Higher Education Internationalization and Quality Assurance in North–South Cooperation

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THE CENTRAL IDEA OF THIS ARTICLE is that internationalising the higher education (HE) system has to depend systemically on quality assurance and vice-versa. At the same time the success of the two processes, internationalization as well as quality assurance, does not mean necessarily getting rid of the local national system or, as some may wrongly think, globalizing by abandoning the local characteristics. It may be, remarkably, relevant and significant to pragmatically use internationalization as a process tool or mechanism to consolidate and enrich the local national system and hence build up the global system by local components. No global system would be attained without being based on the local platform. In fact such a system requires the added value 'quality assurance,' so reaching the internationalization is discovering at first level the local and ensuring its quality.

INTRODUCTION

I am local means I am global, but being global is irrelevant if it does not emerge in a social and historical interaction.

The perceived need for the internationalization of higher education based on diversity entails conditions, weighs on the running of HE institutions and is correlated with quality assurance. Both, internationalization as well as quality assurance, should be considered as a challenge for HE institutions, but, in my opinion, a rewarding challenge. How do we get so many different systems to function together in harmony, while synchronizing the process of quality assurance in the internationalization process? Should we seek only one global sys-

tem of HE or should we take on board all the systems' differences and find solutions for compatibility?

Although, as experts, we varied in the degree to which process we propose a solution or reconsider it, this extremely delicate issue, internationalization of a system and quality assurance in the North–South cooperation, is to be tackled as wisely as possible.[1] Because of different reasons, countries of the South over the decades had never asked questions about internationalisation or even quality, as not only were they structuralizing and regularizing their national HE systems, they were also facing other challenges which were radically different from their counterparts in EU. Their experience should be reconsidered, as it could provide valuable insights into the needs of assisting the HE reform in the South. It is not a question of adjusting, harmonising and making a synergy, but it is a unique and complex situation of assimilating new cultural and social norms more or less different.

THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONALISATION

The Reform of HE announced within the Bologna process principles (1999), then in Prague 2001, Berlin 2003 and Bergen 2005,[2] has not, I believe, achieved its goals since it has not reached the stage of 'the transition.' Therefore, it is necessary to realize such a transition and to move to a new advanced stage: the 'internationalization process.'

What is internationalization? Is it the building of constructive relations between institutions etc.? Should it be considered as a dialogue of educational life, a dialogue between academics, and a dialogue of different kinds of standards? What are the principles of the internationalization of HE? Are they linked to the mobility of institutions or linked to the tools of reaching out to other continents as was asserted at the London meeting of Ministers. To think, objectively, about internationalization without political obsessions and constraints, it is better to go beyond this fashion of successive declarations which shows the spectacular side of events. It is more important to think constructively.

Higher Education as a System

If commentators on the contemporary situation of HE agree about anything, it is that the educational scene is a very special and delicate

kind of world view. Moreover, it is a basic key to thinking and conceiving life. This means that it is also a way of changing the standard of living. If it is so, we have to admit that H E is the most variable generating nucleus and, in consequence of that, H E is usually in a continuous process of changing.

As we know, any conception or any entity is functioning as a cultural social system. Hence, H E is a central cultural social system which should be defined as 'a group of interacting, interrelated, or interdependent elements forming a complex whole, or an organized set of interrelated ideas or principles' (Foulquié 1962). These elements are formulated in a cultural productive context, and are functioning in a certain culture respecting its values and norms.

This harmonized set of elements is also in correlation with different components of culture forming one and only one structure that has its self-regulation (Boudon and Bourricaud 1983), and hence, it is a central nucleus of the 'social engineering.'

The H E system is a tripartite functioning system and it consists of these correlated elements:

1 Creators as major forces, who are academics, administrative staff and students.
2 Knowledge, which is the product designed for society and humanity as a whole, based on methods, programs and pedagogical tools.
3 Spheres, which are institutions and conceptions of building, designed to match the educational and creative process.

How do these elements function? There are numerous conceptions, since they differ in the way they were set up. However, I maintain that what makes any system successful and different from another is the positive dialectics and the interaction based on necessary correlation.

