

# INTERNATIONALIZATION CONCEPT - INTEGRATING A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE IN UCN PHYSIOTHERAPY PROGRAM

Starting from the first semester, UCN is taking initiatives to progressively implement the concept of internationalization at home (IaH) throughout the course of its physiotherapy programme. The initiatives include research and development activities as well as competency development, thus offering students and staff unique opportunities to interact with international peers. This article aims at describing these IaH implementation initiatives and to show how lecturers, clinical supervisors and students perceive the impact of international strategies on our students' professional and personal development. We interviewed staff and students who had been in contact with international students in Denmark. In general, lecturers and clinical supervisors report that the IaH initiatives have had a positive impact on local students, emphasizing that they need to be well-prepared before embarking on an exchange period. The students explained how valuable internationalization had been to their professional development and suggested that IaH initiatives could broaden local students' participation in international exchange experiences.

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## INTRODUCTION

Growing demand for updated, highly skilled professionals with intercultural competencies and excellent language skills (Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Hennings, 2018) has spurred a global trend among

higher education programmes to support internationalization initiatives. In Europe, this trend was intensified by the greater integration resulting from the establishment of the European Union (De Wit, 2002; Beelen & Jones, 2015). The most widely accepted definition of internationalization is "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight, 2004). In practice, this approach aims to enhance the intercultural skills and global understanding of both students and staff when applied directly to

formal and informal curricula as well as to extra-curricular activities (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Some potential benefits and costs of the internationalization of higher education have been suggested (Jibeen & Khan, 2015) based on information obtained from different studies. The positive aspects they highlighted included higher academic quality and the fostering of desirable international competencies in students. Some potential downsides are commercialization of the concept, unequal opportunities in the various countries and poorer quality of education. High school students have pointed out that the

benefits of internationalized education include not only enhanced competencies related directly to the educational exchange programme, but also skills related to the whole experience, such as open mindedness, fluency in a second language, flexible thinking, tolerance, and respect for others (Hayden, Thompson & Williams, 2003).

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that if the encouragement of internationalization abroad – also known as cross-border education or student international mobility (Knight, 2006) – is the only way of implementing the internationalization concept, its impact on most students who are exposed to neither intercultural learning nor international experience will be limited.

Therefore, initiatives to further explore the individual experience of internationalization abroad must be taken so that its benefits can be offered to more students and promote their professional development. Furthermore, in order to achieve the proposed goals, this strategy must include relevant international topics and discussions as well as challenging global problems that can be approached and investigated locally.

Applying this concept, known as Internationalization at Home (IaH), to the physiotherapy curriculum means bringing relevant issues and solutions developed worldwide to teaching and projects, challenging the students to apply globally relevant concepts locally, and increasing the curiosity and creativity of staff and students. Nonetheless, although the IaH concept has been implemented throughout the UCN's three-and-a-half-year physiotherapy curriculum, it is relevant to investigate *how this internationalization strategy impacts the development of UCN physiotherapy students and whether it promotes the development of intercultural competencies among local students who do not*



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Illustration of the development of intercultural skills and global understanding.

*experience an international exchange.* To this end, the article will provide a theoretical framework for underpinning this investigation as well as for supporting our data collection methods.

#### AIMS

In the light of our empirical investigation, which will be described in section 3, the aim of this article is to describe the current initiatives taken to implement the IaH concept within the UCN physiotherapy programme, and furthermore to show how local staff and students perceive the impact of international strategies on our students' professional and personal development. This article will also present future perspectives on how to better explore such strategies for fostering international and intercultural competencies in a larger number of local students.

