan survey. In total we received 83 contact addresses from six institutions. Two institutions have distributed the survey themselves within their institutions and two “snow ball contacts” (contacts given by respondents) were added to our list. In addition to this, the survey was also sent to the Christelijke Hogeschool Noord Nederland and the Maastricht School of Management. The response rate is 48%, 6% only indicated that they would not participate in the survey because it was not applicable to them and 47% did not respond at all. One institution is left out of the analysis because they indicated that the governance board decided some years ago that the whole institution would not develop any offshore education activities and therefore participation in this study was not relevant, another institution did not provide us with any address data.

**Table 6.1: Response to the survey**

	Sent	Response		Non-participation	Non-response	
		returned	NA		Wrong address	No reaction
Total	107	47	4	6	2	48
Response rate		response = 47,7%		Non-participate = 5,6%	non response = 46,7%	

The response rate varies for the different participating institutions between 31 and 70 percent. The low response rate for one institution can be attributed to the fact they did not provide us with addresses but distributed the questionnaire themselves. They were therefore not included in our reminder mailings.



### 6.1.2 Results

An overview the institutions that are active or planning to be active can be found in table 6.2. Out of the 47 respondents participating, 14 are currently active or were active in offshore education.

Thirteen of those also mention the want to do new activities in the future. The only respondents with no intentions for any further activities wishes to gain more experience with his current activities first.

Out of the 33 respondents who do not have any activities, eight claim to have intentions for offshore activities in the future. This means that there are twenty five respondents who are not active in any way, now or in the future, with offshore education. According to the respondents the reasons for this are:

- offshore education is not a priority,
- offshore education is not suitable for the course,
- they are not familiar with offshore education,
- high workload and not enough staff capacity to pursue this.

**Table 6.2: Offshore activities (in absolute numbers)**

Currently or in the past	<i>Intention for activities in the future</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	
Yes	13	1	14
No	8	25	33
Total	21	26	47

Table 6.3 provides an overview of the different types of offshore education in use by the respondents. Some of the respondents mentioned activities that may not be the core offshore activities as defined in this study. Most respondents use some means of cooperation with a foreign institution: flying professors, double/joint degree and recognition of credits are the most cited. The respondents make less use of Virtual / Distance education and provider mobility.

**Table 6.3: Type of activities (in absolute numbers)\***

<b>Program mobility</b>	11
• recognition of credits	6
• Double/joint degree	5
• Validation	2
• Flying professors	9
• Other,	
o curriculum development, teacher training teaching methods	1
o Supervising and recruitment of students from Flemish universities	1
<b>Virtual / Distance</b>	6
<b>Provider mobility</b>	5
• Branch campus	1
• Independent institution (either a new institution, acquisition or merger)	1
• Study Centre / Teaching Site	3

\*multiple responses were possible for this question



Most respondents indicate that the activities are successful regarding the number of students and the quality of education (12 and 11 out of 14). With nine out of fourteen respondents, most of the activities are a financial success as well. The type of institutions the respondents cooperate with varies; they cooperate with both public and private universities and universities of professional education. Companies, embassies and private institutes are also mentioned as partners. The regions where the respondents are most active are: Asia, Caribbean (including Curacao and Antilles), Africa and the EU. The amount of students the respondent are catering for differs, from 1 to 1000. Most (eight) respondents say they reach somewhere between 20 and 50 students while five respondents indicate to address more than 100 students.

The usage of ICT for offshore education is shown in table 6.4.

**Table 6.4: Use of ICT in offshore education (in absolute numbers)**

None or trivial online presence;	1
Web supplemented: the Web is used but not for key “active” elements of the programme (e.g. course outline and lecture notes online, use of email, links to external online resources) without any reduction in classroom time;	3
Web dependent: Students are required to use the Internet for key “active” elements of the programme—e.g. online discussions, assessment, online project/ collaborative work—but without significant reduction in classroom time.	3
Mixed mode: Students are required to participate in online activities, e.g. online discussions, assessment, online project/collaborative work, as part of course work, which replace part of face-to-face teaching/learning. Significant campus attendance remains.	5
Fully online: the vast bulk of the programme is delivered online with typically no (or not significant) campus attendance or through “learning objects”.	2

### 6.1.3 Wishes with respect to future offshore education activities

As shown in table 6.2 there are 21 respondents who have the intention to be active in offshore education. As can be seen in table 6.5 below, the type of activities our respondents mention most are program mobility and virtual/distance. The main regions that are being considered are Asia, EU, Caribbean, Africa and Central/Eastern Europe. The number of students that they want to reach differs greatly, from 20 to 7000. Almost all respondents indicate that they want to be active by cooperating with a foreign provider. Virtual / Distance education is mentioned often as well.

**Table 6.5: Wishes with regard to offshore education (in absolute numbers)\***

<b>Program mobility</b>	20
• recognition of credits	12
• Double/joint degree	12
• Validation	6
• Flying professors	14
• Other:	
o Local teacher, partly educated here, teach the students who get a Dutch degree	1
o curriculum development	1
o joint development of courses	1
o joint program	1
<b>Virtual / Distance</b>	16
<b>Provider mobility</b>	3
• Branch campus	1
• Independent institution (either a new institution, acquisition or merger)	1
• Study Centre / Teaching Site	2

\*multiple responses were possible for this question

#### 6.1.4 Case study contacts

In table 6.6 the number of respondents that indicated to be willing to function as a case study or partner scenario is shown. There are nineteen respondents willing to be a case study, with eleven respondents that were active and sixteen respondents that have the intention to be active. This is the sample used for selecting the case studies and the partner scenarios.

**Table 6.6: Case study respondents (in absolute numbers)**

	<i>Intention for activities in the future</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	
Currently or in the past			
Yes	10	1	11
No	6	2	8
Total	16	3	19

In order to get as much information out of this study as possible and to select the case studies properly, we used an intermediary step before selecting the case studies and partner scenarios. A short round of telephone interviews among the potential case study respondents provided some more detailed information on the backgrounds of their offshore education initiatives or intentions. The outcomes are presented in the next section.

## 6.2 Short telephone interviews

Based on the quick scan survey, a number of respondents could be selected that provided information that is very relevant for this study in terms of previous, current or future offshore education activities. In order to get a little more information, these respondents were contacted by telephone (or email) with a few more detailed questions on their offshore education activities and whether these could serve as a case study or partner scenario. We used slightly different questions

for those who are or have been active in offshore education and those who wish to become active in this area.

For those who are or were active, the following questions were asked in the short telephone interview:

- You are active in offshore education in the following ways ... Did you consider any other formats?
- Why are the activities (not) successful?
- You are active in the following regions ....did you consider any other regions?
- What is the reason for starting this activity?
- What were the most important start up problems, are there currently any other problems?
- Could you tell something about the cooperation with the foreign partner, if any?
- What are the lessons that can be learned from your experiences?
- Why is your case interesting for other to learn from?
- May we contact you in a later stage to do a more detailed case study?

For those who wish to become active, the following questions were asked in the short telephone interview:

- You want to be active in the following ways ... did you consider any other formats?
- Have you considered offering education offshore before, and if so, why didn't it work?
- What are your expectations regarding success?
- You want to be active in the following regions ... did you consider any other regions?
- Why do you want to start an offshore activity?
- What are the most important start-up problems?
- Do these problems still exist, and if so, how do you plan to solve them?
- Could you tell something about the cooperation with the foreign partner, if any?
- What are the lessons that can be learned from your experiences?
- Why is your case interesting for other to learn from?
- May we contact you in a later stage to do a more detailed case study?

The telephone interviews can be seen as short case studies. These short case studies provided a more in-depth look into the activities of some of the respondents to the quick scan. This section provides an overview of the most important topics mentioned: success, important issues and lessons. On the basis of these telephone interviews the case studies were selected.

#### 6.2.1 Reasons for offshore education activities

The respondents varied in the reasons for starting up offshore education and the means they used to offer education abroad. There were some distance learning activities that focused mainly on Dutch speaking students or student mobility programs that can not be regarded as offshore education if we look at our definition. Most activities used the 3+1 or +2+2 concept, which means that students have to study at least one year in the Netherlands in order to get a Dutch degree. Many of the cases started because of international contacts that were made during other work related activities, projects or congresses. There was one institution (CHN) that owned brick and mortar institutions abroad. Two of these are joint ventures with venture capitalists; another is a joint venture with a local university. CHN is 100% shareholder and thus owner of another institution abroad. Most of the other activities used cooperation with a foreign partner or distance education.

The reasons why the activities start differ greatly. ITC, for example, follows the mutual understanding rationale. Their main goal is capacity building and they do not have to make a profit. Another respondent with the same rationale mentioned that their goal is not making a profit but





creating knowledge circulation, create goodwill and give teachers opportunities to teach abroad. Their activities are cost covering at best and this approach generated trust in the host region. The course has good contacts with local government, who support the students financially. This has helped the success of the program.

Other institutions follow the revenue generation rationale but this is not possible for all regions in the world as students from many regions lack funds. Higher tuition fees make it harder for students to study in the Netherlands, they need stipends for that. Asia is, as a region, most viable because the students there have more resources for the 3+1 formula.

### 6.2.2 Important issues

In the telephone interviews, the respondents indicated a number of important issues that can be clustered in issues concerning quality, the local environment, the programmes, the success of the activities and the Dutch regulations.

#### *Quality*

The quality of the program has to be good for several reasons. In order to get accredited, to get funding, to get students or to be allowed in the host country the quality has to be recognized. Quality is important as well for the providing institution, if you deliver students of low quality your image will suffer. One way of ensuring the quality of the study program is selecting students on their English proficiency.

#### *Local environment*

It is important to have a sound understanding of the local environment and your local partner. It is therefore advised to make an in depth analysis of your partner, the country involved, possibilities etc. before starting a partnership. It is important that your objectives combine with the local ambitions.

It is also worth mentioning that partners in some countries can be less reliable. This can mean, for example that agreements are only valid for two to three years, and if a better partners comes along the cooperation is immediately terminated.

#### *Program*

One respondent mentioned that you should implement the program the way you want it, e.g. using program based learning. The local environment is not always used to the working methods used in the Netherlands. This means that starting a program can take a lot of work. An example of this is the cultural differences between students and teachers from the Netherlands. The teaching method is not what the students expect and the Dutch teachers expect different type of students. In the area of research there can also be great differences.

#### *Success*

There are always losses and high start-up costs and this makes some activities more successful than others. These factors differ for every country partly because the regulations differ. Regulations regarding a license can, for example, be vital for the success of the program. A program that is not fully licensed will be less successful.

Another issue important for success is marketing. This can be a problem for the local partner because they don't always have experience with marketing. Most local partners do not have problems to enrol students for their own programs, most of the time there are more students than places available. Joint courses are more expensive and therefore need marketing because enrolments are lower.

Internationalisation activities can be very useful for building a brand. A new institution in China was possible because the United Nations contacted the respondents institution to see if they were interested. CHN was on a short list because of their current activities and they were selected because of that.

#### *Dutch regulations*

One respondent mentioned: *"ALWAYS involve the Dutch Law in you decisions"*. This is an important issue, one respondent said they want to be active offshore, but there is no course offered abroad yet because the Dutch regulations still are too restrictive. New regulations are in the pipeline, but already for quite some time. The institutions can get around this using 'recognition of acquired competencies' EVC, but not every institution is willing to use EVC in order to get around legislation issues. At the moment it is still regarded a substantial problem that students need to have studied for at least one year at the Dutch higher education institution that awards the degree.

Another issue is that the government is continuously checking whether private and public funds are not mixed, even when the administration of the institutions is in good order. A respondent mentioned that *"The ambitions the government has regarding internationalisation cannot be traced back to support for the institutions."*

The HBO sector is reluctant to work with international students because of the funding scandal a few years ago according to one respondent.

#### 6.2.3 Lessons:

The respondents in the interviews mentioned a number of lessons during the telephone interviews:

- ◆ The main problems are quality, funding and student numbers. These problems correlate, for example if you would lower your quality standards, more students will qualify to enrol. One comes at the expense of the other and you have to find a balance between that.
- ◆ Quality is the key; do not compromise on this point. Select partners carefully, the goal should be a long-term relationship. You should look further than attracting students: Staff exchange, research etc. can be important. This prevents the partnership from collapsing if the student part fails.
- ◆ There are negative experiences. The most important thing is how you handle the risks you are taking. There are financial risks and it is important to be conservative with you investments. The other risk is your harming your image/quality.
- ◆ We cooperate with two types of partners: universities and venture capitalists.
- ◆ Cooperating with universities is easy because they share the same language and we only have to implement our program in the universities. The problem is that this cooperation lacks freedom to make their educational choices because you have to work with the educational concepts of the host university as well. So, it may appear easy, but it can create many problems.
- ◆ Cooperating with venture capitalists works the other way round. They have no clue what education is about and they don't share the same language. This does mean that you are free to do what you want regarding the program.



## 7 Case studies

To provide more in-depth and practical information in the area of offshore education by Dutch higher education institutions this chapter provides a number of case studies for which the organisation, success, failure, ICT elements and potential lessons are being explored. On the basis of the we-based survey and the telephone interviews 4 cases have been selected: the Christelijke Hogeschool Nederland (CHN), INHOLLAND, Saxion Hogeschool, and the ITC.

The case studies are performed by interviews with one or a few experts of the higher education institution or programme involved. The interviews had relatively loose structures in which the respondents were given the freedom to indicate what is most interesting and attractive about their offshore education activities. The interviewers, however, used a checklist of issues that were checked during the interviews:

- Reasons for the offshore initiatives
- The type of activities undertaken
- The stages in the offshore process
- Expected achievements and by what actor in the institution
- The quality of offshore education
- The location of the activities
- The relation with the partners
- Characteristics of the target groups, the type of programmes and ways of teaching, etc.
- The teachers involved and how they are trained
- The use of ICT elements
- Experienced problems and solutions
- The perceived success in terms of quality, student numbers and finance
- Wished change of ambitions, activities or approach
- Would one like to do things different
- Lessons learned

The analysis of the case studies is presented by using a number of broad topics: offshore education; the ICT component; problems and solutions; the results of the offshore activities and lessons learned.

### 7.1 Christelijke Hogeschool Nederland (CHN)

CHN is a dynamic university of professional education with campus sites in the Netherlands, and outside of Europe. CHN currently has 6,600 students from 60 different countries, and 580 staff members. CHN offers specialised study programmes and commercial services in the areas of primary education (teacher training) and care and service management for both the national and international market.

Under the heading 'Global Campus', the CHN is making good progress in developing into an institution with an international character. The main international partners can be found in South-Africa, Thailand and Qatar. In the north of the Netherlands, the CHN maintains strategic partnerships with the Noordelijke Hogeschool Leeuwarden, the Van Hall Institute for Higher Agricultural Education, the Hanze Hogeschool Groningen and the Hogeschool Drenthe.

#### *Offshore education*

The reason why CHN started their offshore activities is mainly influenced by the objectives of the institution, but also the educational programme. CHNs curriculum includes schools for hotel and




tourism, two international disciplines. The objectives however are more important. For example the identity and mission of the institution. CHN has a Christian identity and therefore wants to invest in the development of education in third world countries and to invite international staff and students to study in Leeuwarden (unity by community) which also enables Dutch students to get international education and working experience. A third reason is the geographical position of CHN within the Netherlands. Since CHN is a small institution outside of the Randstad, a major growth in the student population is not to be expected. CHN therefore looked across national borders to find this growth. The institution is focusing more and more on the international market. Comparison and competition with international institutions is important. Last but not least, the Dutch and EU governmental policy, for example the Bologna treaty, encouraged CHN to focus on the international market.

Although the first activities in the beginning of the nineties with countries such as Lebanon and South Africa started in an informal, not very structured way, nowadays the objectives are clearly formulated. The initial collaboration with foreign institutions in the nineties started on a individual basis with staff and student exchange and CHN' staff visiting students while they were in training abroad. Also foreign exchange students participated in CHN courses. At the end of the nineties joint (short) courses and trainings were developed together with partners in Indonesia, Surinam and Aruba. These courses were organised abroad. Credit points from the partner were accepted by CHN and students could receive a double or joint degree.

Around 2000 CHN set up a hotel school in Lebanon. Soon afterwards another hotel school was set up in South Africa, this time together with local partners. In South Africa a private branch campus was set up, a big step in the offshore activities of CHN. The regional choice was both based on personal relations as well as the Christian identity of CHN. These initiatives were planned, but still the overall idea was 'to just do it' and wait and see what the results were. Enthusiasm of staff and commitment contributed to the success of the international collaboration in the first years, instead of a carefully designed strategy. The project in Lebanon turned out to be unsuccessful; the South African collaboration was successful though. CHN even became the only shareholder in this project after a while. Other activities were planned in Thailand and Qatar. Two other private branch campuses were set up there. In 2006 a similar collaboration was initiated in China with the start of CHN Royalton University China. The Chinese partner is the investment corporation Royalton Investment. All international activities of CHN are financed by private funding.

