

## BRIDGING THE GAP AMONG ISLAMIC NATIONS THROUGH INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME (IAH)

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### ABSTRACT

Globalization has a profound impact on the higher education institutions to build graduates capable to work and compete in the fourth industrial revolution and Muslim nations have no exception to this movement. The students graduated from overseas gain global exposure through multicultural and diverse cross-cultural learning environment. However, the ratio of non-mobile student among Muslim countries is high who are in need to train with adeptness and capabilities in accordance with the global competitive challenges. The industrial requirements of human capital are changing now as they are demanding the employees capable to work effectively in multicultural environment and with diverse teams. Thus, the present study aimed to identify the current need for Internationalization at Home (IaH) in higher education institutions in Muslim countries to create an environment of mutual collaboration through exchange programs of student and staff. The increased implementation of IaH among these nations would assist in producing Muslim global graduates. The contemporary trends and challenges have been explored through an in-depth literature survey to dig out the best practices. The study emphasized that IaH practices are appropriate solution for the provision of global acquaintance to non-mobile Muslim students. This is probably the pioneer study on the concept of 'Internationalization at Home' in Muslim countries which would assist higher education institutions (HEIs) and Ministries of Higher Education to formulate strategies and plans for the formation of mutual collaboration through the development of an association of universities in Muslim countries.

**Keywords:** Internationalization at Home (IaH), higher education institutions (HEIs), global competencies, student mobility, mutual collaboration among Muslim countries

### INTRODUCTION

Globalization, an ongoing process, has speedily reshaped the world. This transformation process has brought changes in politics, economy, technology, environment, and cultural and intercultural connections among individuals, societies, and nations (WHO, 2015). In addition, higher education institution these days considered internationalization as an integral part of the globalization process worldwide. As the educational policies among countries are reformed and diplomatic relations are improved, the mobility of students worldwide has been an increasing phenomenon. This trend has changed the demand of employers who are now seeking for highly skilled graduates who are able to communicate and efficiently productive in the diverse and multicultural work settings.

An individual experiences alternative cultures, different opinions, and viewpoints on daily basis. The cultural enrichment that students gained by visiting different countries and learning other languages has a parallel in culturally diverse contexts of any kind (Holland & Kedia, 2003). How they act when faced with opinions, values, or lifestyles to which they are fundamentally disagree is the test of their intercultural competence and broad-mindedness, whether at home or abroad. The scholars believe that students with international experiences acquire global and intercultural competencies and show more flexibility while accepting or adapting cultural differences (McBurnie, 2000; Singh & Jack, 2017). Internationalization has help students to treat people with respect and grown them to realize the dissimilar contexts without assigning them a value; 'good' or 'bad'.

Unquestionably, in the contemporary interconnected world, an essential goal of international education is to educate students to act as responsible citizens, not only for their nation but also for the whole world. Student mobility is one vehicle of international education that aims to import international students and export study abroad students (Altbach, 2015). However, this concept or idea in itself is inadequate. Further, to get the real benefits linked with student mobility, institutions must be committed to embedding internationalization that initiates at home, i.e. at the higher education institutions (HEIs) at the home country. This concept is known as "Internationalization at

Home” (IaH). This concept of Internationalization at Home (IaH) is advantageous in certain contexts, particularly where the core emphasis of internationalization of HEIs has traditionally been on students’ mobility.

It is progressively clear that international mobility results in substantial advantages to the participants. However, it is also been noticed that the number of international mobile students is relatively a very small proportion of the student body. Researchers believe that the proportion of mobile students is not more than 10 percent of the whole students who are seeking higher education (Parsons, 2010; Altbach, 2015). Hereby, the question is why only these 10% of students to benefit from global and international experiences? Why not 100% of students to benefits from the internationalization process? Does the remaining 90% have no right to be educated for citizenship in a global world that constantly facing new challenges? Are they not to gain the intercultural communication skills that would enable them to effectively interact with people from other countries?

