Internationalisation at Home From a Swedish Perspective: The Case of Malmö

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This article will describe the development of the Internationalisation at Home (IaH) perspective emerging from the Swedish way of looking at the core of internationalisation. The IaH concept was “born” in Malmö in 1998 and has—with aid from a large IaH network—become of great concern for higher education at many universities both in Europe and other parts of the world. The basic idea has been to try to let the internationalisation process embrace the whole university: all staff and all students—not only the 10% of the mobile students and a few professors. The article aims to examine and discuss different strategies for implementing the IaH ideas with examples from Malmö University, possible solutions as well as problems and obstacles.

Keywords: internationalisation; internationalisation of higher education; international education; internationalising the curriculum; internationalisation at home

THE INTERNATIONALISATION PROCESS IN SWEDEN

The Commission on Internationalisation (1970s and 1980s)

Universities have always been and are international per se. This statement has been used by university people both in Sweden and elsewhere, using notions like studia generales of medieval Europe, the wandering Erasmus of Rotterdam, and others as examples. This statement is largely a myth, as explained by Peter Scott (1998). Universities are national institutions created within national borders. That was also the view of the Swedish Commission on Internationalisation, which started in 1972. Sweden’s mixed welfare economy had to be maintained but the country had to remain competitive on the global market. Swedish companies were expanding abroad and international education was one way to ensure that Swedes could fill...
important positions abroad. Another value was added, which was important in this context: a new sense of global concern and a solidarity with countries in developing countries. The proposals of the Commission stemmed from the following premises:

- An internationalised education should prepare students to view the priorities of other cultures from the perspectives of those cultures.
- With a perspective broadened this way, students engulfed in Western cultures should be able to analyse their own value structures and habits more critically, as well as pinpoint problem areas in international relations.
- To communicate successfully across cultures demands proficiency in languages and other skills that must become a greater part of Swedish university training (Kälvemark, 1997).

The Commission also presented the following number of general goals for the international development:

**Attitude goals.**

- Openness, understanding and respect for all people and their cultures, values, and ways of living.
- Understanding of the relativity of one’s own or national conditions, values, and ways of living.
- Positive attitudes toward international cooperation, international solidarity, and preparedness, and the will to work for this.

**Cognitive goals.** Knowledge about conditions in other countries, including political, social, and economic structures and their reciprocal connection between countries and people.

These goals were accepted by the Swedish universities. Many of us who were students in the 1960s and 1970s were involved in the movements for developing aid and solidarity toward developing countries. A new international consciousness had begun and many teachers, researchers, and students were engaged in different projects and courses, particularly those concerning third-world issues. It was a time of deep engagement and devotion, a period that may be called the Time of Solidarity.

**European Union (EU) and Erasmus the Second (1990s)**

This was the Time of Mobility for Sweden and many other European countries. Sweden joined the EU and was welcome to participate in the European
Educational and Research Programs. This was a shift from internationalisation to Europeanisation. The EU official documents made it clear that the support for cooperation and mobility was clearly to promote a European dimension to higher education, not an international one. But in reality, as stated by Ulrich Teichler (1998), most departments involved in Erasmus clearly emphasized an international rather than a European approach. They appreciated European support and the growing number of students, but did not wish an exclusive emphasis on Europe. The situation was exactly the same in Sweden and it was always extremely difficult to explain to academics the meaning of a European dimension, especially to a professor of chemistry.

But the Swedish government was aware of the fact that Europe was not the world, and even the new government, which took office in 1994, continued to stress the international dimension of higher education and reminded the universities of their global mission. The budget bill in January 1995 underlined this aspect:

Cooperation in Europe must not be developed at the cost of other forms of international commitment and cooperation. Higher education has a great responsibility with regard to the broadening of knowledge and understanding of societies and cultures in other regions. This is particularly true with respect to developing countries, where more than 80% of the world population are to be found. Universities and colleges must actively promote knowledge about the developing countries. They must also forcefully combat every form of xenophobia and racism. (p. 177)

In 1991, I was asked to start an international office at Lund University. The main reason for this was that Sweden—although still not a member of the union—had been invited to join some of the European programmes such as Erasmus and Tempus. The Erasmus Programme was a success from the start. During my period in Lund, the number of exchange students increased from about 50 to more than 1,000 outgoing and about the same number of incoming students. The reason for this leap was partly the great interest among our students but also in large measure to the devoted and hard work of our teachers, study advisers, and international coordinators.