The main reason for the expansion of CHN's partnerships is the fact that the international policy of CHN changed in 2002/3 when the activities were more structured. The board decided that the international projects and the planning of these projects had to be based on the concept of business economics, should be more structured, based on continuity and aiming at a long-term planning. New staff was selected on international experience and skills. Also the marketing was professionalised. From then onwards international activities became institutionalised. Staff and students as a whole were involved, instead of individual staff, students and/or departments.

Nowadays students can participate in an international study called the Grand Tour. All CHN students have the opportunity to join the Grand Tour programme. This means they have the opportunity to attend part of their study in the Netherlands, South Africa, Qatar or Bangkok, or a combination of those four. All study programmes match one another. At each campus CHN and their partners work on a modular basis with an interdisciplinary approach. The educational concept is largely determined by the principles of problem-based and value-based learning. Besides the Netherlands, South Africa, Qatar and/or Thailand, students also have the chance to see other countries. They can define their own Grand Tour and combine it with a foreign internship or exchange programmes in other countries. Dutch students mainly attend a major part of their BA in Leeuwarden, followed by either a Grand Tour, an internship or both. International students mainly participate in short courses or a BA in Leeuwarden. Usually international students don't make a Grand Tour in countries other than the Netherlands. One of the objectives is to change this trend.



South African students should also attend courses in for instance Qatar. The fact that this isn't happening often partly has to do with finances and partly with the difficulty of accreditation of diploma's, depending on the country.

CHN has developed itself into a 'globalised institution', a network of campus sites, where students can participate in courses of any of the four partner institutions.

#### *The ICT component*

CHN works with the didactical concept of Problem Based Learning (PBL). This is a participatory and an active learning process. Students are expected to possess knowledge of their professional work field, but most importantly they should be able to think and act in a problem solving manner.

Through PBL they will acquire knowledge and learn to develop their professional and personal capabilities and be able to think and act in an independent problem-solving manner.

PBL is a participatory and an active learning process. Students work together in small groups. They analyse and solve a case by analysing the problem, brainstorm sessions, individual learning goals, studying in the library and solving of the learning goals of the particular case. The input of all students is part of the learning process. During the PBL sessions a teacher (the tutor) makes sure that everyone gets a say, that the subject is examined from all angles and that the tasks are properly divided.

ICT plays a minor role in the offshore activities of CHN. Pod cast is used and makes classes in Leeuwarden available at the international branch campuses. Furthermore Skype is used for communication. Students make a computer-based test as part of their application and selection procedure in their home country. International agents offer students to make this test in a local office. In general ICT is not used frequently because of practical obstructions. Mainly Surfnet and Blackboard are currently not used internationally, because both are not accessible for international students (see problems & solutions).

In the near future CHN has plans for e-learning and a more extensive use of Blackboard. The idea is to develop more ICT-tools for CHN's international education within the next 5 years. The partner institutions do not play a role in this process. Partly because they are not educational institutions, but financing companies, like in Qatar. Partly because they don't have the experience and skills, like in Thailand. Educators from CHN are working on (short) courses with ICT-components. However face-to-face education and Problem Based Learning will always be the foundation of CHN's didactic concept. ICT is seen as a useful addition.

#### *Problems & solutions*

Problems related to offshore education can be divided in general problems and local, regional problems. General problems are for example ICT-problems. Surfnet doesn't accept foreign students. That way they are not able to connect in this important ICT-instrument. Surfnet should therefore be made accessible for foreign students as well. Another ICT-related problem is the fact that Blackboard is only used in the Netherlands.

All programmes are validated and accredited by the Dutch Flemish Accreditation Agency (NVAO). The Master programmes are accredited and validated by the London Metropolitan University as well. However, accreditation of a Dutch diploma turns out to be complicated sometimes. Even the Dutch law isn't quite clear about the accreditation of double and joint degrees. Local laws and differences in international laws, make a common policy concerning diplomas and validating diplomas difficult for CHN and their international partners. This needs time and effort. Other problems relate to international laws and regulations concerning accreditation. The government and the NVAO should tackle this problem, but it is still difficult within Dutch law.

In the beginning the organisation of CHN wasn't professional enough. Staff was competent if education was concerned, but international education asks for other requirements as well. In the

past years, more international experienced staff, including management, was employed. The College van Bestuur and the high management staff are very committed to, and more experienced with, international education and willing to invest in international activities.

Measuring the quality of education of the international partners and the English level of students also turns out to be difficult. The IELTS and TOEFL tests, but also a language/cognition /attitude test that is developed together with the Vrije Universiteit are useful tools to solve these problems.

Local problems can also be challenging. Local traditions and religion can be influential. For example the fact that in Qatar men and women are not allowed to sit in one classroom. CHN found a creative solution. The staff placed a folding screen in the middle of the classroom.

In the past the curriculum was mainly developed in Leeuwarden. This was partly caused by the fact that some of the local partners are investment companies. Nowadays the idea is to clearly look at each others strengths and weaknesses and that especially the strengths of each partner should be used for the benefit of others. Policy and workload will be more divided between partners and partners complement each other.

In the curriculum, not all modules in the different countries are taking place at the same time. CHN is working on that now.

### *Results*

The offshore activities of CHN have been quite successful. Although in the beginning there were financial setbacks and not all projects were successful, like for example Lebanon, recently (2006) the international projects show a positive financial balance. This is partly due to the fact that CHN has gathered a lot of international experience in the past 15 years. Within international education CHN is quite well-known and has a high ranking. International experience, new initiatives, far-reaching collaborations and a more structured business plan are important for their success.

The policy of CHN has developed during the years from student exchange and flying professors to establishing branch campuses abroad. CHN has a different approach to each project and partner. The project in Qatar is for example initiated and financed by a local investment company, therefore limiting the financial liabilities for CHN. The company and CHN have a joint-venture, each with 50% of the shares. CHN has complete control of the educational programme, which avoided any friction. In South-Africa CHN now is the sole owner of the campus site, and has a monopoly on the educational programme and ownership of the buildings. In Thailand there's again another situation. Here CHN works together with the local Rangsit University. Both partners have a saying in the content of the course. CHN moved in the existing infrastructure of Rangsit. In all courses a double and joint degree is offered to the students.

The international success of CHN can also be measured by the fact that the amount of international internships have increased, the students participating in the Grand Tour have increased with approximately 30%. Students in general give a positive evaluation of the courses, which is confirmed by personal consultations with each student.

Besides the economic success there's also the educational and ethical success. Students learn to connect education with development. For example PABO-students that help to build and develop schools in townships in South Africa. Students also find it relatively easy to find work, especially in international companies. International students from development countries have the opportunity to live and learn in the Netherlands.

### *Lessons learned*

Looking backwards CHN should have worked with clear objectives and a business strategy already in the nineties. The policy should also have been introduced to the whole institutional organisation from the beginning, from teaching staff, to the financial department, to HRM. That way the



international policy of CHN would have been more effective from the beginning and more people would have been committed to international education. Getting to know the new partner and taking the time to design a joint strategy is also crucial. This way differences of opinion, concerning interpretations of both the collaboration, structure of the educational programme and way of teaching, can be avoided. Both partners for example have to agree on how problem-based learning has to be implemented. Last but not least is a clear-cut financial agreement between the partners.

## 7.2 INHOLLAND

INHOLLAND University of Professional Education is an ambitious institution in the Western part of the Netherlands. With about 3000 staff it offers a wide range of study programmes to over 35.000 students at eleven campus-sites (Alkmaar, Delft, Den Haag, Amsterdam, Diemen, Haarlem, Rotterdam, Dordrecht, Hoofddorp, Utrecht and Zaanstad). The institution consists of Schools that each cover a separate discipline: agricultural and life science studies, engineering, economics, health, education, social studies and arts. Every School has a dean who has the full responsibility for all the study programmes within the School. The deans report to the Executive Board. Teams of lecturers are led by programme managers.

INHOLLAND has the ambition to be a worldwide player and to be recognised by its strong international profile. As such it offers a wide range of internationally oriented study programmes covering a variety of professions. For foreign students it can be of interest that one can study at the various sites of the institution, all in the 'Randstad' – the western coastal region of the Netherlands. This region offers a lot of cultural diversity to the students. In addition, the network of companies and partner institutions of INHOLLAND provides ample opportunities to acquire practical experience and to study both in the Netherlands and abroad.

The internationalisation strategy of INHOLLAND has four corner stones. First, international mobility which provides both students and lecturers life experience in different cultures and higher education systems abroad. Second, INHOLLAND developed a large and strong network of around 350 partner institutions. It now wants to intensify and deepen the relations with a limited number of these institutions. Third, as 85-90% of the students are not internationally mobile, INHOLLAND organises its programmes in such a way that students will get international experiences through international projects, visiting foreign students and international elements in the curriculum. This is called internationalisation at home. The fourth element of INHOLLAND's internationalisation strategy is strategic cooperation with a few trustworthy foreign partners. As such, INHOLLAND tries to establish synergies with institutions in China (Shanghai), UK, Buenos Aires, Indonesia, India and the US.

Particularly this latter element has recently been recognised based on the idea that providing one's own teaching programmes abroad is much more interesting and challenging than sending and attracting students only. Offering courses and programmes elsewhere enables institutions to better serve the foreign target groups, to explore more market opportunities and to strengthen the programmes and lecturers. In addition, international students more often indicate that they would like to take foreign degrees, but would like to do so in their home countries to avoid high costs, cultural shocks and reduce the risk of failure. As a result, Chinese and Indonesian partners increasingly request INHOLLAND to come to those countries to offer its programmes. However, before doing so a lot of work has to be done and both sides have to invest in the initiative and to build mutual trust. This takes time.

### *Offshore education*

INHOLLAND has two major initiatives in offshore education. One is the full provision of complete bachelor programmes in economics in Paramaribo in Surinam. The other is the development of joint





educational projects with Shanghai Normal University in China which in due time should lead to joint degree programmes. Both initiatives will be analysed in more detail below.

#### 7.2.1 Offering full bachelor programmes in economics in Paramaribo.

Based on a long tradition of partnership, INHOLLAND in 2001 started to also offer four of its bachelor programmes in economics at the private branch of the Anton de Kom University in Paramaribo in Surinam. To enable the INHOLLAND programmes to be fully taught in Paramaribo, teams of INHOLLAND lecturers were sent to Paramaribo to train local lecturers in 2001. Three times per year INHOLLAND lecturers visit Surinam and once a year Surinam lecturers visit INHOLLAND for an exchange of experiences. The dean of the School of Economics has the full responsibility for the study programmes in Surinam and their quality.

This project may be called a full offshore education project as the four INHOLLAND bachelor programmes are taught in Paramaribo exactly the same way as they are in the Netherlands. The programmes even run according to the same annual schedule with the same courses being examined at the exact same time. All is taught in Dutch and the Surinam students at the end are awarded an official INHOLLAND degree (through their private branch of INHOLLAND Select Studies).

##### *The ICT component*

Because the programmes are fully taught in Surinam as they are in the Netherlands, there is no strong need yet for extensive ICT support. The educational coordinators from the INHOLLAND programmes travel to Paramaribo several times per year to coach the local lecturers. In addition, a few times per year teams of lecturers of INHOLLAND also visit their Surinam colleagues to further train them and to guarantee that the quality of the programmes remains at the same level as that of the home institution, and where needed to adjust the programmes slightly, either in Surinam or in Holland.

In the future, the ICT component may become more central if relations are more fully established and part of the personal visits and contacts between the Dutch and Surinam colleagues can be replaced by video conferencing and other digital forms of communication. This may even be more the case if students become mobile between the two institutions.

##### *Problems and solutions*

This initiative has grown over a number of years and was based on strong mutual contacts and relationships. Particularly as a result of the willingness to offer four INHOLLAND programmes in an integral way INHOLLAND managed to avoid large-scale adjustments to the programmes or other “principal-agent” problems due to the requirements and standards of the host and home universities. Also the financial arrangement chosen prevents conflicts between the hosting and home institutions. The revenues are administered and managed by the Foundation for Surinam Higher Education (*Stichting Hoger Onderwijs Suriname*). The programmes are fully paid from the tuition fees paid by the students. Basically, both institutions do have a financial interest in the whole project. For INHOLLAND the principal interest lies in its internationalisation strategy and profile. The objective of INHOLLAND is to keep the profits in Surinam itself to raise education standards to a European quality level.

One major problem is that under normal conditions it is not possible to provide a Dutch degree if a student does not study in the Netherlands. This is especially true for state-subsidised programmes. In this case it is the private branch, INHOLLAND Select Studies, which awards the degree under its NVAO-accreditation. Under present legislation NVAO cannot accredit programmes outside the Netherlands, but in anticipation of new legislation NVAO has declared that the programmes may be considered equal. The Dutch Ministry of Education, informed of this NVAO

judgment and taking into account the strong relationships between Surinam, as a former colony of the Netherlands, and the Netherlands, has not objected to INHOLLAND's practice of awarding Dutch degrees to students who followed one of these four specific programmes fully in Paramaribo. As such all partners anticipated on the new internationalisation regulations and the new Higher Education Act that are being developed in the Netherlands. Another reason for this special treatment is found in the cooperation agreements and the development work between the two countries. One could also view this initiative as a pilot project to see whether offering Dutch degrees for programmes fully offered abroad is a viable way for internationalisation. In that case, offering programmes in a country that formerly belonged to the Dutch crown is regarded as still relatively "close by".

### *Results*

Teaching the four bachelor programmes in economics in Paramaribo might better be called a form of development aid performed by INHOLLAND rather than a commercial activity. Though the whole organisation of the programmes taught in Paramaribo is paid from the tuition fees from the students, the amount of the fees has been adjusted to local circumstances. From the fees of around €1.500 per year all costs are covered. The revenues are administered and managed by the Foundation for Surinam Higher Education (*Stichting Hoger Onderwijs Suriname*) which reflects the non-profit interest of INHOLLAND. Probably this attitude has led to very positive feedback from a number of official organisations. For example various Dutch Ministers have used the INHOLLAND – Anton de Kom University initiative as an eminent example of Dutch – Surinam cooperation and lauded the initiators for that.

In addition to trade and industry several ministries, official bodies and banks send their employees.

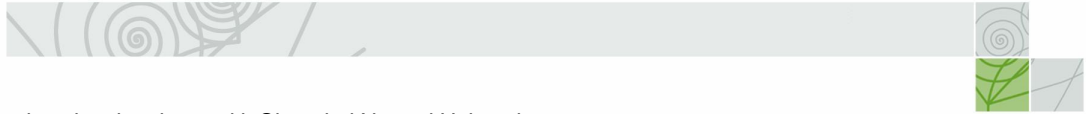
In terms of student numbers the project can be regarded as a growing success. After four years, the four INHOLLAND programmes attract about 385 students in total. This is a steadily growing number of students and at this moment it already generated a viable financial situation.

The students it concerns would not normally go to the Netherlands for their higher education. It is therefore a major contribution to the economy of Surinam. Moreover there has been a development of apprenticeship and minor development in the Caricom countries as in the Spanish and Portuguese language (Brazil).

In terms of quality the whole operation can be called a success whereas strong cooperation and intensive coaching, guidance and training of local lecturers by INHOLLAND staff guarantees that the degrees that are offered also meet the standards of a Dutch degree.

### *Lessons learned*

Offering a full programme abroad requires a range of conditions to be met. In this case, it was the long term relationships and mutual willingness to establish an interesting opportunity to Surinam students, requires both parties to invest substantially. The hosting Surinam university had to provide the facilities for a new study programme and above all to find and prepare a group of its own staff that is *open-minded* enough to fully accept and work in a study programme that has been developed elsewhere. INHOLLAND perceived the whole project as a form of development aid which strengthened its own international profile and thus contributed to its internationalisation strategy to become a global player. This legitimised the substantial investments INHOLLAND makes to get the initiative working, especially in terms of staff time to coach and train its Surinam colleagues. On the other hand, these international experiences for the INHOLLAND staff also mean a way of competence building, offering an interesting job and to provide alternative career perspectives in terms of further professional and personal development.



## 7.2.2 Joint educational projects with Shanghai Normal University

The second offshore activity of INHOLLAND is a bottom-up approach of building joint educational programmes with foreign partners, the first of these with Shanghai Normal University in China. This is done in a gradual process in which intensive cooperation should lead to developing parts of the programmes jointly and finally leading to joint degree programmes. Unlike in the case of the Surinam offshore activities, this process involves close cooperation on building parts of programmes together. As such, trust is even more crucial in this “adventure”.

The type of cooperation with Shanghai Normal University builds on a long tradition of structural contacts between staff and students with other partners, some of which in China. This type of cooperation aims to generate cooperation in the development and delivery of (parts of) degree programmes in various disciplines, among others International Business, Leisure and Tourism Management, Logistics and Communication. INHOLLAND aims at first establishing these joint programmes with Shanghai Normal University and to extend this approach to other partners in its international network.

Currently, INHOLLAND and Shanghai Normal University together establish a limited number of educational projects. These projects involve groups of students from both universities who together work on the same problem content but each working from their own context.

Obviously, a key driver for this cooperation for both universities involved is an interesting and challenging curriculum for students and lecturers.