These questions arised as the original concern of most higher education institutions is that they are looking too much at student mobility in numbers, in particular, incoming mobility, that is the number of international students coming to enroll in their HEIs, either as exchange students or full-time students. Education shall be focused to the growth of a human personality in a way that it strengthens and promotes tolerance, understanding, and friendship among all nations without cultural or racial differences (Beelen & Jones, 2015). However, as many researchers agreed, international students are now considered as ‘cash cows’ who are the providing financial benefits to the institution as well as host economy (Brown, 2014; Cantwell, 2015; Andrade, 2006). However, these economically-driven policies at HEIs do not adequately considered the cultural and educational impacts of student international and global learning in the classroom and beyond. An alternative voice is needed for the rights of all students, in particular for the domestic non-mobile students, that is the domestic students who do not have the chance to travel and study overseas because of a few obstacles, mainly the financial issues.

The concept of Internationalization at Home (IaH) is receiving popularity around the globe. IaH quickly became an important policy issue in many European universities, especially in northwest Europe, where education is seen as a public good and the internationalization of higher education as a way to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all students (Beelen & Jones, 2015). The European Commission also used this idea in its policy documents, as did universities in various other parts of the world. As Wächter (2003) emphasised that IaH denotes any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound students (students going to studny and live overseas) and staff mobility. Internationalization at home is a convenient term to designate internationalization activity aimed at the whole student body.

### **The Situation in Islamic Countries**

Civilizations rise and fall through the windows of knowledge. Muslim civilization reached its pinnacle when its leaders placed value in creating new knowledge and ensured the liberty of mind as the pillar for progress and advancement. Today, the Muslim world faces daunting challenges of reducing the knowledge chasm with the rest of the world in many fields of endeavor (Zewail 2011).The modern history of education reform in the region is a tale of ambition and accomplishment but falling short in achieving socio-economic development (El Baz 2007). The gap between ambition and reality is continuously widening up as schools, universities and education systems stumble in the road to meet and achieve current and future development objectives. In addition, Muslims countries continue to lag behind many comparator countries since the link between education and economic growth and poverty reduction is weak. Elevation of education has become an imperative matter of urgency which must top national priority issues throughout the Muslim world.

On the other hand, analysis of the scientific landscape in the Muslim world depicts an even gloomier image. Such analysis usually focuses on economic dimensions, and in some cases coupled to political elements such as lack of freedom, weakness of democratic mechanisms and domination of pre-modern administrative patterns in scientific institutions. However, cultural problems encountering the Muslim world must be deeply analyzed from a historical perspective in order to identify the enormous impediments that hinder progress and advancement of Arab science,

society and nation (Ghassib, 2010). In particular, the country revolution mind, which dominated the culture of most Islamic countries since in the middle ages, casts a heavy blow to all social fabrics including economic, political and administrative environments and structures. The prevailing conditions urgently demand renewal and require revitalizing a new scientific culture which composes the basis of an effective and influential future knowledge industry. Major fundamental reform of higher education has become a top priority in the quest to fulfill the aspirations of future generation and modernize Muslim countries.

Thus, immediate actions are needed to create strategies to essentially initiate a process of establishing and enhancing mutual collaboration among all Muslim countries (Ghassib, 2010). In the present paper, light is shed on the concept of internationalization of higher education, particularly Internationalization at Home (IaH) and how this may present a small window in the path towards modernizing higher education, reforming universities and empowering Muslim countries through mutual collaboration in the field of higher education.

In the Muslim world, there is a need to understand and recognize the requirements of fourth industrial revolution (4IR) and how it is shifting the demands of skills and abilities of global graduates. Employers are looking for human capital who show high qualities of global mindedness, cultural competence, global civic engagement and able to work in diverse workplace. Hence, the question for the higher education institutions is how to support students in the development of these far-reaching notions, advance their curiosity and broaden their perspectives to encompass alternative standpoints. How do we encourage reflection on the global dimensions of their disciplinary field? More importantly, if students are unable to benefit from international experience as part of their study programs, to what extent can we internationalize the curriculum to offer opportunities for perspective transformation in domestic contexts? And how about the local students, who are because of certain reasons, are not able to be internationally mobile? Does Internationalization at Home (IaH) can bring unity and harmony among the Muslim world?

In the future, there may be an increasing acceptance of the correspondence between the international and the intercultural dimensions, with both being incorporated into curriculum content and approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment in higher education. Indeed, the nations and institutions will be failing to do justice to students, particularly domestic non-mobile students, if they do not incorporate global and intercultural dimensions into their curricula and other learning perspectives at HEIs. Multicultural and international living and working environments are the way of the future. Thus, HEIs must move with these global times by considering it as a right of students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Two main approaches of Internationalization of HEIs**

According to Knight (2006), internationalization of higher education institutions, traditionally, has been understood as a series of several strategies. It seems that recently these strategies are divided into two distinct categories or streams. One stream comprises internationalization activities which occur at the home campus, while, on the other hand, the second stream is about those initiatives that happen abroad or involve cross-border activities. In the last few years, a new term has been in discussion widely as a part of the internationalization development process is ‘Internationalization at Home’ or ‘Campus-based Internationalization’ (Wächter, 2003).