This was a time of quantity. What was counted as an international success for a university was the number of exchange students and the number of agreements with foreign universities. In Sweden, there was a continuous battle between the two oldest universities, Uppsala and Lund: Who has the greatest number of foreign students this year? But how much did we discuss the goals, content, and quality of the exchange programs? Very little—the time for consolidation and evaluation was too limited and these issues were not given enough priority.
The Coming Decade: Commercialisation and Competition—Or What?

A new decade has begun, the first in the new millennium. What will be the core of internationalisation in the future, the future tasks for the international offices?

One major feature of the international development is the commercialisation of international education. For countries such as the United States, Australia, and those comprising the United Kingdom—nations that can teach in their native languages—international education is an important budgetary income. World trade in education was estimated to be US$28 billion in 1996 and US$100 billion in 2000. Some Swedish universities have realized that international education has a huge market, not least in the area of open and distance learning. Shrinking public resources for higher education is the main reason. But, note, we are not so far allowed to charge any student—domestic or foreign—any tuition fees. A new Swedish governmental commission has recently published a report, *Advantage Sweden* (Utbildningsdepartementet, Stockholm, 2001), which proposes different models for financing the increasing number of foreign students coming to Swedish universities. But the commission has abstained from proposing a tuition-based model and it is doubtful that the Minister of Education will approve such a solution. Education, including higher education without any kind of tuition fee, has always been regarded as a civil right for all children in Sweden. But in the long run, if Swedish universities want to enter the market of international education, the parliament has to change the university law.

Is it then possible to combine commercialism and solidarity? That is doubtful. Peter Scott, vice-chancellor at Kingston University in the United Kingdom, states in his book that the flow of students today is driven by the market rather than by the state (Scott, 1998). Subjects such as science, engineering, and public administration have been replaced by management, business, and accounting. This may lead to a stage in which developed countries will be less willing to offer an open-door subsidy to students from poorer countries.

This very personal picture of the development of internationalisation in Sweden—many other perspectives can be added by others—will provide the basis for the following reflections on the IAH concept.

The IAH Concept

The terms *internationalisation*, *globalisation*, *international education*, *internationalised curriculum*, and *international campus* are common in books and articles in different international contexts, and several attempts have been made to define or at least describe the meanings of these words. In some parts of the world, internation-
alisation means recruitment of tuition-paying overseas students; in other countries, just mobility; and so on. A study of all efforts made to define all these words has caused confusion. To put the concepts into practice in Malmö, we have made life easier by using the following broad definitions:

- **Internationalisation** is the process of integrating an international dimension into the research, teaching, and services function of higher education.
- **An internationalised curriculum** is a curriculum that gives international and intercultural knowledge and abilities, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally, socially, emotionally) in international and multicultural context.
- **International education** is any internationally related activity including mobility of staff and students.
- **Internationalisation at Home** is any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student mobility.

The concept of IaH is of course not new in an international academic context—it is just a way to embrace all ideas about and measures to be taken to give all students an international dimension during their time at the university. The second part of this article will describe how we try to tackle these ideas within Malmö University.

**INTERNATIONALISATION AT MALMÖ UNIVERSITY**

**Malmö University and Malmö City**

Some of my reasons for leaving Lund University to start working at the newly opened Malmö University were that (a) this was a brand new university (although some faculties were transferred from Lund university) with many new programs and courses to be set up and curricula to be written; (b) in the Malmö area, more than 35% of the population are immigrants or have immigrant parents; (c) a special faculty, International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER), was to be established; and (d) multicultural issues were to be a central theme throughout the university.

I felt that this might be a challenge to look for possibilities to introduce the ideas about IaH. Additionally, one will be offered to contribute to the building up of a new university only once in one’s lifetime.

Malmö University was founded in 1998 as the newest venture of higher education in Sweden. Starting up with 5,000 students in 1998 and growing to about 18,000 today, the university is already the eighth largest in the country. It offers today 50 study programs and 232 subject courses and embraces 6 multidisciplinary areas:
• School of Arts and Communication (new)
• School of Health and Society (emanating from a community college)
• School of IMER (new)
• Faculty of Odontology (earlier Lund University)
• School of Teacher Education (earlier Lund University)
• School of Technology and Society (new)

Thus, the university is a mixture of old and new. Research is mainly carried out within the “old” schools but is slowly starting to increase within the others.