The whole process is developed step by step. First of all, the experience from intensive cooperation with other partners in the field of international business programmes is used and is transferred to Leisure and Tourism Management. Roughly 70% of these programmes is similar wherever these programmes are taught, while the intensive cooperation focuses on the 30% variable part. The challenge is how the contents of this variable part can be developed jointly while recognising the different contexts of the countries involved. A project like this typically starts with the development of one educational period of ten weeks. Lecturers are being exchanged in order to get mutual understanding of how similar courses are being taught and assessed, a prerequisite for building synergies and developing joint courses. After successful implementation of a first period others are being developed. Ultimately this should lead to a full joint degree programme.

After successful implementation of this approach INHOLLAND aims at extending these efforts in other places like e.g. Argentina, India, the US and later Eastern Europe.

### *The ICT component*


The groups of students from both universities communicate for their projects through ICT platforms like email, blackboard and video conferencing. These ICT means are absolutely necessary if one aims students from both universities to collaborate and communicate on their joint projects. Another way to make this happen is to assess courses as much as possible at the same time.

Lecturers use the same media to keep in touch with their foreign colleagues and to organise the educational project. However, communication via ICT means can never fully replace on-site cooperation between faculty of both partners.

### *Problems and solutions*

Developing joint programmes with a foreign partner with a view to providing the international student with a quality curriculum requires a complex organisational process. The availability of qualified lecturers with adequate trans-national and intercultural competencies takes substantial effort.

An important issue is how to manage the quality of the joint programme. In comparison to many countries quality management in the Netherlands is advanced. Even though the quality of the educational programme of a counterpart is good, the challenge is to demonstrate, maintain and



warrant this level. The gradual approach of mutual staff exchange, investigation of each other's teaching and assessment, where and how to find synergy in cooperation is a way to build mutual trust in the quality of teaching and assessment and how to warrant it.

Domestic regulations in China are an obstacle in the process. It takes a long formal bureaucratic process to get the local authorities to accept curriculum changes and an international partner involved in joint cooperation. This requires considerable investment in terms of documentation and lobbying (personally) as well as a lot of patience to build the trust that is needed for such acceptance. Developing and delivering joint programmes can only succeed if one accepts that it takes long term investment in personal relationships between staff and lecturers of both institutions involved. Trust and commitment are preconditions to start cooperation on content level. In the short term one should not have any commercial intentions, as educational cooperation only costs money to invest in students, staff and joint programmes (or parts of it). Only when such programmes prove to be successful one can consider making them financially interesting as well.

#### *Results of offshore activities*

The main results from these activities are not financial. Although this process only costs money it leads to other rewards. For example, students involved get a strong international dimension added to their education. Lecturers involved have further developed their teaching skills, both in development of educational content and delivery, and have gained a lot of motivation and enthusiasm for the job they do.

#### *Lessons learned*

One of the most important lessons is that if one wants to start offshore education activities, it requires considerable investment, partially in monetary terms but particularly in terms of patience and time and capacity to build mutual trust and understanding. All parties involved should be committed to work together to develop their international profile and to establish a programme that in due course can be attractive and marketable.

### **7.3 Saxion Hogeschool**

Saxion Universities are located in the East of the Netherlands with three campuses. They have a student population of approximately 20,000 of which 2000 are international students taking both Bachelor and Master programs. The international programs in their catalogue are taught in English and encompasses both business and technical studies. Saxion attracts students from abroad using the 3+1 concept, where the final year of study is in the Netherlands. Students from all over the world are participating in their programs, especially from three partner institutions in China, Vietnam and Indonesia. The international programs have an international focus. The purpose is to bring cultures together; the students learn that there is more than their culture and they cooperate with each other. The program aims to provide students with problems on a global scale, with relevance for their field of study.

#### *Offshore education*

Saxion is not very active in offshore education in the strictest sense of the word. The only real offshore courses they have offered, as in an entire program abroad, are preparatory language courses in China. These full cost courses are meant to give students a proficiency level of English and a preparation to the Dutch (education) culture. This course is offered in China to make sure the students go to study at Saxion, instead of going to other providers in the Netherlands after finishing.

The other offshore courses that Saxion provides follow the 3+1 concept, three years of study at an institution abroad and a final year in the Netherlands. Saxion also offers various master



degrees in cooperation with partner universities in the USA and the UK. Some of the programs are under license; others are accredited by these partners.

Internationalization in Saxion, and the realization of the courses mentioned above, followed an incremental process. The first step was that Saxion wanted to make the Dutch curriculum more international by adding an international component. Exchange program projects were implemented to give student international experience. These projects are then only feasible on a global scale if you start providing some courses in English. A second step was therefore that an English curriculum was implemented in order to start exchange projects. In Saxion this was done by an international semester. The step from an international semester to an international final year was only a small one. In this step by step process of internationalization Saxion started to make international specializations of study programs. This made Saxion more interesting for foreign students because they were able to obtain a degree with their visit here. This meant that there was not only credit mobility, but also degree mobility. This rationale could also be applied to Dutch students; you offer them a truly international specialization. This specialization is targeted towards Dutch students who see their future in an international environment, either in the Netherlands or abroad. Intercultural working experience is an important factor for these students. Saxion looks at the competencies, knowledge, skills and attitudes that are needed in the field. This is translated to learning outcomes in the program and then to educational activities. This is the case for international education as well.

On the one hand you want to send students abroad to get experiences and internationalize the curriculum by adding awareness of international developments. These developments are very important, especially in a small country like the Netherlands. On the other hand you bring the world to Saxion by creating the international classrooms with international specializations. Saxion tries to have at least five different nationalities in their international classroom.

In the last ten years Saxion has established three partnerships with institutions abroad to get students for a final year to the Netherlands but the 3+1 option is offered on a global scale. Every student can apply for a final year at Saxion, whether the student is selected is based on a comparison of the subjects and courses that the student followed. Saxion currently has a partnership with an institution in three countries: China, Vietnam and Indonesia. These partnerships evolved from pilot projects, where at first a single course was offered and if that was successful others could follow. With the three partners Saxion has various degrees of cooperation about curricula and other matters. The most important part of the partnership is that the programs of the partners have to be adjusted to make sure that the students have the necessary knowledge base to start their final year. Saxion uses teacher exchange to make sure that after the three year program all the necessary knowledge is obtained.

Saxion has had contact with the Vietnamese partners for more than ten years. In Vietnam already was a course that they could build upon. The partner looked at the Dutch curriculum but made its own version of it. One of the reasons for this was that there are still obligatory courses that have to be in the curriculum, for example Marxist / Leninist party philosophy. Together with the partner the following courses are offered: international business and management studies, accounting and finance, marketing and electrical engineering.

The Chinese program is running for almost five years. The program and its content is well documented and thoroughly discussed with the partner because the entire four year program had to be approved by the Chinese government. The Chinese partner was free to decide on the content of the curriculum; Saxion only gave the necessary exit qualifications. In order to be clear on how Saxion reaches the exit qualifications at home, they provided the partner with syllabi and other course materials. The following courses are offered together with the Chinese partner: civil engineering, business information systems and international business and management studies.



There is currently one course that is offered in Indonesia; environmental science. This is a pilot project. The project originated from a program to attract talented foreign students to the Netherlands. For the Indonesian program, the partner has the most freedom to develop the curriculum. The main reason for this is that the Indonesian education system is relatively similar to the Dutch system, the curriculum is to a large extent a copy of that in the Netherlands and can be considered equal.

The partner universities are comparable to one another but Saxion has become more selective in looking for partners than before. A reason for this is that it is important for partners to be competitive. Students who apply for these types of programs have to be relatively well-off because the final year of study is expensive. It is important that the partners attract students who can afford to go to the Netherlands after their three years in the home country.

#### *The ICT component*

Saxion uses Lotus Learning Space (LLS) as digital learning environment. This application uses relatively much bandwidth and computer resources for the countries that Saxion targets. Therefore ICT plays a minor role in the offshore activities of Saxion. This is mainly because the infrastructure in these countries is less developed than in the Netherlands, although China is gaining very quickly. Saxion currently uses the internet to establish contact between students. This is done through a website, where the student can be emailed. The student can then decide to respond or not.

Saxion had an offshore distance program in South Africa that eventually was discontinued because it was not clear if the student could be registered as students studying at Saxion. Next to these issues, it was also difficult to make the distance education work. The interactive component using LLS did not work out as planned due to technical problems; the students were not able to use the same applications as in the Netherlands so snail mail was used to provide paper versions or CDs.


Saxion also had plans to offer their final year of environmental science online. The program had an open application procedure with the international classroom philosophy and used LLS. LLS was more of a hindrance than a facilitator because it is such a heavy application and eventually only email was used. This was such a hindrance because email bypassed the classroom philosophy, where the contacts would be more interactive. The program turned out not to be a success. The problem with these types of technologies is that in case of a small technical error someone will stop using it. Another issue for such a program is the cost of education. What fee can be put on such a distance/online course. Because none of the education took part in the Netherlands it was unclear whether the student could receive a Dutch diploma. This was the reason this program was put on hold. There is a willingness to go forward but it's not possible yet.

#### *Problems & solutions*

Although Saxion has entry requirements regarding language, and IELTS of 6, language is a big problem. Especially in China and Vietnam it is difficult to find native speakers. This means you have Chinese students who have excellent reading and writing skills, but lack the necessary speaking and listening skills. This is a difficult problem to solve because they do not absorb the tone of the language. Saxion tries to solve this problem by organizing discussion meetings with students where they have to talk English. The only solution for them is to practice with a native speaker. Because a good use of English is important for the successful completion of the program one should make hard entry qualifications for language.

Another problem is the type of education in especially China and Vietnam. It is focused on reproducing knowledge. The students have a good theoretical background, but can not apply this knowledge. Applied knowledge, working together in teams and multidisciplinary courses are not common in the Chinese education system. A student is educated in their own disciplinary context





and there are no disciplines for professional education. The institutions are willing to offer this, but they currently only have the traditional disciplines. Saxion tries to make the curriculum more professionally oriented by adding projects and by staff exchange. The biggest problem are the teachers, they have to be taught to think more multidisciplinary. Once they know this, this does not mean that they are able to use it. Saxion therefore trains the foreign teachers through staff exchange to cooperate, to hold presentations and to have discussions and achieve consensus. Next to knowledge it is important to learn them certain skills. It is also a matter of attitude, active participation in education is what is required for an interactive education system. This may sound very simple from a Dutch viewpoint, but if you look at the discussions this has brought about in China and Vietnam, it costs an enormous amount of effort. Some people are enthusiastic by there is also resistance sometimes; teachers who are comfortably “stuck” in their old ways are not willing to change their role and have less distance from the students.

An international classroom brings cultures together and this can cause certain problems as well. A male student from, for example, India will find it difficult to get feedback from a female student of lower class. The first thing students in the international classroom receive is therefore cultural awareness training. This teaches students that their cultural background is not shared by everyone else and that, in order to be able to cooperate with others, they should take into account any differences in cultures. The students should realize that an international environment cannot be compared to the home environment. In order to smoothen this transition there is much class education in the beginning of the program.

### *Results*

The activities of Saxion offshore can be considered a success with 2000 international students on a population of 20,000. The quality and attitude of the international students has been a positive experience. Financially, it becomes more and more difficult to attract a large amount of students because many scholarships are cancelled and the students have to pay full cost tuition. Evidence from the success of the programs and the demand for it abroad can be found in the many offers from other Chinese institutions to cooperate with Saxion using the 3+1 concept. Saxion is not willing to do this because they do not want to get a monoculture of Chinese students in their international classroom.

Dutch legislation currently does not allow a program like the fully online course that was set up before. If this legislation changes, a discussion will start within Saxion if they want to offer their services entirely abroad. This is currently not the case. Offshore education is often accompanied with an attitude of making a profit. The reality is that in the long run, the program just might make a profit. Saxion believes you should go offshore if you want to internationalize your educational programme and strengthen your international visibility. This makes it clear, also for Dutch students, that you offer them international possibilities. This can be done with student and staff exchange, international programs using 3+1 but also with joint projects. The expertise is also useful for consultancy abroad and upgrading education abroad. If your partnership is not only focused on education but on multiple layers, like for example consultancy or research cooperation, you can cope better if single problems arise in one of the parts of the partnership.





#### 7.4 ITC offshore activities

The International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), knowledge of geo-information management is continually being developed and extended. By means of education, research and project services the ITC contributes to capacity building in countries that are economically and/or technologically less advanced. In doing so, considerable attention is paid to the development and application of geographical information systems (GIS) for solving problems. Such problems can range from determining the risks of landslides, mapping forest fires, planning urban infrastructure, and implementing land administration systems, to designing a good wildlife management system or detecting environmental pollution.

The ITC has a number of offshore activities, many of which are JEPs (joint education programmes). This is because of the ITC's goal that focuses on building up capacity in developing countries. In this area, the ITC is active in various countries and regions, including China and Africa. The partners are often the universities that are just under the top level of a country. The top-level universities in developing countries are often able to cooperate with richer countries. The second- and third-level universities and institutes are less well known but do have the potential to achieve a higher level and better quality, and that is precisely the group that the ITC is keen to help. In recent years, its activities have focused increasingly on Africa, since the need there is more in line with the ITC's goals.

The ITC does not work with just any partner. One of the lessons we have learned is that it is important to look closely to find the most appropriate partner. Taking an initial step creates expectations that are difficult to get out of. There are a great many phases before a programme can begin. It always starts with personal contact, at management level, for example, at conferences where people meet one another or it could be former students looking for a partnership. Institutes from outside the Netherlands also send students to the ITC to see what they think of it, and those institutes sometimes follow up with a request for a joint programme. The ITC management puts the initiatives into motion after conducting a pre-feasibility study involving desk research at the ITC to study the backgrounds of the university or institute, etc. Experience has shown that is important to look at:

- the partner's motivation (why do they want to work with the ITC?);
- whether the group involved is firmly embedded in the university in question;
- whether the IT infrastructure is in place to enable teleworking and keep expenses down;
- the partner's interest in the ICT development; and
- whether it is possible to attract enough students with the proper level of English, background, etc. and whether there are enough organisations that are interested in the training. The number of students to be expected is often estimated on the high side. A total of 15 is the minimum.

On the basis of the study, a project officer makes an initial estimate of the possibilities of working together. The ITC management uses this estimate as a basis for deciding to follow up. If the decision is positive, they will appoint a development team, which looks in more detail at the possibilities for a partnership. The team's work results in a business plan. Depending on the potential partner, this process can take weeks or months. It is difficult to predict just how long. This is followed by approval by both partners and the preparations can begin. The preparations take about a year. They are kept this short to prevent the partner losing motivation. The first students should arrive fairly quickly. This can always be followed by a period of staff development.

##### *Ambitions, results and success*

For the ITC, a successful partnership is when staff development works. When, after a few years, the partner is able to provide the education independently, recruit students and enrol 15 to 20 students



per year in a JEP. The knowledge the partner has acquired in the field of remote sensing and geoinformatics spreads to other programmes given at the university in question and at other universities. Effective embedment also gives rise to a demand for partnership with the ITC in other fields, such as forestry, for example. Incidentally, on the joint course, the ITC remains involved in the intake, examinations, access to and assessment of the thesis, mid-term presentations, etc. Continued involvement in the programme is necessary to guarantee the quality of the programme. ITC staff monitor this closely, because if the quality of a programme is poor, it can have a negative impact on the status of the ITC and the value of other diplomas from other ITC programmes. Often, partners have enough trouble with the quality assurance of the part of the education they provide, but they often feel a moral obligation to let students pass for their employers. If students are unfortunate enough not to achieve the required level at the end of the programme, measures are taken to prevent this from happening the following year. Because this is an ITC degree that is being awarded, the ITC supports efforts to raise the quality in the initial phase as well.


There is an agreement on what staff development entails for every JEP. The ITC staff gear their efforts to the subjects and the level at which they are taught by the local staff. The degree of support offered by ITC depends on the available budget. The country of origin is also important. In the case of staff development, the ITC focuses on the poorest countries (e.g. generally speaking Africa before China). Staff development may involve a great deal, such as ITC staff providing support in the running of courses by local staff, but it can also mean that the local staff are students or lecturers on courses run by the ITC. Experience has shown that the local lecturers often possess good teaching skills but these have not yet come fully to the fore due to the conditions in their country (particularly the large numbers of students). These skills are essential for the joint programmes, however, because there are fewer students. It is often enough to work with an ITC lecturer to tap into the potential of these skills.

When running a programme, the marketing requires additional attention. This is the partner's responsibility but they usually have little experience in this area. Too often, the partner assumes that the students will turn up anyway. This is often the case with other programmes, because more students apply for a course than there are places available. However, since the new programme is often more expensive because part of it is given in the Netherlands, the influx of students is not guaranteed. Employers have to be visited to tell them why the programme has added value. In many cases, the partner requires support in the recruitment of students.

#### *The ICT component*

ICT in the form of e-learning is hard to get up and running. An important point in this context is an often insufficient ICT infrastructure of the partner institutions and that only few ICT-staff are experienced in supporting academics at a distance. To encourage more e-learning and remote support for lecturers, various activities are initiated, such as workshops on online learning to allow people to find out for themselves what it is like to learn at a distance and the use of video-conferencing. The latter will be taking place this coming year for a course being run here with a group of students at the ITC, when a lecturer will be present and a group of students on the joint course in the partner country have the opportunity to ask questions. This situation has already been tested. As a lecturer, you have to acquire experience and take account of the students attending from a distance. The university's internet connection was good enough for email and the internet but not fast enough for video-conferencing. A line has now been rented from outside specially for this purpose. It is also too early in the day to share more experiences.