Internationalization as a Process
Regarding the world change, internationalization should be defined as one of two aspects of universality, but it is neither globalization nor one of its synonyms. Even if the latter, as a concept, and as another aspect of universality, dominates the first one without any distinction,

one should differentiate between the two. Each concept has its self logic, and both have, in some contexts, a certain kind of opposition. Any phenomenon, sector or any system could be less globalized and much internationalized, or on the contrary, it could be much globalized and less internationalized (Siroën 2004).[3] Internationalization is not the integration of systems. In fact, integration is an aspect of globalization, the interdependence of systems is the very category of internationalization. In this process, systems are interdependent even though they are different. Thus, 'In other words, globalization internalizes the Externalities between nations and eliminates the interdependences' (Siroën 2004).

Indeed, 'Internationalization is the process of planning and implementing projects so that they can be easily converted for use in different [...] regions.' This definition completely contrasts with what was taken for granted such as 'Internationalization of higher education is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution.' In that sense 'this definition understands internationalization as a process, as a response to globalization ... and as such including both international and local elements'[4] (Knight 2003). In any case, I consider internationalization 'as a process of designing a product (i. e., an item of goods or a service) so that it can be localized without major engineering changes.' Internationalization should be cultivated for its own sake, but it can also have ambiguous ideological finalities, and thus, it is possible to avoid being oriented or guided by any kind of authority.[5]

The major differences between internationalization and globalization to be taken into consideration are presented in table 1.[6]

Internationalization in Europe

In Europe, three decades ago, national universities had started the systemic reform. Such a reform was based 'on national and institutional agendas' (Zgaga 2007, 18). This means that it was a need of the national system itself, or precisely it was a logical and necessary stage for the self-regulation. I have to maintain that every system in a certain stage needs a new dynamism to escape archaism, but more important is the fact that when the system reaches self-sufficiency it could never

TABLE 1   Differences between internationalization and globalization

Internationalization	Globalization
HE equals interdependent institutions.	HE equals integrated institutions without self-governance.
Process of interdependence and inter-institutions cooperation.	Process of integration performed by actors from other sectors.
Elements of HE systems preserve national specific features.	Elements of other systems such as multi-national companies preserve their own specific features.
Auto regulation of the system and self-sufficiency.	Extra-regulation of the system and extra-sufficiency.
In-service of humanity.	In-service of groups of interests.

regenerate its force and ensure the equilibrium of functioning. In such a situation, other alternatives emerge. It was very important that the Eurydice network made the evaluation and stressed the guidelines for the HE reform in Europe. Eurydice drew attention to the major problem; it is that 'the convergent education policies seem more likely to be a by-product of the economic and social policies which, in the context of European integration, underwent a deliberate harmonization process' (Zgaga 2007, 18).

It is noticeable that:

1 Initially the harmonization and other marks of internationalization were a tool for the European social integration; never were they destined for an international standard of HE. This is true and objective, especially at the early stage of internationalization.

2 The interaction between institutions and experts had ended by Bologna Process, which is 'quite a recent achievement and hence also a result of coping with the challenges of mass higher education as well as international trends in higher education' (Zgaga 2007, 18). Obviously the unsaid is that EU higher education had been facing a crisis of some kind. It should be determined as a crisis of falling into the path of archaism, or the falling out of the current use and need, since the so-called 'National University was a product of the 19th century' (Zgaga 2007, 19).

3 The need for synchronizing between the knowledge cognitive time of scientific inventions and the scholastic time of learning had urged E U countries to move to the transnational. Certainly, the gap between the two mentioned times/processes could find effective resolutions at the international level. Such synchronization is also needed at another level, i.e. that of the compatibility, since 'due to the universal character of science and culture, as well as centuries-long academic traditions, certain compatible elements persisted in the otherwise increasingly incompatible national systems' (Zgaga 2007, 19).

Our large concern is to be aware that internationalization in E U systems had started in order to tackle the gap between science and learning, to solve the compatibility and find resolutions for the adaptability considering the world change. The south is also concerned with the same issues as national systems since they are subject to such crises and international influences, for the simple reason that the national systems were – and still are – no more than western calqued copies or hybridized systems. For the situation is that both north and south, together, have to remodel their systems. In south and north, recently or previously, alarm bells of higher education have started ringing.