#### METHODS

**Internationalization at Home (IaH) as a theoretical framework for investigating the impact of the internationalization concept on the UCN physiotherapy programme curriculum.**

The theoretical starting point for this article is found in the IaH theory,

as presented by Beelen and Jones (2015) in the article "Redefining Internationalization at Home". In this article, the authors introduce a new perspective on internationalization and evaluate previous definitions of internationalization as inadequate, for example, in relation to an international curriculum only being for foreign students and not for local students in a domestic context. According to Beelen and Jones, both formal and informal learning activities (i.e., social activities) can potentially stimulate the development of international and intercultural competencies in all students. Furthermore, the article argues that although participation in activities abroad may be an advantage for some students, such participation need not be a requirement.

Internationalization at Home (IaH) has been defined as "Any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound students and staff mobility" (Crowther et al. 2001, p. 8). However, this definition is very broad, lacking a description of the components of IaH and omitting a specific definition of international activities. Besides, the concept has been criticized for focusing

excessively on methods rather than on learning outcomes or quality indicators. Therefore, Beelen and Jones (2015) suggest another definition as follows: "Internationalization at Home is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments".

## DATA COLLECTION

### *Description of current Internationalization at Home initiatives*

The study investigators are part of the UCN Physiotherapy Coordination team and have gathered information about the initiatives taken to implement the IaH concept in our department. They have additionally registered the number of participants through a local database shared with the team for the period between 2012 and 2019. Data from previous years was not available, and data from 2020 was not included, since it may not be representative due to the effects of the current global pandemic.

### *Interviews*

#### **Participants**

Theoretical lecturers from the UCN Department of Physiotherapy (TL), UCN physiotherapy students (ST) and clinical practice supervisors (CP) from collaborating institutions were invited to take part in this investigation.

The inclusion criteria were that: 1. a participant had to be a student, teacher or clinical supervisor currently involved in theoretical or clinical activities at the UCN Department of Physiotherapy and 2. a participant had to have taken part in international initiatives (abroad or not) in the last two years.

Those not responding to the investigators' contact attempts were excluded.

All participants received written information about the project and were informed that the information

collected would be processed anonymously and stored in UCN password-protected systems.

#### **Data collection and processing**

The participants were contacted via e-mail by one investigator, PBS, with a brief description about the investigation's background and aim followed by a specific set of questions for each participant category, namely, students, theoretical lecturers, and clinical practice supervisors. If participants failed to respond, another investigator, LEH, contacted them for a second and final attempt to include their perspectives in the data. Both correspondence and interviews were carried out in Danish via e-mail. PBS analysed the answers, focusing on the IaH concept and effect of the initiatives on local students. Afterwards, the points of interest were translated into English. Subsequently, the participants were contacted to verify the resulting interpretation and possibly to answer follow-up questions.

#### **Questions**

All participants received the same set of questions presented below.

The follow-up questions were specific to the various participant categories.

1. Do you think that interaction with incoming students has had any significance for local physiotherapy students in terms of their international and intercultural competencies? If so, how?
2. How do you think that interaction with incoming students can affect local physiotherapy students' international communication skills?
3. How do you think the exchange of clinical practice contributes to the subject in a more global context?
4. Do you have any other comments?

Follow-up questions:

Theoretical lecturers and clinical practice supervisors: 1. In your perspective, how are Danish students who do not go abroad affected by international mobility?

Students: 1. How do you think we could make an international experience more relevant for local UCN physiotherapy students?

2. Before participating in the international exchange programme, did you get inspiration or information in some other way from fellow students who have undertaken an exchange abroad?

## RESULTS

### **Participants' responses**

We contacted six theoretical lecturers, three clinical practice supervisors and five students. We excluded the replies from two theoretical lecturers, since the initial contact and questions did not follow the methods described above. The results present the contributions of the four theoretical lecturers (two female and two male), three female clinical supervisors and two female students who all answered our questions before the deadline for this article's submission.

### **Internationalization at Home in the UCN physiotherapy programme**

The UCN physiotherapy programme has progressively implemented IaH from the first semester throughout the physiotherapy programme. Our department has developed a policy that stimulates and supports competency development initiatives for administrative and teaching personnel, enabling them to upgrade their knowledge and skills in areas such as administration, didactics, and pedagogy. This strategy has a special focus on current discussions about advances within physiotherapy evidence-based practice (Leask, 2015).