Malmö is Sweden’s third biggest city with about 300,000 inhabitants and is located in the very south of Sweden. The building of a bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen and the establishment of a university contributed to the change from a city with traditional old-fashioned industries to a modern city with new high-tech companies. A full 35% of the population consists of immigrants from 170 different nations. The university has a special governmental task to recruit students from these families. Today, about one third of the students come from such families.

Planning a Strategy for Internationalisation

What kind of strategy for the international work should be chosen? The study of different theoretical models did not give much guidance for Malmö due to the fact that time was short and the international office had to have an idea before the end of the fall semester of 1998. The conditions for internationalising the university were both good and bad—the interest was there with a slight “sit on the fence” attitude and the experiences were rather small. A combination of Rudzkis’s (2000) reactive and proactive modes and my own experiences of working within this field became the basis on which we started the process in the fall of 1998.

The process had to be divided into short- and long-term needs. In the first group, we put the following urgent issues:

• Convince the central administration and the deans of the importance of internationalising the university. The very first memo, discussed in August 1998, started with the provocative question, Do we want to build Malmö Community College or Malmö International University? The answers were obvious: Internationalisation is important!
• Create an international office for the administration reporting directly to the vice-chancellor and university director. The main tasks should be to prepare for a Socrates application in the fall, arrange housing and introductory courses for already ongoing exchange, and market the new university abroad. The office was in place in October 1998.
Create an internal network with representatives from the schools, student unions, study administration, information department, and library. Minternet—the Malmö University International Network—was in place in October 1998 to deal with information and policy issues.

The long-term needs were to

- Constitute a strategic plan for 1999/2000 through 2003/2004 to be decided by the university board.
- Explore funding for staff development for internationalisation (staff exchange, language preparation, etc.).
- Make a long-term plan for international partner search derived from the Malmö University educational and research profile. Use the IaH project as a distinctive feature when marketing this totally new and unknown institution.
- Make a continuous evaluation of the strategic plan and an external review after 5 years.

To analyse the conditions for implementing a international strategy, we used a very simple form of SWOT-analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). The findings were more or less what we expected:

- The strengths were a dedicated vice chancellor, a strong internal network (Minternet), an effective international office, a special School of International Migration and Ethnic Relations with professors specializing in intercultural education and communicative language teaching, and a multicultural city and a multicultural mix of students.
- The weaknesses were many professional schools (dentistry, nursing, engineering, teacher education, etc.) with tight scheduled vocational programs and low activity in the Erasmus program; at several schools, a newly recruited staff with rather few international contacts and limited international experience; an internationally inexperienced central administration; very few courses offered in English and a great resistance to teach in English; a rather low interest for staff and student exchange and rather few international partners.
- The opportunities were a rising interest in international issues among staff and students, possibilities to internationalise the curriculum, increased interest to participate in IaH activities, use of the international society in Malmö for international and intercultural training.
- The threats were a continuous rise of students that might influence the quality of the education and delay the implementation of the international dimension, an “internationalisation burnout” among the most devoted and hard-working teachers if no incitements were available, and shrinking resources for the international work.

This analysis created a platform for the work with the strategic plan.
The Strategic Plan:  
The Content and the Process

After a 9-month period of analysing and discussing the aims and content of the strategic plan at the different schools, the plan was approved by the university board in June 1999. Thus, an important act was created that has been of greatest importance for the international office when implementing the international issues. As a young university, Malmö must face the fact that even if the mobility of staff and students is a very important element in the internationalisation process, it will still be a long time before the university reaches the goal of 10% of students exchanged, and an even longer time before it creates an international classroom with foreign students. These facts, together with my interpretation of the core of internationalisation, mean that the university has to give special attention to the nonmobile students and devise measures to give them international and intercultural competence.

The plan may be summarised in the following statements: First, the most important goal for the internationalisation of Malmö University is to create knowledge and understanding of other countries, cultures, religions, and values to make the student prepared to communicate and collaborate globally in a changing world. This goal derives from the political goals ratified by the Swedish parliament in the 1970s and is still valid for Swedish institutions of higher education. It is the basis on which we try to build the international work at Malmö University.

Second, the most effective form of internationalisation is mobility of staff and students. This is an undoubted truth. To get people to meet and learn from each other is the best way of getting a greater knowledge and understanding of human nature.