Principles of Internationalization

The goals of internationalization were determined by experts who made a report on H E in different regions. Most of them asserted that (Djanaeva 2001):

The main rationale for internationalization is: recognition of diplomas and degrees abroad; improvement of educational quality; equal partnership on the global level (higher education institutions, scholars, research teams, faculties, students, etc.); equal participation of higher education institutions in the world educational arena (education, research, debates); participation in the development of the global educators' community; better adjustment to the market economy in a new political and economic environment; learning from the international experience; provision of better opportuni-

ties for citizens in terms of the best world educational standards; and equal employment opportunities.

In order to achieve these goals, I propose to build up internationalization on these principles:

1 Giving rise to the logic of necessity of internationalization. It is not a wish, nor is it a slogan, both are not enough. We have to work together and assess different systems to find out this logic of necessity. Precisely, we need the immanent necessity which is derived from the system itself, not imposed, and not artificial. The only assurance of permanent internationalization and its continuity is the logic of necessity. Internationalization is not precarious or casual, but it is a continuous process. Therefore, our determination/intention should be consolidated by logical reasons, so that it can be recognized by all partners and be very effective.

2 Spreading social and economic conditions, as to some extent we ignored before the determination. The term of a complete internationalization has to be linked to the term of the real qualification and promotion of other linked sectors, especially the social and the economic sectors. Both terms should also be parallel with the cultural productive context. Obviously, we cannot dig up for any construction without landscaping. If not 'How can we internationalize in authoritarian regimes, in societies suffering from hunger and poverty, and distinguished by illiteracy?'

3 The institutional interdependence: every institution can act autonomously, but at the same time this autonomy should be based on the interdependence and the inter-linkage between national and international institutions. It is the interdependence of system elements based on the autonomy of governance. Actors decide together after interaction and debate, and even later, at another stage, they should not think about realizing a collective governance as this leads to globalization. The system depends on relationships between institutions and their counter-

parts elsewhere.[7] Moreover, it is the assumed collective responsibility of the functioning of the system and its regulation. I stress on this principle in order to highlight and ensure the pluralistic and non-hierarchical character of the internationalization of the system.

4 The positive rational secularity engagement. This is not an abstract concern, but it is, only, to draw attention to the complexity of the process, once we do not think scientifically and objectively. One of the central axes to focus on in internationalization is to set aside categories of color, identity and belief. It is a possible system, 'not beyond our reach, in which he and I can jointly affirm our many common identities (even as the warring singularists howl at the gate). We have to make sure, above all, that our mind is not halved by a horizon.' (Sen 2006, 186.) Completely, internationalization depends on how main actors in higher education describe and develop the system and how experts consider what people largely expect to be realized at different various levels. The concept of internationalization and ways of realization may develop concerning the principles, components and bases and even accessibility. In some countries – as it is always asserted in the south – the domains of higher education and scientific fields may be demarcated by the impenetrability of others' experiences and minds, thus experts have a number of serious problems with which to contend. At least the real challenge will be how to change the cultural levels, then, realize a fundamental shift.

Conclusion

As experts in higher education and academics, our mission of internationalization is not easy, thus we have to start by preparing the platform. It is also worth noting that it is by prudence that we should doubt the effective role of ministers and some life-long appointed colleagues in circles of decision, who should not be deeply involved. That does not mean doubting rationality, but it is just a means to avoid the political utilitarianism, as we know that they are restrained by the interests of their parties. My proposal, simply, considers that academics,

students and administrative staff should be the main actors in such a process. Therefore, at this point, the best way towards internationalization is in situations where the 'masters' see themselves more as 'facilitators' and guides to internationalization rather than as 'oracles,' as is often the case.

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No doubt there is a compelling need for internationalization, thus, every institution should be 'for institutions.' It is not about building up a unique system. In such a case we harm H E, but here, it is a matter of different systems coexisting within an institution. This is the real mobility and interaction, and this is the variety that respects differences. As much as we need to defend internationalization, we must not forget about localization.