Logo of the international institutions that promote conferences about professional practice and education and international mobility.<sup>1</sup>



This approach leads to our educators participating broadly in relevant international courses, forums, and conferences, such as World Confederation of Physical Therapy Congress, European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education (ENPHE) and the Consortium of Institutes of Higher Education in Health and Rehabilitation in Europe (COEHRE). Moreover, UCN professors and students have engaged in international collaborations with a range of projects aimed at developing international courses, promoting health in vulnerable communities, and designing research activities to support evidence-based clinical practice. Such collaborations boost incoming and outgoing mobility for students and staff, establishing a dynamic learning environment that is extended to include local colleagues and fellow students, and thereby motivating them and increasing their awareness of global challenges and solutions within physiotherapy practice.

Another strategy to incorporate current international knowledge in our teaching content and methods is to invite international guests to share their knowledge and skills with our staff and students. We have welcomed highly recognized physiotherapists who have done outstanding work within research, education and clinical practice. Such initiatives have received excellent feedback from participants in master classes and conferences for local physiotherapy

professionals and UCN staff and from participants in theoretical and practical teaching sessions by international guest lecturers.

From the second year on, a group of physiotherapy students are invited to participate in relevant seminars and conferences, such as ENPHE and COEHRE. Both organizations aim to foster an environment where participants can exchange ideas, thereby enhancing the level of education in the given areas. Participating students are encouraged to share their international experience in extra-curricular informal students' meetings where they can inspire and stimulate the curiosity of their fellow students.

Every year, several students participate in a course developed in collaboration with institutions offering degree programmes in physiotherapy in Iceland, Finland, Sweden and Lithuania. This intensive course takes place in one of the participant institutions to encourage both incoming and outgoing student mobility, depending on the venue. The course, which is supported by the Nordplus programme (Nordplus Handbook, 2019), aims at facilitating exchange between educators and students from the different countries. It provides theoretical teaching and group work across the institutions, thus also promoting IaH activities for local students.

Elective courses for seventh-semester students are offered as another alternative to internationalization for both incoming and

outgoing students. UCN students decide how to construct their six-week, self-customized elective course, which they do in the last semester of their degree programme. The course may take place in Denmark or abroad. Incoming students will have taken part in the international theoretical elective course that our department offers in English every semester. The "Movement, Function and Pain" course, whose theme is clinical decision-making focusing on movement, function, and pain, introduces students to different perspectives on pain treatment in bio-medical, psychological and sociocultural contexts. The course content, curriculum and learning approach are based on the UCN model, RPL (Horn et al., 2020), which combines international research and evidence-based practical application in real-life cases with the practice of manual, communication, and reasoning skills. In this way, students are offered a combination of theoretical and practical teaching, as well as discussion forums and workshops based on clinical cases, they identify themselves. Within this context, international students are invited to share their perspectives and experiences, and the differences and similarities they observe will be included in discussions with local students. In some instances, local teachers have invited international patients to share their journey with chronic pain and answer questions from our students. This structure provides a learning environment

<sup>1</sup> World Physiotherapy is the operating name of World Confederation for Physical Therapy, that advocates for the profession at an international level by collaborating with our member organisations. \*COEHRE is a learning organisation preoccupied with issues regarding the education and training of health and social care professionals across the European Union. \* ENPHE is the leading Knowledge Forum related to Physiotherapy Higher Education in Europe that anticipates trends and forces in the changing society that shape professional practice and education. \* The Nordplus Programme offers financial support between partners in the area of lifelong learning from the eight participating countries and three autonomous regions in the Baltic and Nordic area.

that gives international and local students the opportunity to learn about pain as a concept as well as acquire critical thinking and general skills, while fostering their awareness of current practices, latest developments, and relevant problems yet to be investigated within the area (Case, 2013; Killick, 2015).