The ITC keeps the content of courses in a kind of offline database. A copy is made and sent to the partner, where they can access the information via Blackboard. The ITC chose this option because if everything happens online, the internet connection has to be fairly good. However, efforts are underway to make it possible to offer this content online in the future, since it



also has potential for online co-operation between groups of students at the partner institute and at the ITC. But it also causes new problems, particularly for the offline content users, and the ITC is again technically unprepared for the situation.

#### *Problems & solutions*

The JEPs always have to allow for laws and regulations governing partnership programmes in the country in question, such as the minimum stay abroad and the required accreditation of the training programme in the partner country, for instance.

#### *An example*


An example of an offshore activity is the collaboration with one of their partners in Asia. This institute trains people in the field of geo-informatics and remote sensing, where they have to process huge amounts of data, which is the ITC's field of expertise. The ITC and the partner offer a joint course. The co-operation between these partners is based on equality and mutual interest. The joint course was in line with the ITC's goals and missions. The partner institute wanted to be able to award its students a Master's degree, something which only universities can do in that particular country.

The ITC has been in contact with this partner for a long time, ever since its foundation. The initial contacts were established by former ITC students who took the initiative for a joint programme with the ITC. At first, the collaboration involved projects and courses at a level other than MSc. These initiatives were funded with development co-operation grants. This enabled the ITC staff to pay regular visits to the local staff to train them and help them attain a level at which they could run the courses themselves. Working together on these projects and courses for so many years created the trust and confidence required to set up a joint course at MSc level, the first one of which started in 2001. Those involved knew one another, they both knew that the other partner could deliver a quality product, stick to agreements and had the right attitude to work. The mutual trust was an absolute prerequisite, because both parties had to make substantial investments in order to develop and run the joint course. Incidentally, the ITC staff still provide support to the partner staff in the implementation of subjects in the event of new developments in the discipline.

The joint course for which an MSc is awarded has been structured in such a way that the partner assumes responsibility for a large part of the education and is required to invest. They benefit from the fact that the ITC assumes responsibility for the other part of the education. On this course, the partner teaches the students in three-week modules for a period of nine months. The students then come to the ITC for three months for the remaining education. In the ITC groups, they come into contact with different nationalities and work interactively with one another on case studies. Incidentally, the students do not require a visa for these three months. To complete their studies, i.e. to write their thesis, the students return to their country of origin. The time allotted for the final phase is six months. Lecturers at both the ITC and the partner institute supervise the student in the writing of the thesis.

The students on the joint course – two groups of 20 – are all employed. Their employer gives them a year or 18 months to attend a full-time programme. In most cases, the employer also pays for the course. The part of the course they spend in the Netherlands can be financed in a number of ways. Some students pay their own way, others receive a grant from the ITC and a NUFFIC grant is also possible. However, the funding is a bottleneck. A number of students have to make do with a (shorter) course of a year, because they cannot arrange funding for the three-month period at the ITC. This means that they do receive a diploma (awarded together by the partner and the ITC) but not an MSc degree.

The ITC awards the MSc degree. In the work it does with partner institutes, the quality of the training programme is an important issue. Situations sometimes arise in which the partner tends



to make concessions to the level of quality required for the education. Debate about quality can also lead to claims like 'our standards are higher than yours' or 'we know better', even though both parties are equal partners. There is also a tendency to settle for a lower level, since the students are well able to apply the knowledge they have acquired in practice and other knowledge is too research-based. These situations usually work out alright because both parties have built up enough mutual trust to understand each other's interests and wishes. It also helps if the quality level is defined as a shared problem. If the joint course fails to meet the criteria imposed by the Dutch government, no degrees can be awarded. The requirement in the Netherlands is that the programme must be accredited in the partner's country, which is still not always the case. In the Netherlands, however, joint courses cannot exist under current legislation, so they cannot be accredited either. The law will have to be changed, and then institutes can apply for accreditation by the Dutch Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO). There is fierce competition with training courses that are accredited and this makes it more difficult to recruit students who want an accredited degree to improve their career chances.

A concrete example of when the quality level of the programme can come under pressure is when a student applies for an extension of the thesis period. When students return to their own country, they often tend to combine studying with work, so it usually takes more than six months to write the thesis. However, the ITC believes that an extension is only acceptable in situations of force majeure, while the partner may prefer a more flexible policy. This point of view is not always shared by the partner. For the ITC, however, completion of the thesis within a period of six months is a criterion for the quality of the programme, because otherwise, if you carry on for long enough, everyone will be capable of attaining a Master's degree.

Discussions on quality also occur when the partner is prepared to make concessions with respect to the level of the course to ensure good relations with the student's institute. Often, major investments are made in time and money and a diploma has to be awarded, even if the required level has still not been achieved.

The ITC intends to see to it that the joint course is accredited. The students and partners are asking for this to be done. They want to be sure that the degree they are being taught for is recognised in the Netherlands and internationally. When the joint course started 5/6/7 years ago, people had no idea what accreditation requirements would have to be met. At the time, it was decided to opt for the quality requirements the ITC itself sets for MSc degree courses. It is uncertain whether these are the same requirements as applied by an accreditation committee. The three months of education at the ITC serves a number of different purposes in terms of accreditation. The estimate is that three months of training in the Netherlands are required for entitlement to accreditation. If the entire programme were to be given abroad, it would probably not be regarded as a joint course. Those three months are also necessary to bring the programme up to the same level as other MSc degree courses taught at the ITC.

Another problem area is e-learning. Lecturers stay in contact via email. For the thesis, the supervisors and students also use webcams, Blackboard (for minutes/reports), etc. At the same time, because of the good Internet connection, the partner wants the content of the ITC online in Blackboard. The ITC wanted to conduct an experiment with videoconferencing with this partner, but it failed because there was no connection with the satellite. There are, however, plans to use more ICT to allow more frequent and timely joint preparation and support for the subjects on offer.



## 8 Partner scenarios

Another type activities described to provide more in-depth and practical information in the area of offshore education by Dutch higher education institutions as well as helping them to further develop in this area is the presentation of "partner scenarios. Basically partner scenarios are offshore initiatives that are still being developed and that in most cases are developed at institutions that participate in the current study:. Based on the web-based questionnaire, telephone interviews and personal contacts 4 partner scenarios have been selected: the University of Amsterdam, the ITC, the University of Twente and the Open Universiteit.

The partner scenarios have also been performed by interviews with one or a few experts of the higher education institution or programme involved. The interviews had relatively loose structures in which the respondents were given the freedom to indicate what is most interesting and attractive about their offshore education activities. The interviewers, however, used a checklist of issues that were checked during the interviews:


- Reasons for the offshore initiatives
- The type of activities undertaken and being expected
- Expected achievements and by what actor in the institution
- The quality of offshore education
- The location of the activities
- The relation with the partners
- Characteristics of the target groups, the type of programmes and ways of teaching, etc.
- The teachers involved and how they are trained
- The use of ICT elements
- Experienced problems and solutions
- The estimated success in terms of quality, student numbers and finance
- Lessons learned

The analysis of the partner scenarios is presented by using a number of broad topics: offshore education; the ICT component; problems and solutions; the expected results of the offshore activities and lessons learned.

### 8.1 The Amsterdam Master's in Medical Anthropology (AMMA)

The Amsterdam Master's in Medical Anthropology is an advanced master with a one-year curriculum, consisting of course work, field research and a Master's thesis. The AMMA is part of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of the Universiteit van Amsterdam. The AMMA is designed for social scientists that wish to specialise in medical anthropology, as well as for professionals in health development or health care that want to develop qualitative research skills. Students are required to have either a Masters degree, or a Bachelors degree with a minimum of two years work experience in a relevant field, and with competence in English.

The AMMA produces professional specialists in health and culture and in qualitative methodology who are able to work in multidisciplinary contexts in problem-driven research and intervention projects. AMMA alumni maintain positions in governmental and non-governmental institutes and organizations for health research and health intervention in developing countries as well as in Western and Eastern Europe and the Americas. The program's intake is relatively small (15-20 students per year), which allows for particularly intense training and maximum interaction. The program is disciplinary with a multidisciplinary intake from the social sciences as well as medicine and other health related fields.



The program was approved by the Board of Governors of the University of Amsterdam in 1997. This took place within the context of the University's aim to widen its international as well as 'external contract' activities. The AMMA therefore depends on tuition fees, and has to compete for the funding of its students with educational programs of all sorts.

*Why is this case interesting?*

The core objective of the AMMA is to provide its students with academic and professional skills to contribute to the solution of priority health problems in the North and South. This goal is reached by teaching students how to formulate appropriate research objectives for medical anthropological research, how to develop feasible qualitative study designs which apply relevant theories and concepts, and by demonstrating the means by which good research is conducted, and excellent reports are created. The AMMA acknowledges its responsibility towards the improvement of health policy in developing countries. The programme is especially committed to the training of students from these countries.

At this moment the AMMA staff is working on a concept of blended learning, where distance learning will play an important role. This concept has changed after requests students and institutions. This specific target group prefers to study at home, instead of studying in Amsterdam. There are several reasons; studying will be more flexible, time restraints will be limited and financial and practical reasons. ICT is an obvious component in this distance learning variant. The experience of international partners will be used during the process. The Universiteit van Amsterdam is expected to benefit as well.

*Who are the partner's of the AMMA?*

The AMMA is mainly active in two regions, South Africa and Bangladesh. To start with Bangladesh: first contact was established with Dhaka in the 1990's through staff members who were participating in local research. Recently this has changed into an institutional collaboration. In Dhaka a new master's course in public health has been developed, the James Grant School of Public Health (JGSPH), which is part of the main university of Bangladesh, BRAC University. One of the AMMA alumni is an important staff member of JGSPH. He officially requested the AMMA to work together on a joint module on medical anthropology, as part of the public health master. This module had to be taught by an AMMA staff member, together with local staff. The module was first taught in 2004. The idea is to develop this collaboration in a broader Asian network. Funding is requested through EU (Asia Link), to develop a joint master, PhD training, student exchange and in general capacity training, together with two Asian partners and three European partners, amongst who the AMMA.

In South Africa the AMMA has established a collaboration with the School of Public Health of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town since 2005. In the years before some staff members from both sides worked together in research. Also junior staff members of UWC participated in executive modules of the AMMA as part of their training and a capacity training project of SANPAD. Since 2000 a staff member of UWC chairs one of the short courses, Gender, Reproductive and Sexual Health and Fertility in Amsterdam. In 2005 the School of Public Health and the Medical Anthropology staff of UWC enhanced the mutual collaboration. On the one hand a staff member of AMMA started teaching a short course on medical anthropology in UWC's Winterschool. UWC on the other hand agreed that they will assist AMMA in developing distance learning modules, starting with a short course on medical anthropology. This way both parties benefit from this partnership.

For decades UWC has been working with a distance learning variant. Their target group is Southern Africa. They first learned about the concept of distance learning from an Australian university in the 1970's in a Commonwealth educational project. Distance learning is supposed to





be less expensive for students and easier to fit into their daily lives, since most of the students of UWC are working. The School of Public Health offers different study programmes, not only consisting of distance learning modules. During the year students have the opportunity to attend short courses with face-to-face education as well, during the Summer- en Winter school. UWC works primarily with a printed syllabus, with an institutionalised didactical set-up. Each module consists of study sessions. Each study session consists of content outlines, activities, tasks, feedback and evaluation). Students participating in the distance learning modules keep in touch with their teachers through telephone and e-mail. Little ICT is used, mainly because computer capacities of most students are limited, connections are slow and the organisation of UWC has its limitations (finances, experienced staff, computer facilities). Recently they are however working more extensively with ICT, starting with the use of study material and assignments on cd-rom and through websites.

Future AMMA students have a growing demand for distance learning as well, since most of them live in development countries and do not have the financial means to get to Amsterdam. Also they don't have the time and opportunity, since they are usually professionals and already working. The collaboration with UWC is an important first step for the AMMA to work on their own distance learning module(s). In spring 2007 AMMA staff will visit Cape Town to work together on the first joint distance learning module. The idea is that UWC will offer this module from 2007 in Southern Africa and the AMMA in other regions. Also the "flying professors" collaboration should gradually come to an end.

*Characteristics of the expected activity, including ICT instruments*

The newly to develop course activity aims at professionals from developing countries which are already working. The envisaged students are around 35 years old. Dozens of applications are expected. This expectation is based on current request that the AMMA administration receives every year and communication with alumni.

Participants receive a certificate of attendance, authorised at the moment by the Governance Board of the Universiteit van Amsterdam. Since the distant learning modules will be part of a soon to be accredited master's course (AMMA), accreditation by the NVAO is expected. However rules and regulations of the NVAO concerning distance learning modules are unclear.

The mode of delivery will consist partly of paper and partly of digital information. A LMS (most likely Blackboard) will be used to give students digital information. Furthermore e-mail and video conferencing will be used, so that students are able to work together. Classes will be videotaped and made available through streaming media. Through LMS instructions will be distributed, in combination with study tasks. Group assignments are formulated. Self assessments will be available. An AMMA staff member has to be assigned, who will be available to answer questions (online) or to give feedback. Students will be challenged to perform a literature research and to participate in online discussions. They will be assessed with an essay.

*The added value of distance learning*

There are a number of indicators that show that participants need a distance learning variant. Not only because the question is asked regularly by e-mail. The participants can follow the training in their region. This has of course practical advantages, but also has the advantage that they can implement the knowledge and skills learned directly in their working environment. Another reason is the fact that there has been a decrease in the number of participants from development countries in both the master and the short courses. This has a financial reason; there are less scholarships available for those students compared to the past. The tuition fee of a distance learning module is expected to be cheaper as a normal AMMA short course. A normal AMMA course consists of many guest lecturers and a lot of contact hours, which make the costs high. Also a distance learning



module will save travelling and housing expenses for a students. The student is more flexible in time and place. Last but not least it is expected that the distance learning variant will make a strong appeal to other skills of students. There will be more time for reflection. The student can partly develop his own study plan.

*Problems and solutions*

- Finding potential partners. This will not be a problem. There is a large network of students and alumni from which still much more potential partners can come.
- Finding a host country. For the same reason no problems are expected with finding host countries.
- Regulations in host countries. This could be a problem with regard to the accreditation. It is still unclear if the NVAO can accredit such a course. There might be a possibility that the offshore distance learning module(s) will be accredited since they are part of the AMMA course. But as mentioned before this is unclear.
- Rules and regulations of the institution. The Universiteit van Amsterdam finds international research and education of great importance. Initiatives in this area are stimulated.
- Problems with student application. The AMMA staff does not expect a problem. Hopefully the trend will be that more students from development countries will successfully apply.
- The quality of the programme. Since the AMMA is successfully organised for the tenth year, staff, modules, literature and assignments have proven to be of a high standard. Together with the experience of UWC, it is expected that a distance learning module will be developed that has a high standard as well. AMMA staff has to be trained.
- The quality of the students. The AMMA has certain academic requirements, before a student is admitted in the programme or a course. Students that want to apply need either a Master's degree or a Bachelor's degree with at minimum of two years of relevant working experience. They have to send certified copies of their diploma's. References are requested. Students need to write a motivation why they want to attend the programme. There's also a minimum requirement in the level of English through an IELTS or TOEFL score.
- The organisation of the new courses. There are practical problems in the organisation of the module. It's not clear yet how the course will be staffed and how it will be supported within the university. It is expected that extra staff is needed.

*When will the course be successful?*

Financially it is expected that the course will be successful with an intake of approximately 40 students. Since there's no experience with organising such a course and local tuition fees of partner UWC can't be compared to fees in Amsterdam, it is difficult to make a realistic planning. A business plan isn't ready yet. The idea is to work on that once staff has visited UWC in March 2007. The expectation is that the course will financially break even after approximately 4 years. The organisation of a distance learning module will be less expensive. Important for making this new project a success is enthusiasm and commitment of staff. Besides, staff has to acquire e-tutoring skills. The management of the AMMA has to work seriously on accomplishing these things. Last, but not least, is a positive attitude of the students.

Eventually the mission of the AMMA is to give a positive contribution to the development of health care systems, especially in development countries. The effect of students participating in short courses on this development is difficult to measure for the AMMA staff. Firstly because they only stay in Amsterdam for 2 weeks. Also it turns out to be difficult to communicate with students that are participating in the short course, after completing their course. At the moment evaluation is limited to the course content. It's a different story for alumni of the master's course, by the way. At this stage it is unknown what will be the effect of distance learning modules on local health care.



### *Ambitions*

The AMMA has the ambition to develop blended learning modules, together with current and new partners. The first step is the development of short distance learning modules. A next step could be to develop a combination of several distance learning modules together with face-to-face education in Amsterdam. This has to be combined with a discussion about the future of the Amsterdam Master's in Medical Anthropology, of course. The decision will depend for example on a growing demand from the professional and academic field and an increasing trend that students from development countries have difficulties in obtaining a scholarship. The AMMA management finds these plans realistic, and as mentioned before, part of these plans are already in progress.