QUALITY ASSURANCE: OBSTACLES AND PRIORITIES

The most important and controversial new reform on the higher education scene is what is now called 'Quality Assurance' which is a mark of internationalization and a tool at the same time. It is important, because higher education has never been reformed at a wide international level which could lead to a standard global system. Before that, the attention of experts was focused elsewhere and was driven by a set of evolutionary assumptions that regarded higher education as a governmental-public sector or, more precisely, as a public company in which every elected political party executes its own reform programmes. In short and limited vision, it was related to a national policy without a precise and calculated universal goal.

It is controversial, because the reform in the South (still in the process of development) did not concur with the so-called advanced reform in the North, moreover a certain refusal hidden under some pretexts is not convincing. It may, perhaps, be doubted that this attitude refers to a self-made plan. On the contrary, it is not a tool to refuse, but to protest latently against a lack of ability, which was not taken into consideration by the North. It is inevitable to stress that the South has other priorities; one of the most important being 'combating illiteracy.' So, is it a question of quality? Therefore, quality assurance should be in a postponed plan for many countries in the South.

Diagnosis: Obstacles

Remarkably, the higher education system in the South needs to function in line with the E U standards and therefore it is now in a challenging situation. I cannot exclude those countries in the process of development that have already started with the implementation of the Bologna process (such as Tunisia and Morocco), since the outcome has not yet been evaluated. For some other countries, the reform is mere ink on paper. Precisely, it is no more than a political card raised during elections, then it falls into oblivion.

Obviously, an objective diagnosis of the current situation is too dark, to such a degree that one may not see any 'light at the end of the tunnel:'

1 Enrolment in elementary schools is limited and 20% of students fail.
2 Only 60% of students enrol in secondary schools and only 13% of them succeed in entering higher education.
3 10 million students are of school-going age, but they are not able to reach schools for one reason or another, such as poverty.
4 4 million (or even more) graduates and more than 200 thousand who have obtained doctorates and masters degrees are jobless.
5 The average Arab scientific research budget for example, is 0.5% of gross domestic product (G D P).
6 In the Arabic world 70 million people are illiterate, two thirds of them being women (U N D P 2004; 2005).
7 The poverty map is expanding, as more than 100 million poor people can influence and necessitate a certain policy of reform.
8 There is a disequilibrium of orientation without scientific criteria: 64% of students are oriented to arts, social sciences, and 36% to science.

On the other hand, the higher education system itself is:

1 Composed of two different superposed and incompatible systems, one system is traditional and stereotyped (especially in language apprenticing and classics), but the other one is modernized and deracinated from its references. The basic elements

of the latter were built up progressively in the process of the development of HE European experiences. Such a superposition is noticed in the chosen policy of 'patching up' in the third world countries.

2 Sundered from the social and economic side, this means that Higher Education is actually out of the development process (Aherchou 2006).

3 Neglected in the vision of southern citizens regarding their European counterpart. Consequently, there is no remarkable knowledge 'creativity' among Southern societies but a 'brain drain,' and it is meaningless, actually, to speak about a society of knowledge in the South.

It is this situation, or what ever we wish to call the fragile policies in the South, everything turns into obstacles to such a point that it keeps apart even the thought about quality assurance. Thus, how could we find plans for quality assurance implementation? In fact, the rationale is that, in the South, we are on the sill or on the first step of the ladder of reform based on quality assurance. It would be more objective to assert that, for some countries, there is no ladder at all.

Mainly and remarkably, these obstacles are:

1 Fragility and petrifaction of the higher education systems in the South.

2 A regressive and conservative social structure that obstructs any reform.

3 The lack of a complementary social project on which a new policy of higher education should be based, since there is no education promotion without a social one. Basically, the promotion of science is one constituent of social promotion.

4 The paradox of a policy of promoting higher education, which was not based on expertise work team, but proposed or imposed by individuals. Higher education, as a basic necessary sector to empower society must rely on a planned methodical institutional policy. (For example, in Tunisia from 1990 we dealt with 7 facets of programmes of reform, which are fortunately ending now with the Bologna reform. In Syria, the reform is based on

the caprices of ministers, there is no continuity, and whenever they intend to start a reform, it fails before its commencement.)