Third, the internationalisation process shall embrace all staff and all students. With a purpose to internationalise a university, the university cannot restrict itself to the mobility of some percentage of students and staff. This far-reaching and long-term goal is another basis for the international work. It is impossible to send out all students and staff on international exchange; thus, much work must be done at home.

Fourth, to increase the interest for internationalisation and stimulate mobility, the process must start at home. This is a logical consequence of the third statement—a plan must be made for activities not dealing with mobility. The IaH project must start.

Fifth, the key group for promoting student mobility is the university teachers. It is a well-known fact that if professors and teachers do not enter the international train, very little will happen within the institution in this respect. Finding ways of promoting teacher exchange, language abilities, and time for interna-
tional activities within working hours must be one of the most important steps to achieve.

Sixth, the key issue for communication is language competence. Sweden has—like many other smaller countries—accepted that Swedish is a minor language. This means that we have to make great efforts to increase the language competence of both students, teachers, and administrative staff. The present lingua franca—English—was naturally chosen, and the competence must comprise communicative English as well as the capacity to teach in English—two very different things.

Thus, the strategic plan focuses on two major features: Mobility of staff and students, and IaH.

The Staff and Student Mobility

As this article will concentrate on the IaH perspective, the mobility situation after the first 3 years must be mentioned. It is as follows:

- The goal of 300 outgoing and incoming students 2003/2004 will probably not be achieved (it was about 90 in 2001/2002). The reasons are lack of courses offered in English and a general decreasing interest among Swedish students to study abroad, especially within Europe.
- The interest among the teachers to visit or teach at a partner university is increasing.
- The number of partner institutions has reached the goal and is now 101, 75 within Europe. The strategy has been to start with Scandinavian partners (where we have an almost common language and do not have to wait for the development of courses in English), extend this to European partners and the Socrates program, and finally, to extend it to the rest of the world.

The IaH Process Within the University

The IaH process started later than the other parts of the international work. The first years were concentrated on mobility issues and the IaH idea was something new and unfamiliar: Internationalisation was, to most people inside and outside the university, equivalent to mobility.

Shortly after the creation of the IaH network and special interest group in 2000, the discussions about IaH started at home in Malmö. A seminar was arranged with the central administration and the deans presenting the concept. The attitudes were very positive. A project plan for IaH was created by a local steering group with representatives from the schools, the central administration, and the students. Resources for the project were given from the university budget (55,000€). The main tasks for the group are to investigate different forms for the
implementation of the IaH concept within the university. A first report shall be given to the vice chancellor in June 2003.

The main goal for the project is to propose different measures for all students and staff at Malmö University to increase their international and intercultural competence. To try to define those concepts in an understandable way, international competence is described as knowledge about and ability in international relations; for example, foreign language skills and knowledge about the political, social, and economic development of countries/regions. Intercultural competence means the development of understanding, respect, and empathy for people with different national, cultural, social, religious, and ethnical origins.

The process for the implementation may be described by the following two steps:

Curriculum analysis. After defining the criteria for international and intercultural elements (see above) the goal now is to try to locate and catalogue these elements in the curricula and syllabi at the different schools. These analyses will be followed up by interviews to verify that what is promised in the papers is also a reality in the classroom.

Action-oriented measures. To get off the ground during 2002/2003, the steering group shall suggest concrete IaH measures for both staff and students. Good ideas and examples at one school will be used for inspiration to other schools. Obstacles and problems will be discussed.

Some Concrete Examples of Progress

Curricula Development

The School of Technology and Society offers 5 weeks of IMER courses to students in some of the engineering programmes. The courses include topics such as immigrant policy; integration and segregation processes; and cultural, linguistic, and religious differences, and are offered as an elective but attended by many students. A similar process is ongoing at the School of Health and Society, which is continuously revising its curricula to render visible and introduce intercultural elements into all courses. The School of Teacher Education is doing the same and is offering all students a 12-week course in international and intercultural issues, compulsory for some programs. Awareness has increased among both our teachers and students about the fact that the students after graduation will live and work in a multicultural society inside or outside Sweden and
that they have to be well prepared for this. Similar activities are increasing at the other schools.

**Action-Oriented Measures: Staff**

As stated earlier, the staff is the key group for international success within a university. Thus, the following activities for the university staff have started during this year:

- To increase the language competence among both teaching and administrative staff, courses such as How to Teach in English and Practical English for Administrators are offered. Hereby, we also hope to double the number of courses taught in English.
- Courses and seminars with an international and intercultural content will be given to both staff and students.
- Incentives for teachers to visit and teach at foreign universities (the VC Travel Grants) have been made available.