## **8.2 ITC and UCLAS**

The International Institute for Aerospace Survey and Earth Sciences (ITC), a Dutch institute for international education, based in Enschede, the Netherlands, organises a number of educational programs together with foreign universities and institutes. These joint education programs (JEPs) are important because it's the institute's main mission to build capacity for the benefit of less developed countries. Through the joint programs of education, the Dutch institute's knowledge and experience is transferred to the foreign partner. In the long term the foreign partner should be able to run the program independently, in a network with the Dutch institute. Practical circumstances make the JEPs attractive for employers and employees. JEPs enable students from a region outside Europe to follow the program (partially) close to home, instead of coming to the Netherlands for the whole program. It is becoming increasingly difficult for employers to relinquish their employees for long periods. Also for employees it is often difficult to go away for long periods because of family circumstances or a fear of losing their position during their absence.

This partner scenario describes a JEP with the University College of Lands and Architectural Studies (UCLAS) in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. ITC and UCLAS have a longstanding relationship and have been cooperating in the execution of a number of short and refresher courses. From early on in its cooperation with ITC, UCLAS has indicated its willingness to operate as a regional centre offering joint degree programmes in co-operation with partner institutes in The Netherlands. UCLAS' extensive experience with the training of Ministry staff in the fields of surveying, mapping and GIS, makes it a natural partner for ITC.

UCLAS teaches a nine-month under-graduate diploma course on Geo-Informatics which is an exact copy of a similar course running at ITC. The course at UCLAS is taught by local staff, with the support of ITC. They use the same teaching materials as at ITC. The diploma contains both the ITC and the UCLAS logo and is undersigned by ITC and UCLAS. The target group consists of mid-management professionals working at local and national mapping organizations and NGOs. The course attracts people from Tanzania and its neighbouring countries. The course is currently (2006/2007) running for the third time.

### *Approach and ambitions*

The implementation plan of the course at UCLAS aims to decrease ITC involvement gradually. As a preparation for implementation, a didactical workshop was organised during which the course materials were officially handed over to UCLAS and in which UCLAS staff were prepared for the type of students they could expect. In the workshop, they had to prepare and teach lessons which were observed and commented on by ITC staff. Also four technical staff members (engaged in education) from UCLAS came to ITC to attend the full, original course.

During the first run of the course in 2004/2005, longer missions of ITC staff were held whereby the knowledge and skills of ITC staff were passed on to UCLAS staff. ITC staff gave

classes at UCLAS and observed classes given by UCLAS staff. Initially some staff at ITC as well as UCLAS had the idea that due to its non-scientific character the transfer of the course would not meet too many problems as most of the UCLAS staff has a scientific background. However the course is aimed at mid-career professionals, with practical experience in working with GIS software in a real-world work, production oriented work environment. Not all UCLAS staff had this experience which is considered as essential for successful course teaching. Thus, ITC staff guidance also targeted the transfer of this essential professional experience.

During the second course run, the number of missions of ITC staff to UCLAS was decreased and the missions were more focussed on quality assessment and control. UCLAS staff was also invited on a guest-lecturer basis to guide ITC GFM4 students during their final project. The ITC students were very appreciative of this as the number of ITC staff originating from Africa is very low. It also shows that the UCLAS staff is accepted as equals.

In the third run, the number of missions decreases even further. With ITC taking up the role of observer at a distance, with the main focal point of attention being the level of the exams and assessment of the exams and practical exercises.

#### *The ICT component*

The use of ICT in the course (e.g. use of digital learning environments) has been discussed with UCLAS staff members during a workshop at UCLAS given by ITC on this topic. The response is very positive however; external circumstances such as unstable electricity supply, low quality internet infrastructure (at the University as well as within Tanzania) make it unlikely that within a few years, ICT can seriously be implemented within the regular course program.

#### *Problems (and solutions)*

A number of problems/ points of attention that came up during the implementation of the course at UCLAS:

- Status: Some UCLAS staff did not appreciate the importance of the course for the African mapping world because of its profession oriented character. This appreciation changed positively when staff started to realize the great potential of the course proved by the growing number of course applicants and the large share of own accounters among these applicants.
- Embeddings: During the first run the course had no official status at UCLAS. This led to a lack of payment of staff at UCLAS, double scheduling of teaching hours and shifts of individual priority in executing educational tasks.
- Due to less suitable PC systems, lack of a reliable server, delays in the delivery of educational software, continuous digital virus attacks and electric power disturbances seriously delayed and hindered the execution of the practical exercises which make up about 60% of the total educational program.
- Students could not register in time for the course because it was not incorporated in the University Course program yet. The handing out of diplomas took place separate from the official UCLAS diploma ceremony. These problems have disappeared during the second year because the course is now an official, registered UCLAS course.
- Ownership: From the beginning it has been made clear that (although the course is officially categorized as a JEP course) staff should consider and treat the course as their "own" UCLAS course. ITC supports them with materials and didactical advice, but takes a position at a distance. UCLAS is free to organize the execution of the program in their own way as long as they stick to the original content and quality aspects of the course.
- Team building: It is important to build a team from the people who are involved in the course at UCLAS and ITC. Staff from both institutes have to work together and communicate at a distance and good personal relationships are important.

- Finances: Due to internal, financial procedures, it has been difficult sometimes to let the student fees flow from top university level to the course itself. Because of this, purchase of hard and software educational course materials could not be realised during the first run and had to be pre-financed by ITC.
- Exams: The level of the exams is important for ITC because students receive an ITC-like diploma. Comparison of exam results showed that in general the UCLAS staff tended to give 5 – 10% higher marks as their ITC colleagues. There are also differences in opinions about “what is a good product”. This applies e.g. to maps and the design of user-interfaces for web and database software design applications.
- Communication: ITC and UCLAS mainly communicate using e-mail because that is the only facility that works most of the time. Other tools are difficult to utilize due to the poor technical infrastructure. Sometimes even e-mail is a problem, with no e-mail contact for several weeks. Internet connections are extremely slow due to limits in available bandwidth. Because the course is now running smoothly this is not as such a real problem, more an inconvenient.
- Quality assurance: Some staff members proved to have insufficient teaching skills and motivation for teaching the programme. ITC has advised in some cases to improve didactical skills and/ or course interest for some individual staff member.
- Because of the aforementioned problems, it is found essential for the successful implementation of a JEP course, to have a strong driving force on the side of the partner institute.

#### *Results and success*

The course is a success. During the first run (2004) there were 12 students. During the second year (2005) there were 15 students. In the third run (2006) there were > 60 applications of which 40 were admissible applications for 22 seats. From these 22 seats 14 are own accountants and 8 have a NFP scholarship. A number of own accountants could not be placed because of the limited number of seats. The number of seats is limited to the number of computers and available staff at UCLAS. Due to the high number of participants, the course budget shows a solid character. Within three years the costs of ITC missions to UCLAS have been recovered. Eventual yields from the course by ITC are revenue to UCLAS in the form of extra support for the local infrastructure. The course is appreciated in the region, by students and apparently (and most important!) by their employers! Students find it interesting to receive a “western” diploma without going to Europe.

For the future, the following points of attention are formulated:

- Due to the bad electrical supply it is not always possible to conduct practical exercises at their scheduled time. This can lead to a divergence of the practical and theoretical parts of the course. Synchrony of theory and practice should be kept under attention.
- Will the management at UCLAS remain supportive of the course longer term and will the course prove to be really sustainable?
- Copying more of these courses to other countries: Coaching/staff capacity from the ITC side could be a problem. It is suggested that to foster a solid course start and implementation it would be good to station someone from ITC at the beginning of the course at a new location for a longer period of time (e.g. 2 months). After that, shorter missions can be planned and executed.
- UCLAS is using the materials from ITC, but is stimulated by ITC to develop datasets from their own region in order to give the course a local flavour and own identity.
- Educational support from ITC to UCLAS could focus on more independent work by students and how the teachers would coach this. Also the quality of lectures at UCLAS might be further improved to support and enable the transfer of higher educational programs to UCLAS.

- Discussion on the minimum support/control from the ITC side to the partner institute is required. ITC has to conduct some kind of quality control of the program and its needs to be decided which form this should have.

### 8.3 The University of Twente

The partner scenario of the University of Twente comprises two initiatives. First the School of Management and Governance with two offshore initiatives and second the European Teachers Education of the Faculty Educational and Behavioural Sciences.

#### 8.3.1 Offshore activities of the School of Management and Governance

The case concerns two types of activities: The Chinese International MBA Program (IMBA) and the Mi-EIS project (Managing Implementation of Enterprise Information Systems). In addition some material has been developed such as an interactive video course for business students.

The Chinese International MBA Program (IMBA) from the University of Twente is a management development program with an international orientation, designed for university and higher vocational graduates who have a degree in a technology related subject and/or a couple of years of work experience in a technically oriented environment. The program is carried out in cooperation with the College of Business Administration of Hunan University in Changsha, located in the central part of China.

The IMBA Program extends over an academic year, consisting of two modules followed by a third module containing a business assignment lasting for six months. All courses are taught at Hunan University. During the second module a two months period will be spent in the Netherlands for extensive company visits. After having passed all the examinations after each module students will be awarded the MBA diploma issued by the University of Twente.

The Mi-EIS project involves a Master level teaching and professional training reference curriculum in Managing Implementation of Enterprise Information Systems. This includes subject modules. In this project three institutions work together: Cranfield (UK), Twente and Hunan University.

Mi-EIS will provide a systematic program for personnel training, covering knowledge and experience in information systems, business organization and technology management. The project result will be a Master level reference curriculum with teaching materials to train business managers and information staff so that they can fully drive the information system implementation to deliver the business benefits which information technology should bring about. For the individual, it is an opportunity for learning and personal development.

#### *Process of the activities*

The activities have been developed because of the general belief that there is a high demand for managers with a technical and professional background. Managers need all the competencies (sufficient skills and know how) to handle the processes that are intrinsic to a technically oriented environment. Since the University of Twente has acquired much experience and knowledge on particularly the combination of management and technology, it was felt that efforts in this area would be desirable to meet these demands.

On order to invest in product development the (technical) facilities required for distance education are available at the campus of the UT and the experiences with a digital learning environment through Teletop would be beneficial for offshore education.

The activities in China started more or less coincidental when a Chinese student finished her PhD at the School of Management and Governance. She knew many people in China (from universities and from companies) and assisted in making the necessary connections.



China was chosen as an orientation because it is seen as a huge market, with a high demand for managers in a technically oriented environment and with a technological infrastructure which would facilitate the feasibility of distance education. Four years ago the Dutch team visiting China already noticed how advanced that country is in terms of the technological infrastructure (such as high level broadband).

The IMBA is an intensive program the results of which do count: results in terms of personal development; results in the individual and group assignments; and results in linking theory and practice. Through literature study, case studies, computer simulations, factory visits in China and Europe and the business assignment, participants put into practice what they have learned. The end result is an international recognized MBA that prepares students to move quickly into jobs worldwide with broad management perspectives.

The activities are specially designed to deliver on the Chinese territory. Only the second module of IMBA is three months in the Netherlands. This period is chosen in order to avoid problems with the immigration law. All the other parts are in China.

The project is basically based on private funding: it has to be paid by the participants themselves.

Each partner would adapt the reference curriculum to its own situation according to the education market, national legislation and institutional procedures. Common teaching material will be developed and the teaching methods will be shared.

Other activities in the context of offshore activities include a range of interactive video courses. A most notable product in this context is the InnoBus, the interactive video course for business students. This was developed in co-operation with the Language Institute Regina Coeli, the Dutch Digital University and the SURF Foundation. The InnoBus case aims to teach students about key issues in the area of business development and manufacturing and at developing integral managerial assessment abilities. This product illustrates very well how a large group of students can be reached, and who work with a limited number of teaching staff in an interactive way. It is flexible enough to accommodate student groups of many different sizes and levels.

#### *The ICT component*

The UT is advanced in making use of the available technology e.g. is ahead with the technological possibilities especially the intranet and the availability of high-level broadband. Four years ago wireless video was still problematic, but is nowadays more widespread and applicable. The Interactive video course (InnoBus) has an attractively nonlinear approach, offering students random access to video and documents. By making full use of internet technology, the course can be used as a web application, but is also suited for stand-alone use. Also an extensive electronic teacher's guide is available, containing a course outline, assignments and slides. Generally the ICT component appears to be a clear vehicle for change and it creates many possibilities for further development. These would not be possible without internet. Students 'hand in' their assignments through internet.

As far as future developments are concerned it was felt desirable to extend the campus program Teletop in such a way that it can optimally be used also off-campus. In the future extensive use of video conferencing is foreseen (depending on the availability and scope of broadband) whereby the teaching staff can communicate with their students in a direct way. The next phase is the electronic learning environment in which learning processes are structured in an optimal way (see below).

#### *Problems and solutions*

One of the basic problems that were faced is to find a good partner and to build a sustainable relationship. This takes much time and endurance, particularly in a country like China. A strong goal



orientation and attainment is very important in shaping an academic work environment. As said before the contacts made by a former Chinese PhD student were very beneficial in establishing the necessary contacts.

Technology does not appear to be a basic problem. Although we were witnessing some technical problems in China these can be overcome given the infrastructure which has improved considerably over the years. Wireless video was four years ago still problematic but looks now very promising. The idea of a digital learning environment is less developed in China, and requires another way of operating both by teaching staff and students as well.

There are problems in both the Netherlands and China especially regarding the current law which only regulates education provided in the Netherlands. Offshore education does not belong part of the standard accreditation procedures and therefore is not accredited.

In China there is much demand for education whereas the capacity is relatively low to meet all these demands. There is a fear that foreign countries will expand their educational activities in China. There is much distrust and fear that foreign providers offer courses of poor quality. Apart from this, procedures in China are very slow.

It is believed that when the Dutch accreditation board (NVAO) would accredit the program, this would facilitate its recognition in China. In the Netherlands changes regarding formal recognition of offshore education is foreseen (under the new regulation from April 2007), which would be an opportunity to expand the activities (e.g. to other regions).

Another more practical problem is that course materials are often distributed as PDF files which cause problems with libraries. This problem is more general and should be solved between the parties concerned.

An important issue is how to oppose the tendency of academic tourism and to admit students who wish to enrol for other than intrinsic reasons. Therefore the assessment of the student intake has to be done very carefully.

Generally the quality of Chinese students is quite high, but not always easy to assess. The command of English is among the selection criteria, but not the only one. There is a certain tendency, however, that those students who are relatively fluent in English language have a larger chance to be admitted. But these are not necessarily the best students. This is an important pitfall and there is a risk that other students who are much more intelligent, but their command of English is at a lower level have less chance to be selected. "Our selection criteria are yet not adequate developed to select the best students in terms of their knowledge and skills".

At present it is considered to offer a pre-Master program offshore with emphasis on research methodology on the basis of which students can enrol in the IBMA program. Such a program makes a better selection possible, and additionally has the advantage of preparing students as far as their knowledge base and their skills are concerned needed for further study. Additionally students will become familiar with this type of learning to overcome cultural barriers at an earlier stage of their studies.

The quality of the program is strongly affected by cultural barriers. It appears that Chinese students learn differently which has to be taken into account when developing course material. Also the final project that has to be carried out in a Chinese company may cause some problems which have to be dealt with. For example, in Chinese companies as a student you are in a learning role which means that students are not supposed to deal with complex management problems. Students are not in a position to advise the usually older personnel who are in higher established positions. The common hierarchical work patterns between older and younger personnel have to be taken into account when formulating assignments for students.

There are also other different cultures between China and the Netherlands. It appears that Chinese students learn quite differently from Dutch students and this difference clearly affects the quality of the course. This has to be accounted for in the all the course material. In order to bridge



the cultural gap the new curriculum will be designed in close collaboration with the Chinese colleagues. This has to result in a curriculum that is tuned to the Chinese culture in which Confucianism constitutes an integral part.

#### *Success of the activities*

The current IMBA program is in an experimental phase. There are nine Chinese students participating in the first group. Its success is dependent on the formal recognition by both the Dutch and the Chinese authorities. But as said before these problems are expected to be solved when the program is accredited by the Dutch accreditation board (NVAO).

It remains to be seen whether the activity is financially viable. This is expected in the long run, when a sufficient critical mass can be attained. Success of the activities is obvious when all the students graduate and when a new group of students shows interest. Because of the success so far activities for extension of the program have been planned in other regions, especially in West China, mainly for practical reasons because the KLM has started a two weeks flight on that location.

The question what the expected added value is to the planned activities should be answered in a broader perspective. On the macro-level it would contribute to put the Netherlands as a knowledge society on the map which is very important for the Dutch industrial sector as a whole. There are clear signals from some Chinese companies who show interest and see the program as a way for further learning opportunities for their personnel. A further advantage is that these Chinese students have important positions in Chinese companies who through the course have become acquainted with Dutch culture and business. This may contribute to a further interaction between Dutch and Chinese business ('supply change').

#### *Lessons learned*

One of the challenging questions is why offshore education is not developing so fast, despite all the available technological opportunities.