5 The restriction of planning the development programmes rests in hands of economists, and on excluding those who are in the central education operation.[8]

6 The conditioned execution of International organizations reform, often imposed by the WB without taking into consideration the problem of non-compatibility, the local specifications and the history of development process of higher education in the region. Obviously HE in different countries has a 'memory,' which is worth being taken into consideration. Up to a certain degree, some plans of the IB are bombarding these fragile systems and, paradoxically, they are leading to the opposite side of the intended targets.

INTERNAL COMPLEXITIES

In the South, some countries regard the reform of higher education as a necessity. Others see it as one of the European fashions to be rejected. In general, two wings are differentiated:

1 One wing is scratching the past waiting for a divine inspiration. Paradoxically, they are consuming products of modernity without any need to emulate their counterparts.

2 The other wing is in a preparatory phase represented by North African countries (especially Tunisia and Morocco) including Egypt, and recently Lebanon. Experts in these countries are working continuously on the applicability of quality assurance criteria. This is done mainly by supporting 'staff to provide a quality service that meets the institutions needs' and adopting the LMD system.

Furthermore, I should draw their attention to two major problems:

1 Until now, they have been focusing on structure (LMD) rather than on contents (programmes). The structure has no meaning without its contents.

2 They are not dealing with the compatibility and the harmonization, which are basic issues of international competitiveness.

By adopting different ways, they should not proceed in a climate of confusion. Focusing on the Tunisian experience, as an example seeking to realize the HE reform by being in line with the Bologna Process, it is important to re-evaluate it since other countries should be guided by this model. Basically, they have to gain the positive points and reject deficiency. Generally, Tunisia has a very fragile economy because it is based on tourism and services; therefore building up the society of knowledge is more than a priority, it is a vital strategic plan. HE education, in this plan, is highly considered, therefore, technocrats have determined some essential goals such as:

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1 Building up the society of knowledge by realizing the BP principle 'lifelong learning,'[9] forming competencies and leaders in management and entrepreneurship. This could be achieved by development of methods, enriching contents and providing new pedagogical tools.

2 At the institutional level, the universities should have their self-autonomy and should also be multi-specialized universities and non-sectarian.

3 Adopt measures and instruments to regularize yearly the HE system, by taking into consideration systems in OCDE and EU, and using the CITE and the European indexes in the evaluation.

4 In 2009, 50% of teenagers are supposed to reach the higher education (around 500.000 students).

5 Improving the index of graduation of engineering and science from 9.5/1000 to 11/1000 in 2009, and continuing this upgrade in order to reach the European indexes.

6 6% of the national budget is for higher education, and 16% for education and training.

7 In 2009, students can choose from among 1000 choices/specialties.

8 In 2009, more than 50,000 students are expected to enroll in IT.

9 By the end of 2008, more than 470 HE agreements were signed with foreign universities concerning joint degrees, accreditation, and joint courses. This is a triangular partnership with Euro-Mediterranean, American and Japanese institutions.[10]

Needless to say, that some goals are still in shadow, and some efforts are still insufficient, particularly, concerning mobility of the teaching staff and students. In fact, there are no clear programs in this sense, and there is no visibility for the ministerial plan. Even the appreciated individual initiatives of professors and rectors are not structuralized. Tempus and Erasmus projects are not enough, as the national system itself has to prepare projects on its own budget without dependence on external grants. Also notable is the lack of flexibility and creativity of programs, since the central bureaucracy is still obstructing new proposals which should be ratified by perpetual ministerial 'masters.' Recently, the focus in Tunisia started to be on contracting between the ministry and institutions, and this may solve such a problem. Actually the major problem of this experience is that this policy of internationalizing or, precisely, reaching and emulating the EU counterparts is part of an intergovernmental or 'inter-ministerial forum.' It was considered, latently, as a political affair, but on the contrary, it has to be conceived as an educational affair which is by all norms an interuniversity affair. Strategically thinking, a very sharp educational policy may help in the social integration in the union for the Mediterranean, as it was for the EU, and even more, this policy should give priority to not being left on the margins of discussions.