Finally, our department is part of an international collaboration offering clinical practice as part of exchange programmes. This means physiotherapy students who are interested and who fulfil the prerequisites can carry out their mandatory clinical education abroad. Current agreements give outgoing students the opportunity to experience the professional environment, clinical practice, and discussions in such widely different places as Australia, Austria, Belgium, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Indonesia, Norway, and Spain. In return, the UCN physiotherapy department works with local partners to offer these international exchange students a practical clinical education programme alongside Danish students.

**International Mobility**

Although a quantitative analysis may not adequately reflect the impact of our department’s international approach, the mobility numbers show how much international exchange the Department of Physiotherapy at UCN has promoted. The following figure shows in how many staff (Figure 3) and students (Figure 4) have been internationally mobile since 2012.

Staff mobility has fluctuated over the past eight years (Figure 3), with outgoing mobility ranging from eight staff members in 2013 to 27 in 2017. On average, about 18 staff per year taught or undertook research abroad, corresponding to about 45% of our department’s staff. Several studies demonstrate that, for the IaH concept to be successfully implemented, academic staff must develop internationalization competencies, offer qualified support for and develop the formal and informal activities that stimulate the targeted learning outcomes for a broader group of students (Slotte and Stadius, 2019). Incoming staff mobility rose from two staff

members in 2013 to 14 in 2015. This highlights the importance of investing resources in implementing partnerships such as Nordplus, which boosted incoming staff mobility in 2015 and 2019 (yellow columns - Figure 3).

Student outgoing mobility in our department has been stable and on average exceeds our goal of 40 outgoing students per year (green and yellow columns - Figure 4). This corresponds to about 10% of our third- to seventh-semester students having the possibility to participate in international exchange activities. Our outgoing students are clearly more interested in taking clinical training programmes in other countries than in Denmark, with an average of 36 studying abroad each year (green columns - Figure 4). Incoming mobility is distinctly more variable and lower, with 16 students per year on average (blue and orange columns - Figure 4). The figures fluctuate more for incoming students wishing to take theoretical courses, and the figures for this type of mobility were distinctly higher when our department hosted the Nordplus Intensive Course, receiving 30 and 22 students from six other institutions of higher education in 2015 and 2019, respectively.

**Perspectives of lecturers and clinical supervisors**

“The presence of incoming exchange students in theoretical and practical environments have potentially a relevant repercussion in local physiotherapy students that do not experience international exchange activities themselves. According to TL#1, who has taught incoming students in Denmark, the extent and relevance of such an impact requires that the exchange student is ready to take the initiative and interact with local fellow students and teachers. In her words, “they must be dressed up to *get out into the world*”. Among other things,