It is suggested that offshore education is still too much in the sphere of a hobby or seen as an add-on. There is still too little understanding of the fact that it requires a different way of working and that it should fit in the overall educational policy of an institution. Teacher staff who are involved should adopt the attitude of an 'in-time response'.

The organizational aspects are crucial for the success of the activities. If distance education is undertaken by institutions, they must be prepared to invest in it and to make explicit that they are involved in distance education. It requires another way of working. Innovative education should be taken out the sphere of a hobby and considered as an integral part of the educational activities of an institution. This support is also necessary on the central level of the university which defines it as part of its strategic mission.

It is believed that if this university does not take this up further, others will do this. Particularly Australian universities are increasingly active in this part of the world, and are serious competitors.

Asked about the possible collaboration with other Dutch universities, it was brought forward that this requires much energy from the partners whereby not all share the entrepreneurial and innovative character of the UT.

It would be more appropriate to acknowledge the offshore activities as a distinctive asset of the university on the central level. This would constitute a basis for further recognition (from the Ministry and NVAO). Offshore education is growing and China is a huge market. There is much demand for knowledge in the sphere of management and technology and it is very challenging to develop activities on Chinese territory. "As a university we have to think about this and be prepared to invest in it and to develop products that are marketable".



Technically speaking much is possible to make a distance product through open source learning. Development of the electronic learning environment with optimal use of Teletop (open source) is very promising and beneficial.

The impression was put forward that SURF projects do not contain a clear implementation phase. If the creation of a breakthrough in actually providing distance education is the goal, it is necessary not merely to establish a project, but to go beyond the pilot phase and move into a ramp-up phase with implementation and evaluation. In this context SURF is suggested to establish an advisory board which assist universities in developing the (funded) project further towards its implementation phase.

### 8.3.2 European Teachers Education

The envisaged project European Teachers Education of the Faculty of Educational and Behavioural Sciences at the University of Twente is in the early stages of its development and there are as yet no concrete results. The views on its purposes and approach are very worthwhile as a partner scenario because it shows how in a rather difficult subject area an attempt is made to bring experts together with use of the available ICT. The following description cannot be too detailed, but it gives an impression of the approach chosen and the perceived chances for success.

#### *Description of the project*

The area is difficult because initiatives have direct repercussions towards the national system. The structure of teacher training is strongly bound and shaped by national contexts and history. The state as main employer of graduates tends to have a strong influence on the structure and content of teacher training, and the related requirements generally tend to lower the flexibility of provision in this field. On the European level there is little coordination and this project shows how complex the various educational systems are organised.

Given these restrictions, the project aims to develop an MA program in teacher training in which different partners collaborate on a jointly basis. Partners are those in countries which have adopted the Anglo Saxon model of a two-cycle system where the MA can be seen as a consecutive but distinctive cycle.

Basic idea is a two-year Masters, one year of which involves concentration on a particular teaching specialism in which candidates wish to teach and the second year the theoretical component in pedagogy and the practical part (apprenticeship). Especially this second year is envisaged as offshore education. Graduates will receive a teaching qualification on the highest educational level in their area of specialisation (in Dutch: first degree qualification).

#### *Process of the activities*

The activities started on the basis of incidental contacts between institutions in Europe. An initiative of the Spanish colleagues led to the current plans together with University of Twente as well as with other European institutions (e.g. Portugal) to submit a project proposal which includes both pre-service and post initial training. Offshore education will be offered on a jointly basis whereby learning modules will be exchanged. The philosophy is to contribute to the idea of an "European teachership". It is believed that such an exchange will contribute to a further development of the European dimension in education.

At the same time there are contacts about this initiative with some African countries (South Africa, Mozambique, and Zambia) which have shown much interest in this project and have plans to participate.

As far as the funding is concerned the proposal will be submitted as a EU project. Some additional funds would be desirable from for example the university, especially in the development phase.

#### *The ICT component*

It is envisaged that as far as the second year is concerned much use will be made of telecommunication and ICT. Teletop by the University of Twente will be very useful but is not considered to be sufficient to meet all the needs. It would be necessary to create a virtual learning environment through video conferencing in order to simulate a real class room situation.

Although ICT is very important in this project, all parties are convinced that just technology is not sufficient to make this initiative a success. Physical mobility and face to face education remain important. Blended learning is not seen as simply adding an ICT component to the program but requires a different way of working by both the teaching staff and their students. Important aspects are the kind of assignments, and the way feedback has to be given by the teaching staff. Actually the educational process has to be changed in terms of organisation and didactical approaches.

#### *Problems and solutions*

One of the expected problems is that candidates may not have the same level as far as their subject field is concerned. For this reason it would be interesting also to provide a pre-Master programme in order to ensure that all students have attained the same level. Assessment of those who have not the right qualifications will be part of the plan.

The issue of formal recognition of offshore education is not seen as a problem since the UT remains responsible for the program. Much effort has to be put in negotiation with the prospective partners in order to receive mutual accreditation. The coupling of the practical component with subject didactics is a major concern: how should the apprenticeships be carried out, what demands are required and how would the feed back take place to the pedagogical and didactical components of the program?

Other problems that may occur are how to attract students and under what conditions. Most of them are mature students, they are already employed and take the program on a part-time basis. What will the financial consequences be and are they prepared to stay a period abroad? The optimal use of ICT may help to solve some of these problems and variants should be explored to use ICT as a strong communicative medium. Much effort should be put in developing the website in a didactically adequate way.

#### *Success of the activities*

It is too early to talk about the success of the project. A crucial factor for the success of the project is to find partners who are reliable and who have the capacity to collaborate. Especially for teacher training there are various national regulations which have to be taken into account and national authorities require statements about the partner institutions as well as about the behaviour of participants.

#### *Lessons learned*

Ambitious plans should be avoided given the national sensitivities in the area of teacher training. The project will start very simple in order to build reliable contacts with foreign partners that are sustainable for a longer time. In the pre-stage there is some mutual exchange and an opportunity to understand the educational infrastructure in the participating countries. This can simply be tested and will do no harm. There are cultural barriers between teachers which have to be taken into account.



ICT is not considered a hindrance to the envisaged project as most of the technological infrastructure is available campus-wide. The pedagogical and didactical use of this infrastructure is a challenge, but at the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences there is much experience with these issues. Asked about the broader policy support, it was put forward that the university should promote such initiatives widely and eventually refer to them in its institutional plan. In this way the university shows how the European dimension can be shaped through educational activities.

## 8.4 Open Universiteit

Within the Active Learning Master's programme that recently started at the Open University (OU), two offshore initiatives are in development. They concern a joint project with the University of Sydney (Australia) and another with Florida State University (FSU, USA). These initiatives did not entirely get off the ground in the way the OU envisaged and there have been requests to improve them. We will look first at the offshore initiatives in association with the University of Sydney.

### 8.4.1 An offshore education project with the University of Sydney

Like the OU, the University of Sydney has an educational theory programme that has just started up. The collaboration focuses in particular on the joint development of courses for both programmes. The ultimate goal is to work together to develop one or two distance courses in the area of innovation. A key aspect in this development is that in terms of content and assignments, the courses can be offered at both locations. It does not matter whether one or both partners supply the course to the students in question.

The collaboration is a result of personal contacts between leading academics in both programmes and institutions. These personal contacts are important to the joint project as they may fill the gaps that arise in the development process due to the physical distance between the two institutions. So mutual trust in the professional quality is vital.

An initial step in the collaboration was that three OU students took part in a course run by the partner last year. All together, this course lasted three months and a Dutch teacher was involved. The course was a mixture of distance education and contact education, i.e. synchronous and asynchronous distance education. The OU students took part in the synchronous distance part. Both the Australian and the Dutch student groups followed the asynchronous part at a distance.

#### *The ICT component*

The ICT component consists of ICT videoconferencing and chatting. The combination was designed to allow students to interrupt, to comment on the process and to table new topics. In the chat environment, everyone had a nickname, which created a strange situation in the face-to-face situation. Use was also made of asynchronous co-operation, an asynchronous environment to deposit documents and make comments on one another's things. These tools were used to discuss the products that were handed in.

#### *Problems and solutions*

During the course, a number of problems occurred. For the Dutch students, the timetable of the synchronous part was unsatisfactory. They did not have enough time for their assignments, unlike the Australian students, who did. Not enough account was taken of the time differences between the two countries and of the fact that the Dutch students were only studying part-time. Because of the synchronous situation with full-time students, the teachers in Australia were used to sending out an assignment shortly beforehand according to an Australian timetable. However, the fact that an assignment was sent out eight hours before the deadline instead of twelve hours caused problems for the Dutch students. They received the assignment at the end of the day and there was not

enough time to complete it the next day. The Dutch students needed to be aware of the assignments earlier in order to be able to plan their work efficiently.

The cause of this timetabling problem was the different approaches adopted in distance education and face-to-face education. In a genuine distance environment, the course is first developed and then sent out. In a university setting based on lecturer-student contact, the course is developed while it is running. Lecturers who come from a face-to-face background are unaware of the gaps in the education they give when they change to distance education, because problems are always solved *en passant*. Suddenly, they are faced with students who are doing synchronous and asynchronous education in which a lot of things are unclear. They do not, however, understand what is unclear and why. Distance students also have different expectations than students who have graduated from face-to-face education. The distance students know in advance what they are expected to do. They know that these are the tools and that is how things work. This enables them to schedule their work and prepare themselves conceptually.

Another problem occurred during the synchronous sessions in which both the Australian and Dutch students took part. The Australian students sat at one table with a lecturer, while the Dutch students participated from a distance. The Dutch students found it hard to make themselves heard, they were excluded. They did everything they could to rectify the situation, by chatting and attracting attention visibly at the same time.

In future, these kinds of sessions will have to be better moderated if students have to follow the lecture from a distance. It makes no sense pretending you are all sitting at the table. There should be a chairperson who can intervene and allow everybody to contribute. These forms of conduct still have to develop. On this course, the impression was 'oh, the Dutch people have something to say'. If you develop a course together, one can pay more attention to these moderator aspects. In the event of a follow-up, these shortcomings will have to be improved, but the first priority is not to have OU students take part in these courses run by the Australian university. Too much energy is expended and the results are uncertain if the OU is not involved in the development of this kind of course. It would be better to point out to OU students that taking part in the course has its advantages and disadvantages. For the time being, there will be no further joint participation in courses, the experiences were too negative. Once a solution has been found to the communication problem, it may again become a possibility.

#### *Success of the activities*

The added value of collaboration for OU students is the network they can build. The added value of the OU study is not only the content, but also the fellow students and their quality, the lecturers and the network you build up as a result. This remains a benefit, even after you graduate. Students make a contribution to this kind of discipline. Not only do they contribute text documents, but also audio-visual material resulting from an assignment. If it is archived and made easy to search, it can be reused. At the meta level, you show other people how something can be approached. The input has to be varied because it is more interesting for the students. Working with a number of partners enables you to create this source of variety. The quality of such a learning process depends on the assignments. When learning critical analysis, this process is seen in a completely different light.

It is hard to say what the added value of the Australian initiative was for the OU students. It did not feel like added value to the Australians either. Because of the limited knowledge they acquired, the Dutch students only wrote a final report and did not take part in the examinations. The Australians went on alone. In this initiative, the question was whether this form was feasible, what kind of obstacles you encounter, what lecturers and students think of it. A real preliminary study, using the possibilities on offer. Other types of courses will face other problems and require other solutions.



The added value for students must be incorporated into the course. This could take the form of systematic inclusion of experiences that you do not find elsewhere. This depends on how one designs the course, e.g. self-contributed situation ethics, making comments, additions, suggestions, etc. Otherwise, a fellow student is a disaster instead of someone you can learn from. As part of the offshore project, the OU would like an answer to the following question: how do you organise the added value for students when the students are situated at a distance from one another?

The funding of the Australian initiative was arranged fairly informally. The time spent on the project was financed from general resources. This did not include the professor's time. This is handled differently in the case of a formal project, which involves a project proposal with a budget for time and money. In that case, the funds would come from an internationalisation fund (the OU has €1 million available for innovation projects) and it would be approached in a different way, starting as a small-scale, better planned project, for example. The evaluation would also be different. In this situation, the participants noted their experiences. In a more formal approach, they would have ascertained whether there was a willingness to develop two modules together and then determine the level of 'jointness'. Is it merely development or joint delivery, are all lecturers involved, should there be a single pool of participants? An analysis of the problem areas would have been conducted to establish what is realistically feasible and this would have been developed further. In that case, more attention would have been paid to differences in scheduling strategy and the mutual communication between lecturers and students would have been well co-ordinated. The way in which the various sessions had to be modulated and chaired would also have been worked out more clearly. Often, the solution gives rise to new problems. If you were to work out the schedule and communication at a concrete level, people may think you were fussing.

#### *Lessons learned*

There are a number of variations possible in collaboration with a partner. The level of jointness determines the format of collaboration. Level 0: you are free to use our things in your programme; level 1: we will develop the teaching material together, both the assignments and the knowledge elements; level 2: we will run the course together, but students from both programmes are free to participate in the course in question at the same time. Ambition is the second level, exchange is pragmatic. The joint development and delivery in an international context could be a major step forward.

This is also the case in another international activity. The OU organises mini-conferences, a part of 'trends and issues'. Afterwards, OU students are required to write a report. These conferences are open to everyone. The next one will be a web conference. Students from countries such as Germany, Finland and Norway will be taking part. The European network is also interesting in terms of learning experiences. The field of participants can be expanded, but it must not become too diverse because you are then unaware of what students will contribute and of what they expect. The previous ambition with the Australian project may be cancelled out by these mini-conferences, since they offer sufficient variety and teaching knowledge.

The learning experiences from the Australian have consequences for the running of an Innovation course. On the one hand, content and assignments have to be planned effectively, and on the other, the communication aspect will have to be included in the working plan for joint course development. The added value of the collaboration is then primarily in the sharing of expertise with regard to the design of innovation courses. The next step is to tailor the course to your own students' requirements.



#### 8.4.2 An offshore education project with the Florida State University

The second initiative is the joint project with Florida State University. With this initiative, the OU wants to set up a Master's programme that focuses on research. Graduates become an international MSc in the field of educational research. The idea is to develop this programme together and to attract students from Europe and the US. An important question here is: how do you recruit students and where from? The initiative is likely to start after 2007. Further agreements will be reached in the near future. First of all, it is necessary to establish the goals. There are many financial consequences, including the pricing of the programme. Next, those involved will have to look at what the curriculum concept could be, the apportionment of the courses, the quality concept, and at who is to be authorised to do what. Because of the cultural differences, it is important to make agreements on these aspects.

The motivation behind the initiative is that the market for good educational researchers is small. These people are spread all over the world. Together, the OU and FS have a unique combination of competencies that they want to make available to others. They want to train good researchers as partners who also wish to develop their competences further.

##### *The ICT component*

With regard to the ICT component of the new Master's programme, an audio-visual environment will be created around products, in addition to text documents. The environment will allow students' products to evolve into learning material for other students. It will have to be an object-centred discussion environment, including peer discussions and peer teaching. Blackboard may not be sufficient. As a person, you are used to communicating in a particular way. New technologies later show how the communication should be adapted to them. This is also the key message in an OU module: what does it mean for students, how can you improve how it is taught?

##### *Opportunities, problems and success of the activities*

The financial consequences are primarily in the – labour-intensive – operation, particularly the supervision of graduation papers. The programme does not necessarily have to be profitable, but it must not run at a loss either. Budgeting an initiative like this also depends on the funding of the institute as a whole. At the OU, when a faculty sells more modules, the additional income can be skimmed off. There are also funding rules that state that it is sometimes too expensive to have students in the thesis phase due to the intensive supervision during that phase. The allotment of time and money gets in each other's way. The funding of the OU is becoming more in line with other universities, so the OU Master's programme could become one of the ordinary funded programmes. International accreditation of the programme is an option.

Setting up and running this kind of programme demands even more. There are two doom scenarios. First, it may quickly turn into a financial disaster if there are not enough students or, second, if it is not accredited. Students are primarily interested in the recognition of their diploma. You have to make sure that this kind of programme does not lead to a situation in which the diploma is worthless.



## 9 Conclusions

This report has shown that offshore higher education is still a young area of activities and under developed area of study. Nevertheless, the case studies and partner scenarios have shown that offshore education is a developing area at the cutting edge of internationalisation in higher education. Those active in offshore education explore paths where no one went before. They can be called pioneers who discover opportunities and impossibilities. It takes courage, creativity and endurance to find opportunities that may bring innovations in higher education to provide new challenges to students and teachers or that may open up markets for higher education programmes and institutions that were not known before. This study not only provides a conceptual framework for offshore education but also a collection of practical experiences to guide higher education explorers into new territories.

The ambitions of this study were to provide in depth analysis of offshore higher education. Next to embedding offshore education in its wider contexts of internationalisation and ICT in higher education the study also aims at providing practical examples and experiences of what factors have an impact on the success or failure of offshore education activities and initiatives. In addition, the study included a short market study to identify potential opportunities for offshore higher education initiatives. In the following sections, some general conclusions will be drawn with regard to the issues touched upon in this report, following the basic structure of the report.