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in many countries have made numerous efforts to contribute to global mobility by recruiting international students and sending their own students abroad. However, a very less focus has been paid to the immobile students who stay at home campuses and have less opportunities to go abroad for international experiences. The domestic immobile students are huge in numbers and deserve substantial consideration for gaining benefit from international perspective of higher education. Leask (2009) stressed that domestic students are ‘most resistant to having an international experience at home, yet they have potentially the most to gain’ (p. 14). This idea of home-based learning is most relevant to Internationalization at Home (IaH) which embraces all students for international and global education, irrespective of being internationally mobile or not (Teekens, 2007; Mestenhauser, 2003). Also less attention is paid to for for cross-cultural learning for international students who are already in the host country. HEIs should take this opportunities of having international students in their campus and programmes

involving both local and international students should be conducted in order to increase the internationalization learning among the students in the campus.

### **Internationalization at Home (IaH)**

Internationalization at Home (IaH) is an approach to internationalization that encourages thinking and moving beyond the student mobility programme. Student mobility has been traditionally, the most significant and, in most cases, probably the most active international activity that has been practiced by HEIs. IaH is not a coherent theory, but "internationalization in action" (Teekens, 2007). However, by saying this does not mean that IaH approach rejects the student mobility programs. It is directing to think beyond the regular practices for mobile and immobile students by focusing on their interaction, intercultural learning, and on-campus internationalization initiatives. IaH is moving internationalization from the edge to the core of educational institutions (Joris et al., 2000; Mestenhauser, 2003; 2011). This internationalization approach was started in Europe when the university creation along with its objectives was conceptualized (Nilsson, 2003). The scope of IaH is then realized "to try to let the internationalization process embrace the whole university: all staff and all students-not only the 10% of the mobile students and a few professors" (Nilsson, 2003, p. 27). Nilsson's explanation about IaH highlights that international education or internationalization of HEIs should be transversal and it should involve the whole institution.

Internationalization at Home (IaH) emphasizes cultural diversity as an elevating factor of improved campus-based social interaction. As the world is changing at a very fast pace and the communities are now more globalized, thus students nowadays are considered as social and economic developers of a nation. The success of these students depends on their adequate adaptiveness for this new interconnected, multicultural and fast-changing world (Süssmuth, 2007; Hudzik, 2011; Rosen & Digh, 2001). Beelen (2007) highlighted the need for global graduates as "they will be global citizens at home. If universities manage to prepare only a small percentage of their students for that world, they will miss their goal" (p. 4). Moreover, responsible global citizenship among graduates implies the need to develop social consciousness and a sense of belonging to a global community and cognitive justice. IaH is providing a platform to develop a more inclusive understanding of knowledge in order to build capacity to find solutions to complex problems in local and global contexts. It requires curriculum development and content that engages with multiple and global sources of knowledge in which students explore how knowledge is produced, distributed, exchanged, and utilized globally (De Wit, 2011). This internationalization approach and its focus are promoting through educational reforms in many higher education institutions worldwide, particularly in Europe to produce holistic global graduates.

### **Mobility in Islamic Countries**

Though the mobility is growing rapidly in Muslim countries and resulted in numerous benefits, disparities in study abroad participation is still a concern for higher education institutions (HEIs). According to Dessoiff (2006), students of colors are less likely to go abroad for educational purpose compared to the white students. Research has emphasized that several factors stimulus underrepresented students' decisions to stay at home, including fears of different encountering racism and familial obligations/concerns (Carter, 2006; Dessoiff, 2006). Salisbury, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2011) also suggested that study abroad participation may appear as potential exposure to stereotype threat to African American students. Some other barriers explored by previous researchers are the excessive cost of study abroad, fear of going to unfamiliar places, and minority group marginalization (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Yeh & Inose, 2003; Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