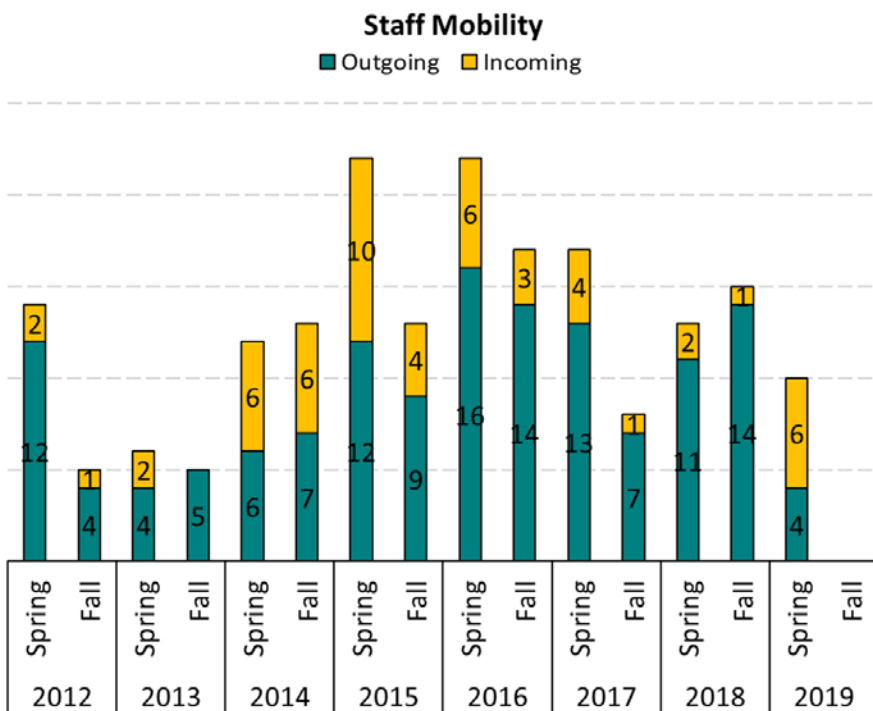
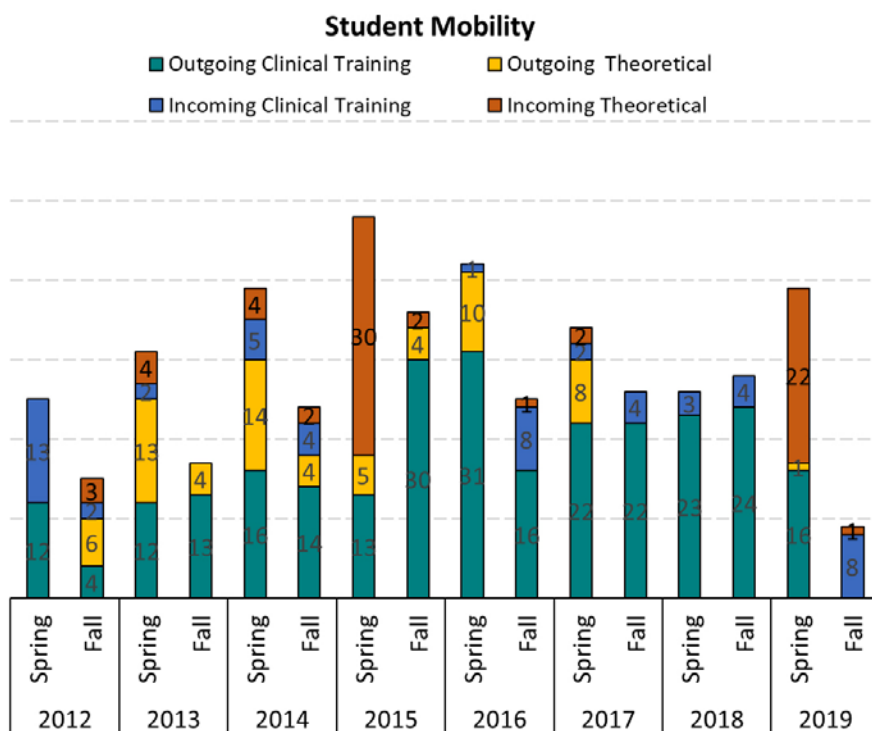


Figure 3: Outgoing (green) and incoming (yellow) staff mobility, spring and fall semesters from 2012 to 2019.



**Figur 4:** Student mobility, outgoing and incoming for clinical training (green and blue, respectively) and for theoretical studies (yellow and orange, respectively).