### 9.1 Internationalisation

Internationalisation of higher education becomes increasingly important in contemporary higher education policies, both at national and at institutional level. Like other national authorities, also the Dutch government aims at making Dutch higher education internationally more attractive for talented students and researchers. Attracting more foreign students and researchers is regarded important in view of the development of the knowledge economy, as well as involvement in international research networks. As such, Dutch higher education should increase its efforts to recruit foreign students, researchers and research projects.

Besides public efforts like the establishment of educational support offices like the NESOs and the development of a “branding” strategy, also Dutch higher education institutions become increasingly involved in internationalisation. These policies have gone far beyond student and staff mobility and now increasingly focus on bringing international dimensions into study programmes. Institutions also regard internationalisation as a way to generate some additional revenues from fees paid by international non-European. The bachelor-master structure triggered many higher education institutions to start teaching in English, particularly in master programmes.

Attracting more fee paying students from outside Europe is one step. To bring one's educational services to these foreign students is the next step. That is called offshore education.

### 9.2 Offshore education

The key focus of this study is offshore education, currently one of the most far reaching ways of internationalisation in higher education. Offshore education in this study is defined as the (partial) provision of education on location abroad (for fee-paying students). Offshore higher education can range from offering or developing joint courses to the establishment of full branch campuses. This implies one has to organise and offer the courses in a complete different cultural and administrative environment. Often one needs to have local partners, either to be successful in attracting students, to link to existing programmes or student pools, or just to be able to overcome



the complexities of administrative procedures that have to do with licensing, accreditation and degree recognition.

Within offshore education, a major distinction is between people mobility and programme or institutional mobility. People mobility occurs when students or staff go abroad to study (for example a full academic year). Program and institution mobility concerns physical or virtual movements of individual courses, programs or whole institutions across national borders through face-to-face teaching, distance learning or a combination of these modes. One can imagine that foreign student markets can be served in various ways. For example the home institution can send its own staff or recruit local teaching staff. One can use face-to-face instruction or distance education or a combination of both. Many of the choices made in terms of the organisation depend on local situations, traditions and education cultures in the hosting country.

It was interesting to see that international literature shows quite a number of examples of public policies that stimulate institutional initiatives to offer its education services abroad. Regardless of a number of countries developing active national policies in these fields, like Australia, the UK, the US, New Zealand and Germany, there hardly are case-by-case examples that show rich information on the day-to-day practice of offshore education adventures. There are no practical overviews yet of factors that make offshore education to be a success or failure.

### **9.3 ICT in higher education and offshore education**

Thinking about internationalisation and offshore education, which involves large distances between new target audiences and the home institutions, a natural reaction is that such educational initiatives heavily rely on ICT applications to support intensive contacts between groups of students, between teachers, or between teachers and students from the home and hosting institutions. However, the actual process of integrating ICT in regular higher education has lacked behind the high expectations raised during the 1990s. Even though higher education institutions around the globe heavily invested in ICT-infrastructures and that internet and email opened up the world and made communication and the dissemination of knowledge much faster than ever before, real high-tech applications of ICT in teaching practice stayed rather the exception than the rule. It remains difficult to lift ICT applications from more small scale or individually based situations and solutions to mass teaching instruments. In addition, advanced educational applications often put high demands on the ICT infrastructure which requires heavy investments that cannot be made in many parts of the world.

The latter situation particularly applies to a number of target regions for offshore education, like Asia and Africa. Unreliable ICT networks can be a major hurdle in distance communication and education. Such problems may be related to the lack of financial means or other technological problems. Other obstacles involve the level to which university staff are able to and willing to familiarise themselves with ICT applications and the development of this area. Many still prefer face-to-face teaching methods. Other issues involve the collaboration between partners and the quality management systems that are often developed based on the ideas of traditional teaching methods. All in all, if one really wants ICT to become a successful ingredient in teaching and if one wants to cater for larger groups of foreign students, than ICT and online courses should become more at the heart of institutional strategies.

### **9.4 The market for offshore higher education**

The market study conducted in this project heavily relied on the market studies performed by the NUFFIC in order to serve Dutch higher education for their international cooperation projects and in finding potential new student markets. In addition the NESOs have been contacted to investigate their view on offshore education opportunities for Dutch higher education institutions. These led to the following results:

- ◆ There are substantial student markets that are waiting to be served.
- ◆ Offshore education may be interesting because many students in Asian and African markets cannot or do not want go abroad to get a highly valued foreign degree because of financial reasons or the risk of failure.
- ◆ In terms of student numbers and financial profitability, offshore education is most viable disciplines like business, economics, law and some engineering programmes, and rather at master than at bachelor level.
- ◆ There are also limitations to offshore activities. These for example concern juridical regulations, both in the Netherlands and the host countries. They also involve quality differences or procedures to guarantee quality. In addition there may be enormous bureaucracies that need to be tackled before one can really start.
- ◆ Collaboration with foreign partners requires a thorough analysis of and adjustment to the national culture, habits and regulations. One needs to be aware and willing to make such investments.

### 9.5 Offshore activities of Dutch higher education institutions

To explore the offshore education activities of Dutch higher education, 107 educational directors of the DU-institutions and some other internationally active institutions were surveyed. The response rate was 48%. Of the respondents, 14 are currently active or had been active in offshore education until recently. Another 21 respondents indicated to be interested in developing (further) offshore education activities. Most of the active respondents indicate that their activities are satisfactory or successful in terms of student numbers and financial viability.


With regard to the application of ICT support for offshore education, most respondents indicated a mix between traditional face-to-face education and web-based supported teaching elements, like online discussions, assessment and online project/collaborative work. Only 2 respondents provide more or less full online courses where 1 respondent indicated to only offer face-to-face instruction.

Respondents who indicated to provide more information were contacted for a short telephone interview. These interviews showed the following results:

- ◆ Major problems in the offshore activities derive from the trade-off between quality and quantity. The more students one wants, the lower quality standards must be. But most do not want to compromise on quality. Therefore one has to select partners carefully through long-term relationships that also include other activities like staff exchange and research.
- ◆ Offshore education also involves risks, like failure due to an administrative and regulatory burden, high investment costs or difficulties to achieve the envisaged quality standards, to agree on the educational concepts or to build one's image. One also has to take into account that not only partner institutions are involved but often also venture capitalists. The latter are only interested in the outreach and financial consequences rather than the educational content, which generates its own kind of problems.

### 9.6 Lessons from Dutch offshore activities and ongoing initiatives

A very important part of this study consist of the presentation of case studies and partner scenarios reflecting actual practices and hands-on experiences with offshore education or the development of such initiatives. Based on the web-based survey and telephone interviews 4 case studies and 4 partner scenarios were selected. The case studies included: the Christelijke Hogeschool Nederland (CHN), INHOLLAND, Saxion and the ITC. The partner scenarios were formed by the University of Amsterdam, ITC, University of Twente and the Open University.



As it is aimed that current or envisaged offshore activities can benefit from the existing experiences of the case studies, the major findings and lessons learned will be described in an integrated way.

The case studies and the partner scenarios in most instances use comparable approaches to offshore education. Most activities can be labelled as mutual understanding, development work and helping countries and regions that are less well off through staff exchange, strengthening educational programmes and building partnerships. The objectives of most stakeholders are not profit seeking but to build partnerships that is mutually beneficial. Offering wider opportunities to students and staff, as well as creating a strong international profile of the institutions are the main goals. In the long run these investments are aimed to lead to greater attractiveness to students and staff which will lead to a stronger competitive position that will be rewarded by greater revenues. This means that branding is important. CHN, INHOLLAND and Saxion all state that building a strong international reputation is envisaged to lead to attracting new groups of students, either from abroad or just Dutch students who are offered truly international programs.

A major lesson from most of these experiences is that these partnerships require strong investments in mutual trust, understanding and long-term commitment. These take time, money, willingness to travel and an open mind for new influences by large groups of staff of the various partners involved. Only then one can form a good basis for setting up joint activities and to work as partners to take all other hurdles for making joint projects successful. One has to understand that it often takes a lot of work and lobbying to get passed all kinds of regulations and administrative requirements before real joint courses or projects are allowed to be launched.

In addition to that, course contents and quality management are serious issues to deal with. Establishing joint courses requires mutual understanding and agreement about the subjects to be taught, the ways in which these can be taught and assessed. One has to deal with cultural differences in terms of expectations by students and teachers as well, finding ways to meet those requirements, particularly if one offers courses to international classes. This implies that teachers have to communicate and be jointly involved as equal partners in such projects. It also requires stability in the partners being involved.

With relation to quality management, many aspects are important. There may be all kinds of requirements in terms of the capacities of students and staff, like existing knowledge of concepts and working methods, but also in the area of linguistic skills and cultural flexibility. In addition to that, quality assurance and accreditation procedures of both cooperating partners and their national systems have to be explored in great detail. This involves a lot of administrative activities and often also lobbying. All these kinds of issues require strong communication which often cannot be done at a distance. Intensive face-to-face contacts are crucial.

International and online classrooms also have their specific requirements and potential obstacles. One has to deal with different time zones, different learning approaches, technical issues like power and internet capacities (bandwidth, login issues), and different types of students as regards social background, part-time versus fulltime students, cultural background and language issues. The case studies for example showed that interactive learning elements and the online services are not always possible within the infrastructure in all countries. The cases raised some doubts about the usability of an ELO or other heavy online applications in developing countries. The ICT infrastructure of the partner institutions as well as of the students should be in a good condition to make online applications work.

Another important issue is finding a right partner and developing a strong partnership. This can evolve from earlier collaborations, or from contacts gained during teaching or research. It is important to think in advance about what one wants to accomplish with the partner and if that fits the needs and interests of both partners. To make partnerships more stable and trustworthy, it often helps if these involve various activities, like teaching and research or other type of service activities.



Another issue concerns that one has to be very well aware of differences in curricula and the modes of delivery by means of teaching methods and examinations. To create common understanding and objectives, teaching staff needs to be trained on both sides of the partnership. Flying professors and teacher exchange may be ways to handle such problems, but also providing periods in which the teachers of particular courses from both institutions can sit together and jointly developing curricula changes. Of course such innovations need then to be integrated in the whole curricula and meet the quality and accreditation standards again.

Finally, if the joint educational projects are established, then one also has to think about the students. For example if they have to travel during some part of the studies. Linkages to scholarship programmes, setting an acceptable fee level and providing additional services may be important accompanying policy issues which can make or break a programme.

## 10 Samenvatting

Offshore onderwijs is een activiteit in het hoger onderwijs die nog in ontwikkeling is en waarnaar nog weinig onderzoek is gedaan. Uit de case studies en de partner scenario's van dit onderzoek blijkt dat er op dit gebied vele grensverleggende internationaliseringactiviteiten zijn. De pioniers die op dit moment actief zijn in offshore onderwijs belopen paden waar nog geen andere Nederlandse instelling is geweest, en ontdekken op deze manier zowel kansen als onmogelijkheden. Er is moed, creativiteit en doorzettingsvermogen nodig om mogelijkheden te ontdekken die tot innovaties in hoger onderwijs kunnen leiden. Innovaties die nieuwe uitdagingen aan studenten en docenten stellen en nieuwe markten openen die voorheen nog onbekend waren. Dit onderzoek biedt niet alleen een conceptueel kader voor offshore onderwijs, maar ook een verzameling van praktijkervaringen om hoger onderwijs pioniers en internationaliseerders te leiden naar nieuwe gebieden.

Dit onderzoek wil een gedetailleerde analyse van offshore hoger onderwijs bieden en om dit te bereiken wordt offshore onderwijs in de bredere context van internationalisering en ICT in hoger onderwijs geplaatst. Het onderzoek geeft ook aan in hoeverre het Nederlandse hoger onderwijs betrokken is in offshore onderwijsprojecten. Verder zal de studie door praktijkvoorbeelden een indicatie geven van succes- en faalfactoren voor offshore onderwijs activiteiten en initiatieven en biedt het onderzoek een kort marktonderzoek om potentiële mogelijkheden te identificeren. In de volgende paragrafen zullen de algemene conclusies van het rapport worden beschreven in dezelfde volgorde als de hoofdstukken van het rapport.

### 10.1 Internationalisering

Internationalisering van hoger onderwijs wordt steeds belangrijker binnen het huidige hoger onderwijsbeleid, zowel in het binnen als het buitenland. De Nederlandse regering heeft, net als andere nationale overheden, zich tot doel gesteld om het Nederlandse hoger onderwijs internationaal aantrekkelijker te maken voor getalenteerde studenten en onderzoekers. Meer buitenlandse studenten en onderzoekers aantrekken wordt gezien als noodzakelijk voor de ontwikkeling van de kennis economie en de betrokkenheid in internationale onderzoeksnetwerken. Het Nederlands hoger onderwijs zou derhalve haar inspanningen om buitenlandse studenten, onderzoekers en onderzoeksprojecten aan te trekken moeten vergroten.

Naast publieke initiatieven zoals de oprichting van de NESO vestigingen en de ontwikkeling van een 'branding' strategie, zijn Nederlandse hoger onderwijsinstellingen zelf ook actief bezig met internationalisering. Het huidige beleid gaat verder dan mobiliteit van studenten en/of staf en richt zich op het brengen van een internationale dimensie in de opleidingen. De invoering van de bachelor master structuur heeft ervoor gezorgd dat veel instellingen vooral hun Masteronderwijs in het Engels beginnen te doceren. Hiernaast wordt internationalisering ook vaak gezien als een mogelijkheid om extra inkomsten te genereren door middel van collegegelden van niet-Europese studenten. Het aantrekken van meer collegegeld betalende studenten van buiten Europa is de eerste stap, de volgende stap is het aanbieden van de onderwijsdiensten in het buitenland; offshore onderwijs.



## 10.2 Offshore onderwijs

Offshore onderwijs is een van de meest vergaande vormen van internationalisering in het hoger onderwijs. Onder offshore onderwijs wordt onderwijs verstaan dat (gedeeltelijk) op locatie in het buitenland wordt aangeboden. Het onderwijs verplaatst zich op deze manier naar de student toe, in plaats van dat de student zelf mobiel is. Dit onderzoek richt zich vooral op offshore onderwijs voor collegegeld betalende studenten van buiten de EU.

Er zijn verschillende vormen van offshore onderwijs mogelijk: van het gezamenlijk aanbieden van een opleiding tot de vestiging van een campus in het buitenland. Dit alles houdt in dat de opleiding in een compleet andere culturele en administratieve cultuur moet worden opgezet en aangeboden. Men heeft vaak lokale partners nodig om succesvol te zijn in het aantrekken van studenten, om bestaande programma's of studentenpopulaties te koppelen of om de vele moeilijkheden van administratieve procedures zoals vergunningen, accreditatie en diploma-erkenning te overkomen. Er is binnen offshore onderwijs een onderscheid te maken tussen mobiliteit van personen en mobiliteit van opleidingen of mobiliteit van instellingen<sup>10</sup>. Personenmobiliteit vindt plaats wanneer studenten of staf naar het buitenland gaan om te studeren of te werken. Als een cursus, opleiding of instelling fysiek of virtueel de landsgrenzen oversteeft dan spreken we van opleidings- of instellingsmobiliteit. Een buitenlandse student kan op verschillende manieren worden bediend. Zo kan een Nederlandse instelling ervoor kiezen om de eigen staf te gebruiken of om staf in het buitenland te rekruteren om onderwijs te geven. Verder kan worden gekozen voor face-to-face onderwijs, afstandsonderwijs of een combinatie van beide. Veel van de uiteindelijke keuzes zullen afhangen van de lokale situatie, tradities en de onderwijscultuur in het gastland.

De internationale literatuur laat interessante voorbeelden zien van beleid van nationale overheden die de initiatieven van instellingen om diensten in het buitenland aan te bieden stimuleren. Ondanks dat een aantal landen actief nationaal beleid op dit gebied heeft, zoals Australië, het Verenigd Koninkrijk, de Verenigde Staten, Nieuw Zeeland en Duitsland, zijn er nauwelijks voorbeelden die uitgebreide praktijkinformatie bieden over de dagelijkse praktijk van offshore onderwijs avonturen. Er zijn op dit moment nog geen praktijk georiënteerde overzichten van factoren die offshore onderwijs tot een succes of een mislukking maken.


## 10.3 ICT in hoger onderwijs en offshore onderwijs.

Internationalisering en offshore onderwijs lijken natuurlijke partners te zijn. Er is vaak sprake van grote afstanden tussen student en de instelling en het lijkt natuurlijk om voor zulke activiteiten zwaar te bouwen op ICT applicaties om de intensieve contacten tussen studenten onderling, docent en student of docenten onderling te faciliteren. De grote verwachtingen van het integreren van ICT in het hoger onderwijs die in de jaren negentig zijn ontstaan zijn echter niet waargemaakt. Ondanks grote investeringen van hoger onderwijs instellingen over de hele wereld in ICT infrastructuur en de invloed van internet en e-mail op de manier van communiceren en het verspreiden van kennis, blijven ICT applicaties in de leerpraktijk eerder uitzondering dan regel. Het blijft lastig om ICT applicaties te transformeren van oplossingen op kleine schaal of individuele basis naar instrumenten die inzetbaar zijn op grotere schaal. Een bijkomend probleem is dat geavanceerde applicaties vaak grote eisen stellen aan de ICT infrastructuur en dat dit in veel delen van de wereld (nog) niet haalbaar is.