These arguments show that mobility is largely restricted which in turn limits the students' ability to acquire international, intercultural and global competences. What other steps can be initiated to substitute mobility in order to produce global graduates? This question brings the idea of Internationalization at Home (IaH) that includes all students for global and international education, regardless they are "internationally mobile or not" (Teekens, 2007; Mestenhauser, 2011). As Ackers (2008) states; "Internationalization is not the same thing as mobility" (p. 424). Researchers have recommended that diversity between local and international students can facilitate the recognition of IaH (Paige, 2004; Leask, 2009). Engaging both domestic and international students by involving in curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities can

enhance their mutually beneficial experiences. Amid these challenges, various concerns are growing regarding domestic students who are unable to participate in study abroad resulting in lack of global and international competencies as their peers (Bentao, 2011; Brandenburg & De Wit, 2015). Therefore, there is a need to institutionalize internationalization at home (IaH) in Muslim higher education institutions in order to develop a fit environment in producing global graduates without for them leaving their home country.

**METHODOLOGY**

The current study is an exploratory qualitative study with a problem-solving approach based on an analysis of the published literature e.g. journal publications, organizational and national reports. An investigative in-depth approach is especially valuable in academic research as higher education and higher education institutions worldwide have many common traditions and characteristics (Altbach & Peterson, 1999).

**DISCUSSION**

**Key dimensions of Internationalization at Home (IaH)**

The aim of internationalization is to develop students’ global, international, and intercultural (GII) competencies and shifting them towards a responsible global citizen (Burnett and Huisman 2010, 117). The GII competencies create “knowledge about several dimensions of global and international cultures; appreciation of cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity; understanding of the complexities of issues in a global context; and comfort in working with people from other cultures” (Soria & Troisi, 2014, p. 262). It is said that graduates who hold GII dimensions are likely to have efficiency in work at culturally diverse working environment, as well as they, are likely to have strong leadership in a global context (Soria & Troisi, 2014; Earnest 2003).

Additionally, IaH and internationalization abroad both share the same goal, i.e. to help students develop their international and global competencies (Beelen, 2011; Hayle, 2008). However, IaH is found to have better effects than internationalization abroad in terms of internationally developing students (Soria & Troisi, 2014, p. 273). Not all higher education students are able to join international exchange programs where they can spend a period abroad to gain global competencies. In other words, internationalization abroad only reaches a fraction of the student population. Student exchange programme aims to help all higher education students achieve international and intercultural dimensions and to ensure that returning students from international exchange programs have opportunities to “integrate their study abroad experiences and provide alternative international experiences at home for those who choose not to study abroad” (Nilsson, 2003, p. 31-34; Steglitz & Briggs, 2005, p. 11).

All students can achieve international and global competencies via the internationalized curriculum and international extra-curricular activities as these are the two main aspects of IaH (Hayle, 2008). First, an internationalized curriculum is defined as “a curriculum which gives international and intercultural knowledge and abilities, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally, socially, and emotionally) in an international and multicultural context” (Nilsson, 2003, p. 31). According to Knight (2008), there are five categories such as curriculum, teaching and learning process, extra-curricular activities, liaison with local, and research and students’ activities that can be supportive in the implementation of IaH by the higher education institution. Table 1 below explains these five elements in details.

**Table 1. IaH activities under five categories (Knight 2008)**

Category	Activities
Curriculum and programs	Innovative programs with international themes; the infusion of international, cultural, global, or comparative dimensions into existing courses; foreign language study; area or regional studies; and joint or double degrees.
Teaching/learning processes	The active involvement of international students, returned study-abroad students, and cultural diversity in the classroom in teaching/learning processes; virtual student mobility for joint courses and research projects; the use of international students and teachers and local international/intercultural experts; and the integration of international materials, international materials, intercultural case studies, role-plays, and reference materials

Extra-curricular activities	Student clubs and associations; international and intercultural campus events; liaison with community-based cultural and ethnic groups; and peer support groups and programs
Liaison with local cultural/ethnic groups	The involvement of students in local cultural and ethnic organizations through internships, placements, and applied research; and the involvement of representatives from local cultural and ethnic groups in teaching/learning activities, research initiatives, and extracurricular events and projects.
Research and student activity	Area and theme centers; joint research projects; international conferences and seminars; published articles and papers; international research agreements; research exchange programs; international research partners in academic and other sectors; and the integration of visiting researchers and students into academic activities on campus.