limited language skills may present a big challenge in addition to the academic demands. In TL#2's experience, "the Danish students are reluctant to sign up for an elective course taught in English". She believes one reason may be that the students are unsure whether their language skills are good enough. Moreover, according to her, the students that chose to participate in courses taught in English said the opportunity to strengthen their language skills was a motivating factor. TL#2 observed further that the environment provided by the international elective course exposes local students to other teaching and learning approaches, stimulating a meta perspective and so enhancing their critical thinking about the learning environment. At the same time, as both TL#2 and TL#3 pointed out, local students are required to reflect more deeply when sharing knowledge and working in groups with foreign students. They both observed that local students have to take many factors into

consideration, for example, when working on clinical reasoning with students who have different backgrounds and approaches to physiotherapy practice. Furthermore, according to TL#3, it should be noted that the above-mentioned characteristics require foreign students to become integrated and to actively participate in learning activities. In some instances, however, both TL#1 and TL#3 described that the incoming students seem withdrawn and did not participate in the discussions and activities offered, while in others, they were active and engaged. Therefore, it seems crucial to emphasize that local staff and students must be prepared and committed to integrating exchange student, as this serves to create a welcoming environment where both local and incoming students can realize the full potential of the exchange.

On a similar note, international guests invited to teach master classes and courses on our campuses every semester may distinctively

impact local students. TL#4, who had participated in a master class, suggested that "such an initiative gives students the opportunity to become acquainted with specialization and illustrates the nature of the physiotherapy programme as a basic education. Since the task of basic education is to build a stable foundation for a subject involving lifelong learning, it is healthy for the student to dream ahead and meet people who are passionate about and have excelled in a specific area of physiotherapy". Nonetheless, he has a relevant observation on the students' aptitude and preparation before meeting such skilled, clever and experienced professionals: "The challenge is to figure out when the students are ready to take part on a specialization. Do they benefit professionally from master classes, or are the stakes too high? Should they rather be offered an experience that primarily aims to stimulate their curiosity, attention and commitment to their own learning and profession?"

Likewise, when asked about how international clinical exchange students impact local physiotherapy students, CP#1, who had taught clinical practice to a few international students, affirmed that: "the degree of competence development is very person-dependent". According to her, "the extent to which a local individual student has the extra time and energy required to engage with foreign students varies greatly". The clinical educator has an important role in stimulating this process and setting an example to local students. She raises another important aspect, namely, that the opportunity to meet foreign students is granted arbitrarily to a few students, rather than being a personal student choice. Therefore, some students may feel uneasy about the forthcoming experience. She illustrates this sort of occurrence with an episode where a local student describes how it felt to be

assigned to a clinical practice group along with exchange students: “if I knew that I was going to be with foreign students at the internship, I would not have applied for a place here – I am afraid of losing too much guidance.” However, a couple of weeks later, the same student expressed a very different view: “it is already clear to me that the gain from exchange is greater than the loss of guidance. The foreign students are academically proficient and happy to share their knowledge and experience with us Danish students”. All in all, from CP#1’s perspective, the academic benefits of international exchange are clear: “the insights and new perspectives gained are absolutely worth the extra investment, courage, energy and commitment invested by all parties involved”. At the same time, her experience supports the notion expressed by the theoretical lecturers above – that our local students are somewhat reluctant to interact with international students, especially when assigned randomly to an international clinical practice group.

In general, CP#1, CP#2 and CP#3 are all satisfied with the exchange programme, emphasizing that the incoming students are skilled and well-prepared, adding value to the clinical practice environment because they bring different perspectives and experiences to the group.

CP#3 further observed that the interaction between local and international students during clinical practice gave them an opportunity to reflect on their own education structure, organization and content. Such interaction promotes the development of competencies such as a global understanding of physiotherapy. An example in point is how different countries strike a balance between developing theoretical background knowledge and developing

practical skills, and how their national professional practice reflects this. She illustrates this by describing how students became aware “that the degree of independence expected from Danish students in their clinical practice was different or less pronounced in Belgium”. Moreover, CP#2 highlighted the motivational aspect underlying such exchanges, in the sense that the fresh perspectives incoming students may have about local practices can increase local students’ awareness and understanding as well as change their perceptions about local clinical practice and culture. In her words “the opportunity to discuss and exchange experiences with international students can make local students even better informed about the advantages and disadvantages of their local professional structure when they compare it to that of other countries”.