Priorities

Although the South is concerned with bringing quality assurances into line with the HE internationalization, this will never take place unless priorities are determined. In other words, the South has to inaugurate a preparatory phase in the social and political environment by:

1 Reforming the political systems internally: as long as higher education staff does not work in a democratic atmosphere, every reform will not be conceived as a patriotic project that concerns 'the nation.' Never will it be a political card of a mono-party state. Accepting quality assurance should be based on a culture of entente and freedom, since the rule is 'I am not free, so I am not thinking.' This is a collective target to be realized, not an introduction to some political interests. As a rule, also, thinking

quality assurance is immanent, a process in itself, and 'Quality is for Quality.' Externally, quality assurance is not in essence an intergovernmental project. Contrary to that, it must be a higher education inter-universities process. If not, any trouble between governments affects the project negatively.

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2 Changing the cultural social standards in Southern countries, since before planning to reform higher education experts have to incorporate a preliminary plan in order to change the cultural vision. First, it is by changing the vision of the North and getting rid of the conspiracy idea. In science, the North is neither an enemy nor is it a colonizer, as science is an intrusive phenomenon. Second, it is by struggling against illiteracy. 'Education for all means a society of knowledge.' Third, it is by enhancing social welfare, because individuals in a poor society do not even search for the quality of bread, so how could they care for the quality in higher education? Quality assurance is also not an isolated phenomenon as well.

3 Promoting the infrastructure of the South to apply quality assurance in the institutions, as well as in programmes and by qualifying the staff. It is clear, e. g., that practice is one measure of guaranteeing quality. Labs, computers, and sophisticated machines in medicine are beyond the capability of under-developed countries. I agree with the mobility and flexibility – no doubt about that – but we had better think about funds' transferability allocated to found institutions in the South which function in accordance with EU standards and by respecting diversity. Needless to say – and being based on proofs – the allocated grants given to the South by the EU or by other international organizations are obtained by western companies, institutions and experts in the international tenders, while the South is getting but 'odds and ends.'

4 Within a process of a transnational education and, simultaneously, let us think about promoting higher education in all villages of one country itself, and decentralizing it. We had better join our efforts to work on establishing institutions of higher education in 'shadow areas' or 'distant areas.' I mean that higher

education must reach the un-reached. We have to think about Algeria, Syria, Mauritania, Morocco, Libya and different countries of Africa.

Proposed Plan

Details aside, quality assurance in higher education, was, and is, a response to a changing knowledge order and not, or at least not so much, an economic one. It has consisted of an attempt, or a series of attempts, to come to terms – global terms – 'with a certain and emerging international community.'

1 Enabling the South on the cultural level: this is a North–South mission. In order to introduce the culture of quality assurance we have to work together by forming multinational 'follow-up' teams of experts able to reach every country. Essentially, these teams should elaborate a new higher education strategy that can lead to a different vision for the South of itself, to the 'other,' to the facts and to the future. New conceptions and concepts have to be based on objective perspectives.

2 Forming national teams: Their role consists of planning for the compatibility between theoretical and practical levels in higher education. Participants should be drawn from all social shareholders. The South should also derive benefit from some experiences: 'BIBB in Germany, the Australian Training Framework, Progression Roots in the UK and South Korea, JSPS in Japan, National Council for Working Forces in Singapore.'

3 Before execution and realization, we 'expect a series of national reforms, possibly being inspired by those countries that have recently reformed their systems in line with the Bologna process' (Hog 1999, 5). Surely, this has to be by European assistance. Experts have to supervise these reforms since there is a risk of non-concerted reform.

4 Promoting and changing methods in education by accommodating them to the 'third modality:' labs, virtual labs, computers, modelling and stimulation ... in such a modality, necessarily, we have to understand that the relation in education has changed

from the relation man-man to man-machine, as a matter of fact, we are aware of a certain kind of alienation (Mrayaty 2006).