**Action-Oriented Measures: Students**

- To increase both the students' language proficiency and their international/intercultural competence, we offer students from all schools a course called Practical English in Cross-Cultural Communication (30 ECTS credits). There is also a full program, Migration and Language (180/240 ECTS credits), in which students are provided with an understanding of issues concerning migration, integration, communication, human rights, and globalisation, as well as essential knowledge, analysis skills, and proficiency in communication in English.
- The Multicultural Dialogue is a weekly seminar open for everyone inside and outside the university, with many guest speakers and participants from Malmö international community.
- Each year, 100 university students act as mentors for 100 schoolchildren, mostly from immigrant families, in what is called the Nightingale Project. The mentors follow the children for a year, spending at least 3 hours a week at the children's homes or taking them to different activities. The aim is twofold: to get the children to feel safer at school and get them interested in university studies; and for the mentors to get awareness of other cultures, religions, and traditions, thus increasing their intercultural competence.

These are just a few examples of initiatives taken by the teachers and students with support from the International Office and the Rector. But all that glitters is not gold—let us turn to some identified obstacles and difficulties in the implementation process.
Obstacles for the IaH Implementation

The most serious weaknesses and threats for Malmö University when planning the international work were discussed in the SWOT-Light analysis. The assumptions have more or less been verified. The overwhelmingly biggest problem has been the rapid expansion of the university, from 5,000 students in 1998 to 18,000 in 2002, and from 550 staff members to 1,100 during the same period. The number of educational programs and courses has increased tremendously. The workload of the staff has been tremendous when creating these new courses and programs. Everyone can understand that there has been very little space for international discussions, and at a guess, at most, 50% have ever heard about the existence of a strategic plan for internationalisation. The dissemination issues are the most troublesome and one has to be very realistic and understand that this process needs a lot of time.

It is a long way from the central administration to the classroom, the teacher, and the student. And, as in many other institutions, there are considerable differences in interest and commitment between faculties, schools, and departments. The same goes for the deans, professors, and lecturers.

“We have no space for this kind of thing in our programme.” “How will my students be good engineers/dentists/teachers without 60 hours of my subject?” “Those are subjects that should be dealt with somewhere else and not here.” These are a few examples of attitudes among professors and lecturers that I have met during my many years in Lund and Malmö, and they are difficult to change.

On the other hand, more and more staff members have realised the importance of creating an internationalised university and not a community college, so the attitudes have started to change.

Much more is to be done before the desired level of internationalising Malmö University is reached. It is a pity that international experience has not been highlighted enough when employing new staff. There has been rather little success in recruiting international professors to Malmö—the university is still too unknown in the big world and its research is so far limited to some separate areas. The university has failed in its ambitions to recruit staff from Sweden’s international community—the immigrants. Many of those have high university educations but are cleaning our offices or baking our pizzas. Still, there is no good plan of how to use the returning exchange students or the foreign students, as well as the students with immigrant background, in an IaH context. And there are so far no existing regional and area studies except European Studies.

There has recently been a change of leadership at Malmö University: the vice chancellor, the university director, and two of the six deans are new in their positions. The importance of leadership is proved in many cases and also in the area of internationalisation of higher education (Mestenhauser, 2000). Time will tell
in which direction the internationalisation process will proceed with this new leadership. But I am hopeful.

CONCLUSION

International education, IaH, or whatever it may be called, is here to stay. That is for sure, no matter whether a university is tax- or a tuition-financed. A recent survey carried out by the American Council of Education (2001) indicated that institutions with robust international offerings (international programs, foreign language courses, study abroad programs, and opportunities to interact with foreign students) will have a great competitive advantage in attracting future students.

Of course, I have a dream for Malmö University. I would like to see all our students leaving this university with the added value that an internationalised curriculum can give: Besides good knowledge of their subject area, they should have open minds and generosity toward other people; know how to behave in other cultures and how to communicate with people with different religions, values, and customs; and not be scared of coping with new and unfamiliar issues. I would like to vaccinate all our students against the dark forces of nationalism and racism. I once read in an article that a technical innovation takes 10 years to implement; a medical one, 20 years; and an educational one, 50 years. So be patient and realistic—these kinds of changes in thinking and attitudes take a very long time.

REFERENCES


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