#### **The students’ perception of how their stay abroad affected them**

A local student who had participated in international conferences with students and staff from other higher education institutions declared how valuable the experience is and recommends anyone who can afford it to study abroad. According to her, the experience has strengthened her international competencies and her communication skills, not only by compelling her to converse in a foreign language, but also by giving her an understanding of other countries’ strengths as well as the particularities of their professional practice and educational methods. As such, the experience gave her a better perspective about where Denmark stands in the global context of physiotherapy education and practice. In her words, “It is an exchange that to a large extent makes it possible to learn from one another”.

The second contributing student

attended the most recent intensive course, held in Aalborg. She described how valuable the experience with incoming students has been to her professional development. She indicated how different perspectives and approaches to learning and practising the profession affected her perception of her role as physiotherapist as well as her appreciation of knowledge and skills development. At the same time, she said she does not believe her experience has had any meaning to her local peers in terms of intercultural competencies, an opinion that highlights a gap that will be investigated further. In this way, initiatives aimed at promoting interaction between students who have been abroad and those who have not may have a more lasting and decisive effect on both groups’ education.

When asked the follow-up questions to complement her input, the student answered that she found it difficult to suggest how we could develop future initiatives to boost the local impact of internationalization activities, since she has always been personally motivated to work on international activities, and the opportunity of an international exchange was a factor that motivated her to embark on the physiotherapy programme. At the same time, she stated that she was also inspired by the information on the UCN website, especially by a presentation where other students discussed their formal and informal international experiences during their participation in the elective course “Physiotherapy in Africa: applying physiotherapy in a global context” that had taken place in Rwanda. Interestingly, she pointed out that some students know little about international activities, either because they are not interested or because they think participation is complicated. She believes that personal experiences could have a more powerful effect on local students if

presented through videos, cases, or other presentational forms to involve these students more closely.

## DISCUSSION

The numbers of internationally mobile students and staff at the UCN physiotherapy department have exceeded our goals. However, as mentioned before, the internationalization approach does not apply to mobility only, and the numbers do not adequately reflect the effects of this process on our students' education and professional life. Indeed, only a minority of the students will experience internationalization abroad. According to one student, Danish students could share their personal experience with international peers to a greater extent with their peers and thereby help to integrate internationalization into the local learning environment. Social media platforms, which provide a familiar language and environment for all students, could support this sharing experience. As Beelen and Jones proposed (2015), the formal and informal learning activities provided by this type of interaction may give rise to opportunities, perspectives,

reflections and new knowledge, for local students as well, and thus promote the development of international competencies, also for those who do not attend a study exchange programme. Similarly, the informal sharing of knowledge and common practice between lecturers and clinical coordinators can broaden the individual experience, enabling others to benefit from the knowledge and experience acquired by their colleagues.

Additionally, according to our results, incoming exchange students can add new perspectives to both theoretical and practical discussions and thus contribute to the development of intercultural competencies among local students who do not intend to or cannot afford to take part in an exchange programme (Raby, 2007).

The results seem to indicate that the different modalities of laH integrated into our curriculum could enrich our students' development. However, it is crucial that all students interacting with international peers abroad or at home are prepared and receive support to cope with the initial challenges associated with such experiences. In this way, initiatives that prepare staff to work with local students may have a positive effect on the impact of international activities for

local students, by giving them a solid foundation for daring to engage in such challenging experiences.

Such observations are supported by Beelen and Jones' considerations regarding the successful implementation of laH.

According to them, it is crucial that academic staff support students to fulfil their goals, and an investment in developing the internationalization competencies of staff is crucial therein (Beelen and Jones, 2015).

