Task 11.4 – EDUC Strategic Framework for engaging regional and international stakeholders and common standards

Preamble

The members of the EDUC Alliance created this document to draw a strategic framework for the regional and international outreach activities of both its member universities and the entire Alliance.

This framework does not intend to substitute or overwrite the universities' already existing respective strategic documents. Rather, it aims to provide an 'extra layer' over the institutional-level strategies by combining strengths and identifying new, alliance-level goals.

This framework is built largely on the outcomes of the two good practices trainings organized in relevant topics, the EDUC Mission and Vision document *(do we have this already?)* and the member universities' relevant strategies.

Common standards and definitions

The EDUC Alliance strongly agrees that international and regional outreach strategies are not "single issues"; they have to be integrated into the goals, functions, and implementation of higher education activities.

The Alliance makes efforts in building meaningful partnerships across the world and locally with higher education institutions (U2U-type), research centers, international and local non-governmental organizations, corporations, and other relevant stakeholders. This means a wide spectrum of engagements from student exchanges through cultural programs and university-to-business (U2B-type) partnerships.

While this document intends to create a common framework for the Alliance, it also acknowledges the different social, political, geographical, cultural, and historical considerations of the members. Implementing this strategic framework can only be successful if the members adapt the strategy to the local realities. Because of these differences, this strategic framework does not intend to incorporate all fields of internationalization and outreach. The goal here is to develop joint actions on the areas that can have the most significant impact. These areas are mentioned in the Plan of Actions (PoA) section.

Also, for the sake of the success of implementation, the different actors within the member institutions and the Alliance, in their ecosystems, should feel that they own this issue. This ownership is connected to the engagement of the local community to the actions, which can have the potential to bring hidden assets and energies to the surface.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Each member has strategic thinking and planning on these areas.
- At each member university, these areas are considered as high priority and have strong support from the leadership.
- There are numerous overlaps in terms of inter-university partnerships (U2U-type) and international organization memberships, which can provide stronger visibility to the Alliance.

Weaknesses:

- International strategies have different focus points
- Because of that, some members are solid in terms of the number of international degree programs but struggle with outgoing mobility numbers, and some are the other way around. That makes it harder to have a clear shared vision.
- The universities are working in different political/geopolitical, cultural, and social settings, so the regional outreach goals and tools are hard to unify, or make come closer together.

Opportunities:

- The members have different strengths and good practices. Sharing and combining these can help the individual universities excel and the Alliance become an internationally recognized actor/entity in higher education.
- The members combined have a colorful portfolio of study and research in three out of the five most widely spoken languages globally.

Threats:

- The "too much diversity" may lead to a lack of common goals.
- As the budgetary situation is unclear, it is challenging to decide on measurable actions.
- As an international 'project', EDUC is mainly running in English, and it can be hard to connect it to the local ecosystems (e.g., senior academies or outreach to local kindergartens have to be in the native language).

Plan of Actions (PoA)

In line with the previously mentioned 'cross-cutting strategy' philosophy, the actions listed here are to be deeply connected with every work package of the Alliance.

International rankings

The Alliance understands the significant role of international rankings in today's higher education, and identify the following actions:
- alliance-wide efforts to publish together and involve the published works of member institutions' colleagues in literature reviews and other overviews:
    o In 2022, minimum 15 publications featuring at least two member university colleagues as co-authors should be published. This number should reach 50 by 2024 and 75 by 2026.
    o Citation within the alliance should reach 50 in 2022, 150 by 2024 and 250 by 2026.
- In rankings, where peer opinion surveys are run, recommending each other has to be a priority.
- Introducing the 'EDUC Chair' visiting professor program among the Alliance members can boost the number of international faculty members, which is an indicator in international rankings. These Chairs can be co-funded by the members and corporate partners:
    o In 2022, the goal is to develop the program and announce the first call
    o In 2023, a total of 5 chairs should be announced
    o By 2025, this number should reach 10

Memberships in other organizations

- As an alliance, taking part in university organizations/associations, as platform/umbrella representation (as associated member in those organizations).
    o First attempts should target the Compostela Group of Universities (where already three of the eight alliance member institutions have membership), European University Foundation (EUF) and the Young European Research Universities (YERUN) network (where already two of the eight alliance member institutions have membership).
- The alliance can sign agreements with other alliances, starting with the African Research Universities Network.

Engaging new regions

- Based upon the U2U Report of the Alliance, where scarce or no presence of any of the members can be described, EDUC attempts to be present:
    o In the second part of 2022, the first "EDUC–Gulf Region University Meetup" will be organized virtually.
    o This will be followed by an in-person event connected to the annual Dubai Expo (if the pandemic situation allows).

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- o   In 2023, the first "EDUC–Indian University Meetup" will be organized virtually.
- In any region where any of the member universities has a contact/partner, it does not only deepen its partnership, but also fosters the presence of others in the Alliance (and the Alliance as such).

Strengthening the international visibility of EDUC

- EDUC has a separate stand at the major HEI global events and offers talks/presentations as an alliance about internationalization, the European Universities Initiative, etc.
    - o   EDUC will have a separate stand at the upcoming EAIE in 2022, and will have a separate stand at NAFSA and APAIE from 2023.
    - o   The Alliance will take every opportunity to be visible in talks, presentations and poster sections during these events.

Cultural diversity/intercultural learning environment

- The Alliance decides that its members take definite steps towards achieving these common goals, each member confirms its relevant actions:
    - o   In 2022, each member organizes thematic cultural days/weeks. This can be incorporated into staff weeks, or other events.
    - o   During the Erasmus+ outgoing mobility application period, members are visiting each other and promote their universities, fostering exchange within the alliance.
    - o   European Doctorate to be institutionalized in the Alliance by 2023.
    - o   Create a pool of EDUC internship placements at administrative offices and research labs by 2022.
    - o   From 2022, the alliance members include the members and topics of EDUC into the local programs of early outreach and senior academies.
    - o   Connecting Education and Research better, EDUC as an alliance deepens the promotion of the organizations of summer/winter schools, and SIMPs.

Entrepreneurship

- EDUC has already organized entrepreneurship days for its students in Nanterre. This should become an annual series of events, inviting the industry and respective chambers of commerce partners.

Inclusion and equal opportunities

- Higher education must be available for all. Each member should confirm further, locally relevant actions to help disadvantage group's access to higher education.

Refugees

- Migration is one of the major issues higher education must tackle in the coming decades. EDUC has significant resources in scientific results and professional capabilities in helping local, national and European decision-making, providing good examples and recruiting students from migrant-background.
- Each member should confirm further, locally relevant actions

Health and Sports

- Those members with medical and health sciences education together with clinical facilities/practices, share good practices with the entire Alliance about prevention.

Strategic topics/issues

- Members confirm there relevant actions connected with digitalization, global issues, climate-related issues and the SDGs.

Appendices

D 11.1 Mapping and U2U Report (international)
D 11.2 U2B Report (outreach)
D 11.3 Report on the GPTs

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