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<sup>10</sup> People mobility, programme mobility and provider mobility.





Deze laatstgenoemde situatie is vooral van toepassing op een aantal regio's die vaak worden genoemd als mogelijke regio om actief te zijn met offshore onderwijs. Onbetrouwbare ICT infrastructuur kan een grote belemmering zijn voor communicatie en afstandsonderwijs. Zulke problemen kunnen te maken hebben met een gebrek aan financiële middelen aldaar of problemen van technologische aard. Een andere mogelijke belemmering is de mate waarin staf de mogelijkheden heeft of bereid is om zichzelf te bekwamen met ICT applicaties en de ontwikkelingen op dit gebied, velen hebben toch een voorkeur voor contact onderwijs. Andere mogelijke probleemgebieden zijn de samenwerking tussen partners en het kwaliteitszorgsysteem die vaak zijn ontwikkeld met traditionele vormen van onderwijs in het achterhoofd. Als men wil dat ICT een succesvol onderdeel wordt van het lesgeven en als men dit wil gebruiken voor grote groepen buitenlandse studenten dan moet men ICT en online cursussen meer binnen de institutionele strategieën plaatsen.

#### 10.4 De markt voor offshore onderwijs

Om de markt voor offshore onderwijs te onderzoeken is gebruik gemaakt van de verschillende marktonderzoeken uitgevoerd door de NUFFIC. Deze marktonderzoeken hadden tot doel om Nederlandse hoger onderwijsinstellingen te helpen bij hun internationale samenwerkingsprojecten en bij het vinden van potentiële markten voor studenten. Om tot een completer beeld te komen zijn ook de NESO vestigingen aangeschreven om hun mening te geven over offshore onderwijs activiteiten in hun land. Hieruit kwamen de volgende resultaten naar voren:

Er is een grote, groeiende markt van studenten met een vraag naar hoger onderwijs.

Offshore onderwijs kan interessant zijn omdat veel studenten uit bijvoorbeeld Azië en Afrika niet naar het buitenland willen of kunnen gaan om een goed aangeschreven buitenlands diploma te bemachtigen vanwege financiële redenen of het risico te falen.

Bedrijfskunde, economie, recht en enkele technische opleidingen verhouden zich het beste met offshore onderwijs wat betreft student aantallen en financiële inkomsten.

Er zijn ook belemmeringen ten aanzien van offshore onderwijs. De wettelijke regelgeving, zowel in Nederland als in het gastland, is hiervan een voorbeeld net als eventuele verschillen in de kwaliteitszorg of de kwaliteit van de opleidingen zelf. Er is ook een mogelijke bureaucratische last die overwonnen moet worden voordat men kan beginnen.

Voor samenwerking met buitenlandse partners is een zorgvuldige analyse van en aanpassing aan de nationale cultuur, gewoonten en regelgeving nodig. Hiervan dient men zich bewust te zijn en bereid te zijn om zulke investeringen te maken.

#### 10.5 Activiteiten van Nederlandse hoger onderwijsinstellingen

Om een beeld te krijgen van de activiteiten van de instellingen die lid zijn van de Digitale Universiteit zijn 107 opleidingsdirecteuren en enkele andere internationaal actieve instellingen ondervraagd. De response rate was 48%. Van de respondenten waren er 14 op dit moment of vroeger actief in offshore onderwijs. Verder gaven 21 respondenten aan dat ze geïnteresseerd waren in het (verder) ontwikkelen van offshore onderwijs activiteiten. De meerderheid van de actieve respondenten gaven aan dat hun activiteiten succesvol zijn, zowel qua student aantallen als financieel rendement.

De meeste respondenten geven aan dat ze een mix gebruiken tussen traditioneel contact onderwijs en onderwijs met ondersteuning van het internet, zoals online discussies, beoordeling van online

projecten of samenwerken. Slechts twee respondenten gaven aan volledig online onderwijs te geven terwijl slechts één docent alleen gebruik maakt van contactonderwijs.

De respondenten die aangaven verder mee te willen werken aan ons onderzoek zijn telefonisch geïnterviewd. Hieruit kwamen de volgende resultaten naar voren:

Grote problemen voor de offshore activiteiten ontstaan vanwege de spanning tussen kwaliteit en kwantiteit. Hoe meer studenten je wilt bedienen, hoe lager de kwaliteitsstandaarden zullen moeten zijn, maar je moet niet te veel in willen leveren op kwaliteit.

Het is van belang om partners zorgvuldig te selecteren door lange termijn samenwerkingsverbanden aan te gaan die zich niet alleen op onderwijs richten maar ook op onderzoek en stafuitwisseling.

Er zijn risico's verbonden aan offshore onderwijs. Er komen verschillende redenen naar voren die ervoor zorgen dat een activiteit niet van de grond kan komen: administratieve lasten of problemen met de wetgeving, hoge investeringskosten, moeilijkheden om de vooraf verwachte kwaliteitsstandaarden te halen, geen overeenstemming over het te volgen curriculum of gebrek aan imago. Als partner voor offshore activiteiten zijn niet alleen andere hoger onderwijsinstellingen mogelijk maar ook investeringsmaatschappijen kunnen als partner optreden. Deze laatstgenoemde zijn vooral geïnteresseerd in het financiële succes wat weer een ander soort problemen op kan leveren.

## 10.6 Lessen uit de huidige praktijk: case studies en partner scenario's

De presentatie van de case studies en de partner scenario's is een belangrijk onderdeel van dit onderzoek omdat het de huidige praktijk het beste weergeeft en praktische handreikingen kan bieden over offshore onderwijs. De online vragenlijst en de telefooninterviews vormden de basis voor het selecteren van vier case studies en vier partner scenario's. Als case studie zijn gekozen: de Christelijke Hogeschool Nederland (CHN), INHOLLAND, Saxion hogescholen en het ITC omdat deze al vergevorderde offshore initiatieven hebben lopen. De partner scenario's bestaan uit niet zo lang geleden opgestarte offshore onderwijsprojecten: de universiteit van Amsterdam (UVA), het ITC, Universiteit Twente en de Open Universiteit.

De case studies en partner scenario's hebben in de meeste gevallen een vergelijkbare benadering. De meeste activiteiten vallen onder de noemer van 'mutual understanding'; ontwikkelingssamenwerking door middel van stafuitwisseling, het aanpassen van curricula en het aangaan van samenwerking op andere vlakken. De doelstellingen zijn meestal niet winstgevendheid maar het aangaan van een samenwerkingsverband dat voor beide partijen iets oplevert. Andere doelstellingen zijn het kunnen aanbieden van ontplooiingsmogelijkheden voor zowel personeel als studenten en het creëren van een internationaal profiel van de instelling. Er wordt verwacht dat op de lange termijn deze investeringen zullen leiden tot een grotere aantrekkingskracht op studenten en staf resulterend in een betere concurrentiepositie en dus wellicht meer inkomsten. Dit houdt in dat 'branding' erg belangrijk is. CHN, INHOLLAND en Saxion hebben alle drie de verwachting dat een sterk internationaal georiënteerde reputatie nieuwe groepen studenten kan aantrekken, zowel buitenlandse studenten als Nederlandse studenten, die een internationaal programma willen volgen.

Een van de belangrijkste lessen uit de ervaringen is dat de samenwerkingsverbanden een investering in wederzijds vertrouwen en engagement voor de lange termijn nodig hebben. Dit vraagt om een investering van tijd, geld, bereidheid om te reizen en een open geest voor nieuwe invloeden van de betrokken staf in de instellingen. Alleen dan kan er een goed fundament worden gelegd waarop de gezamenlijke activiteiten succesvol kunnen plaatsvinden. Het is belangrijk te begrijpen



dat voordat men kan beginnen met het daadwerkelijk aanbieden van de gewenste activiteiten er veel arbeid en lobbyen nodig is om langs de vele administratieve valkuilen te komen. De inhoud van de opleiding en de bewaking van de kwaliteit zijn daarnaast natuurlijk belangrijke zaken om rekening mee te houden. Een gezamenlijke opleiding ontwikkelen houdt in dat er overeenstemming moet komen over onderwerpen die aan bod moeten komen, de manier waarop de lesstof wordt gegeven en welke manier van toetsing zal worden gebruikt. Als men internationale klassen wil creëren moet men rekening houden met de culturele verschillen van studenten én docenten en manieren vinden om de verschillende studenten in te passen. Dit houdt bijvoorbeeld in dat docenten moeten communiceren met hun studenten maar ook dat er tussen docenten onderling een goede verhouding bestaat. Een stabiele partner relatie is hiervoor een pré.

De kwaliteitszorg van offshore onderwijs kent vele aspecten. Er kunnen verschillende eisen worden gesteld aan studenten en staf, zoals kennis van concepten en werkmethoden maar ook op het gebied van taalvaardigheid en culturele flexibiliteit. Hiernaast dienen de kwaliteitszorg en accreditatie procedures van zowel de partners als hun nationale hoger onderwijsstelsel grondig bestudeerd te worden. Dit betekent dat naast veel administratieve activiteiten ook lobbyen vaak nodig is. Om al deze aspecten in het oog te houden is veel communicatie nodig, wat vaak niet over afstand kan. Intensief face-to-face contact is hiervoor cruciaal.

Internationale en online opleidingen hebben zo hun specifieke eisen en potentiële belemmeringen. Problemen kunnen zich voordoen door verschillen in tijdzones, het verschil tussen parttime en fulltime studenten, verschillende leermethodes en techniek gerelateerde zaken zoals elektriciteits- en internetcapaciteit (bandbreedte, login problemen). Voor international classrooms zijn voornamelijk de verschillen tussen de studenten qua sociale achtergrond, culturele achtergrond en moedertaal een probleem. Uit de case studies blijkt bijvoorbeeld dat interactieve elementen van een opleiding niet altijd mogelijk zijn online vanwege de beperktere ICT infrastructuur in bepaalde landen. Deze infrastructuur dient bij zowel de partner instellingen als de studenten van een voldoende niveau te zijn om online aan het werk te kunnen.

Een ander belangrijk issue wat uit de cases naar voren komt is het vinden van de juiste partner en het opbouwen van een goed samenwerkingsverband. Een samenwerkingsverband ontstaat vaak vanuit eerdere gezamenlijke projecten zoals onderzoek of onderwijs activiteiten. Het van te voren afspraken maken met de partner over wat men wil bereiken en wat de wederzijdse verwachtingen en interesses zijn is aan te raden. Extra activiteiten in het samenwerkingsverband betrekken, zoals onderzoek, kan de stabiliteit en duurzaamheid van de samenwerking versterken.

Verschillen in curriculum en manier van lesgeven zoals de lesmethoden en examinering zijn een volgend belangrijk punt. Om gezamenlijk tot dezelfde doelen en uitgangspunten te komen dient de onderwijsstaf bij beide instellingen te worden getraind. 'Flying professors' en staf uitwisseling zijn manieren om dit te bewerkstelligen en dit geeft ook de mogelijkheid voor docenten om bij elkaar te zitten om het curriculum te bespreken of dit samen te wijzigen. Deze wijzigingen moeten dan natuurlijk in het gehele curriculum doorgevoerd worden en moeten ook voldoen aan de kwaliteits- en accreditatie-eisen.

Als laatste is het zeer belangrijk dat voor men aan een project begint er ook aan de studenten wordt gedacht. De studenten moeten misschien reizen tijdens een deel van de opleiding. Verder zijn de mogelijkheden van beurzenprogramma's, een redelijk collegegeld en andere mogelijke ondersteunende activiteiten, zoals visa procedures en huisvesting, belangrijke beleidspunten die een programma kunnen maken of breken.



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## Appendix 1: The web-based questionnaire (in Dutch)




### Inventarisatie Offshore Onderwijs

In het kader van een studie van de Digitale Universiteit (DU) naar de betrokkenheid van instellingen bij offshore onderwijs en de toekomstmogelijkheden hiervoor, willen wij u enkele vragen stellen om te kijken in welke mate uw opleiding/instelling betrokken is bij het aanbieden van offshore onderwijs of dat er mogelijke wensen zijn op dat terrein.

In het kader van ons project verstaan wij onder offshore onderwijs:  
*alle vormen van hoger onderwijs die door Nederlandse instellingen worden gebruikt om hun onderwijsdiensten aan te bieden in het buitenland.*  
Wij concentreren ons daarbij vooral op activiteiten buiten de EU.

[Naar de vragenlijst](#)



**1. Wat is uw functie?**

Opleidingsdirecteur

anders, namelijk

**2. Bij welke instelling bent u werkzaam?**

**3. Bij welke opleiding bent u werkzaam? (als meerdere opleidingen dan de meest relevante)**


**4. Is of was uw opleiding betrokken bij één of meerdere vormen van offshore onderwijs?**

Ja

Nee

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**4a. Kunt u voor de volgende vormen van offshore onderwijs aangeven of uw opleiding hierbij betrokken is of was? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)**

Samenwerking met buitenlandse instelling

- Erkenning studiepunten
- Double/joint degree
- Buitenlandse instelling biedt uw diploma aan
- Uw medewerkers verzorgen deel programma in buitenland (flying professors)
- anders, namelijk


Virtual / Distance

Uw opleiding of delen daarvan wordt via afstandsonderwijs aan buitenlandse studenten aangeboden

Buitenlandse vestiging van uw instelling/opleiding

- Branch campus
- Eigen instelling in het buitenland door bijvoorbeeld fusie of overname
- Study Centre / Teaching Site
- Anders, namelijk

Vorige pagina Volgende pagina

  
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**4b. Zijn of waren deze activiteiten succesvol met betrekking tot het aantal studenten, het financieel rendabel zijn van de activiteit of de kwaliteit van de opleiding?**

		Eventuele toelichting
Aantal studenten	<input type="checkbox"/> Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Nee	<input type="text"/>
Financieel rendabel	<input type="checkbox"/> Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Nee	<input type="text"/>
Kwaliteit van de opleiding	<input type="checkbox"/> Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Nee	<input type="text"/>

Vorige pagina Volgende pagina






  
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**4c. In welke regio's bent of was u actief? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)**

- Latijns Amerika
- Afrika
- Midden Oosten
- Centraal / Oost Europa buiten EU
- Azie (b.v. China, India, Vietnam, Indonesie, etc.)
- EU
- anders, namelijk

**4d. Met welk type instellingen werkt (e) u samen? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)**

- Publieke universiteiten
- Private universiteiten
- Publieke hogescholen / colleges
- Private hogescholen / colleges
- anders, namelijk


  
Digitale Universiteit

**4e. Wat is het aantal studenten dat u ongeveer bereikt (e) met de offshore activiteiten?**

**4f. Welke vormen van ICT gebruikt (e) u voor uw offshore activiteiten?**

- Geen
- Web ondersteund (bijv. rooster of sheets online, gebruik van email, links naar externe bronnen)
- Web afhankelijk (studenten gebruiken het internet voor belangrijke elementen in het programma, maar geen reductie in contact uren)
- Mixed mode (studenten moeten participeren in online activiteiten als onderdeel van de opleiding wat face tot face contact verminderd)
- Volledig online



  
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**5. Heeft u wensen om (verdere) offshore activiteiten te ontwikkelen?**

Ja  
 Nee


**5.a Wat houdt u eventueel tegen om (verdere) activiteiten te ontwikkelen**

**5 a. Aan welke regio's denkt u dan? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)**

Latijns Amerika  
 Afrika  
 Midden Oosten  
 Centraal / Oost Europa buiten EU  
 Azie (b.v. China, India, Vietnam, Indonesie, etc.)  
 EU  
 anders, namelijk

**5b. Wat is het aantal studenten dat u ongeveer wil bereiken met de offshore activiteiten.**

Vorige pagina Volgende pagina

  
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**5c. Welke vormen van offshore onderwijs denkt u dan aan ?**

Samenwerking met buitenlandse instelling

- Erkenning studiepunten
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Virtual / Distance


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- Study Centre / Teaching Site
- Anders, namelijk

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6. Uit het totale bestand van antwoorden op deze enquête willen we een aantal cases van offshore onderwijs selecteren om verder uit te werken. Zouden we u eventueel mogen benaderen voor een interview over het offshore onderwijs op uw instelling?

Ja  
 Nee

Waar / hoe kunnen we u het beste bereiken?


Mail

Telefoon +31

7. Kent u anderen binnen uw instelling die actief zijn met offshore onderwijs die benaderd kunnen worden in het kader van dit onderzoek? Zo ja, kunt u dan de naam en email adressen van deze personen geven?

Naam:	E-mail adres:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Vorige pagina Volgende pagina

  
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**Dit is het einde van de vragenlijst. Hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking.  
U kunt hieronder op de verzenden knop drukken om de vragenlijst af te sluiten.**

Vorige pagina



*This is a research report providing an international exploration of the concept of offshore education. The report not only defines offshore education, it also shows how it is embedded within internationalisation strategies, the most recent national policies in this area as well as how ICT applications can be of use to make ambitions come true. In addition, the report explores the position and wishes in Dutch higher education with regard to offshore education as well as a number of best practices.*