In conclusion, the inputs from staff,

external collaborators and students indicate that the current initiatives to implement the laH concept within the UCN physiotherapy programme have effectively promoted the development of international competencies; however, the local impact could be improved by boosting the interaction between exchange students and students who otherwise would not have the chance to be exposed to an international experience. Nonetheless, for internationalization both abroad and at home, it is imperative that staff have developed competencies for preparing and supporting the students, so they are ready to engage and learn.

## LIMITATIONS

A few factors that may affect the results and conclusion of this study must be highlighted: the lack of response from students who have in some way taken part in local or international activities, and the absence of perspectives from local UCN students who did not directly participate in international activities. The latter is particularly important given that the perspectives of local students with no international experience would have an exceptional value and unparalleled relevance for supporting the current initiatives and/or for implementing future ones and thus strengthen the impact of international strategies for local students.

## FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

In keeping with the UCN mission "We develop North Jutland", our programme's international strategy aims to teach international competencies that can help creating sustainable growth and welfare. By having UCN's own strong didactics and learning models as a foundation for all external collaborations, we intend to support the development of teaching and research activities aimed at creating and translating knowledge, competencies and skills that are

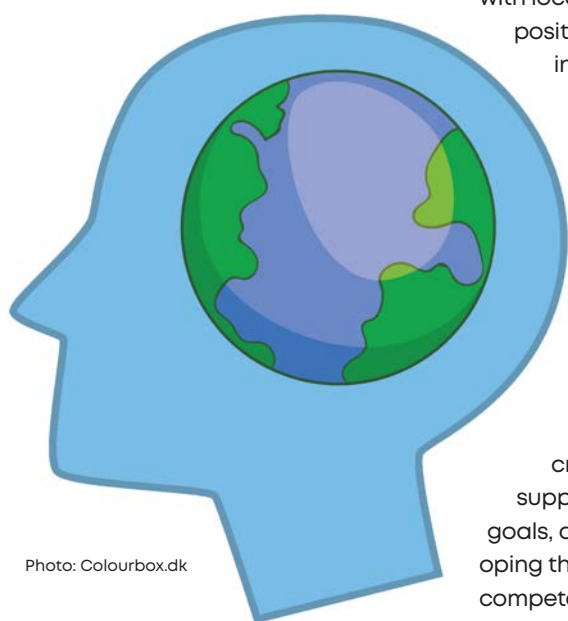


Photo: Colourbox.dk

Illustration of the development of global perspective and competencies.



internationally relevant not only to our students and staff, but also to the profession and to society.

Currently, the UCN International Office is preparing a mobility campaign intended to better connect students while abroad through video cases where the students themselves present their experience away from home. In this way, students can share their knowledge about the exchange experience and other cultures in a simple manner and in a familiar space (the social media), thus giving local students a tangible, simple source of information that allows them to interact and participate at some level. This sort of initiative has the potential to broaden the reach that the international activities have developed and will be supported and encouraged in our programme.

Outgoing international mobility in our department has been stable and corresponds to our goal of having about 40 students participating per year. As regards incoming mobility, we aim to offer more international courses and boost the participation of exchange students in our current international elective course in order to enhance the experience for local students.

At the UCN physiotherapy programme, we have continuously worked from a strategic perspective, immersing ourselves in a global and international mindset that focuses on embracing the world. Accordingly, our efforts aim to support ongoing collaborations and projects and further strengthen the development of an internationally recognized research-based curriculum in the bachelor's programme. We also intend to further support the development of international master's programmes or courses. Moreover, we strive to support established international cooperation within our programme in terms of developing our curriculum and research. Another

important parameter for us is a high degree of reciprocal student mobility. Our efforts to broaden the global aspect of our students' education are guided by education, health care, and management as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), all of which build a foundation on which students can become citizens increasingly aware of their professional role in a global

context. The observations presented here correspond with this approach and demonstrate that the international concept proposed – with initiatives abroad and at home – contributes broadly to students' global perspective of physiotherapy, its role and nuances, intensifying the development of intercultural competencies and an understanding that extends beyond the national perspective on the profession.

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