5 Enhancing the level and grades of teaching staff to strengthen the teaching programs and reinforce curriculum development (e. g. in Tunisia only 15% of the teaching staff are able to supervise students in M A and Doctorate). [255]

6 Considering the diversity, which is another basis of internationalization and quality: the South has to search for new providers from abroad, because students in the process of competitiveness 'have a real possibility to choose from a spectrum of different types of education from inland and abroad' (Hog 1999, 6). If it is so, the first criterion of choice will be certainly that of quality assurance.

Conclusion

Quality assurance is not a fashion, but it is a new age in international education, in which we have to live. The idea of cooperation nowadays is meaningless out of this age. The South has to intend to live within this age, but intention alone is not enough as there are some constraints to be overcome. The South alone cannot perform and realize such a required quality, as 'It takes two to tango. There are different goals to be reached in this process of world change, the most important being to help create environments that cultivate diversity, create introspection about individuals' often skewed perceptions of others, and inspire appreciations of difference' (Davis and Richards 2008, 259). Thus internationalization correlated to quality assurance is a tool to a world multicultural learning community, when we engage ourselves, as academics, to prepare multicultural programs systems that will be flexible and pluralistic. This will then facilitate the international social integration based on mutual understanding. Being positive, all together, we have to be aware that H E (as well as science) is an authentic means to achieve universality.

Given the crucial situation of different institutions, in the south as well as in the north, the Internationalization of Higher Education has now become imperative. It is relevant to assert that major turning points in this millennium are and have to be accompanied by educa-

tional reforms and changes. From an analytic perspective I made clear the basic dialectics and relationships between education and social, economic and political development, as I did emphasise that Education at all levels is a world view. With changes affecting positively our life, such a dual process is inevitable.

Internationalization and quality assurance have to go hand in hand in the new process considering all levels of dialectics. So, internationalization is guided and shaped by quality assurance, and quality assurance is guided and shaped by internationalization. Internationalization and quality assurance processes should be conceived as 'heads or tails,' or else they will not exist at all.

Once this process has been started, as a real step, not an illusory one, the one depending on the other, HE teams have to ask not only what internationalization can do for quality assurance, but also what quality assurance can do for internationalization. It is, in fact, credibility based on a rigorous scientific approach which builds this 'core process.'

As for systems of HE, we have to come up with a solution, which is evidently no more than what is called 'Pluribus Unum.' This is to state that it is 'out of one many,' 'within one many' or 'system of systems.' We encourage only efficient systems, we promote their programmes as sub-systems and we grant them possible privileges.

NOTES

1 How can we define South and North? Which is the North and which is the South? Does the term 'North' or 'South' designate a geographical, political or even economic reference? Does the North or the South represent one people or several? What distinguishes the one from the other? In my opinion, it is more efficient to use the HE rankings of institutions, as there are pioneering institutions in countries of both sides, and there are also institutions which are not upgraded. Precisely, by North and South I am referring to the Medieterreanean and European Union, but I have to affirm that these terms (north and south) are used by the UN to refer to two categories of countries: countries that are considered developed, and developing countries in terms of economy, industrialization, globalization, standard of living, health, education.

2 It is very important for those who are interested in BP to read the First report of the Working Group on the External Dimension of the Bologna Process (Zgaga 2006).

3 As Siroën had asserted that the international is not the global, we have also to emphasize that the global is not the local.

4 We should ask this question: is the process of internationalisation of higher education in Asia different from other regions or shall we re-consider some specificity?

5 See Bourdieu (1994). It is noticeable that internationalization 'con-trasts with localization, which is the adapting of a product to a specific country, region, language, dialect, culture, etc.'

6 Inspired from the table of differences drawn by Jean-Marc Siroën (2004).

7 See this idea in Peterson and Shackleton (2002, 350).

8 In Saudi Arabia, the reform is proposed by the Sheikh of Islam, three years ago Sheikh Salah Kamel, who is an 'oil capitalist,' got the courage to lecture about how the reform of education should be based on an Islamic method, which is ambiguous!

9 It is supposed that the lifelong learning system enables more than 8000 to reach universities. Yet, I have to state that there is a gender balance quite equal to the European. Thus, 57% of students are females, 38% of teaching staff in universities are females. As for the average of success in higher education, it is about 70%.

10 For more details see Lamlumi (2008). See also www.tunichallenge.com.

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