Source: Knight (2008)

### An Internationalized Curriculum

Additionally, the internationalized curriculum is said to be an outcome of a process called “internationalization of curriculum” which is defined as “the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the preparation, delivery, and outcomes of a program of study”. The internationalized curriculum aims to “engage students with internationally informed research and cultural and linguistic diversity and purposefully develop the international and intercultural perspectives as global professionals and citizens” (Leask, 2009, p. 209).

Moreover, an internationalized curriculum must meet two objectives, namely “cognitive objectives” (providing international competence) and “attitude-related objectives” (providing intercultural competence). Table 2 lists examples of what an internationalized curriculum should offer students. (Crowther et al. 2000) It is stated that participation in lectures and formal curricular activities whose themes are international or global related can foster students’ intercultural competence as their awareness of cultural diversity is developed (Soria and Troisia, 2014).

**Table 2. Objectives of an internationalized curriculum**

Cognitive Objectives	Attitude Related Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Foreign languages</li> <li>○ Regional and area studies</li> <li>○ Humanities and subjects such as international law and international business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Broad mindedness</li> <li>○ Understanding and respect for other people and their cultures</li> <li>○ Values and ways of living</li> <li>○ Understanding the nature of racism</li> </ul>

### Institutional activities to promote IaH

Extra-curricular activities play a key role in benefiting students’ international and global learning. The research of Soria and Troisi (2014) suggests that IaH is an alternative to studying abroad because students can enhance their global competencies at home by taking part in international extra-curricular activities that are involved by students from diverse cultures. The presence of international students is said to contribute to the intercultural and international dimension of HEIs to some degree (Christensen and Thielen 1983, 210; Mellors-Bourne 2013, 97; De Wit 2015, 49).

In addition, “intercultural learning at home can initiate the development of positive attitudes toward other cultures, and behavioral skills to act efficiently and adequately in an intercultural context” (Crowther et al. 2000, p. 18). Students could also find themselves confident and comfortable in engaging with foreign schoolmates via international activities (Crowther et al. 2000, p. 17; Soria & Troisia, 2014, p. 274). In other words, interactions and relations with people of other cultural backgrounds may help local students developing their GII competencies as they get to learn more of new cultures, be able to understand and tolerate differences and diversities (Deardorff, 2009).

Hence, it is important to ensure that international students participate in such programmes. In fact, international students who arrive in the host country for the first time might face culture shock. It is suggested that new-coming international students may withdraw into their “own cultural colonies” if they do not make close connections with other students of distinct cultural backgrounds (Crowther et al., 2000, p. 17). This is because newcomers usually have contacts only

with people of their own cultural groups, but hardly with other international or domestic students. Moreover, if new students are isolated in their own cultural communities, there might be "negative effects on their readiness for learning, their consciousness of relevant learning tasks and on their academic performances" (Crowther et al., 2000).

Therefore, in order to prevent this and to ensure the activeness of international individuals, HEIs are recommended to have proper social support for the newcomers and to make sure that foreign students get in touch with each other upon their arrival. Since the number of students that remain at home during their studies is significantly high, there is a need to evaluate the IaH of HEIs, and to exploit the benefits that IaH could bring (Knight, 2008, 2015).

### **Implementation of IaH at the HEIs**

Internationalization can serve as the focus for a transformative agenda in HEIs. Transformative internationalization requires a holistic approach in which universities become internationally-minded communities, not simply institutions with ever-increasing numbers of international students and international activities (MacKinnon & Manathunga, 2003; Volet, 1999). A responsible internationalization strategy will incorporate innovative approaches to curriculum development, student support mechanisms, and academic development initiatives. Academic development is more likely to achieve 'transformations of consciousness' when sustained, well-planned initiatives engage academics in collaborative, evidence-based research into their own practice and when the research itself is 'reflexive, interactive, iterative, constructive, distributed and transformative' (Christie & Pollard, 2009, p. 34) to assist students and academic staff to develop the skills, values and dispositions needed to adopt an internationalist perspective (Robson & Hsieh, 2010). The internationalized HEIs can provide deeply personal or transformative experiences that enable its communities to contribute to the intercultural construction, exchange, and application of knowledge (Odgers & Giroux, 2006). This can help to foster an overall positive climate and to determine the extent to which individuals position themselves as active agents of change in their context and in the international world.

#### ***Conceptualization of IaH***

Entering into cooperation with international partners should be a process that is based on content-related choices. When a program is able to define what distinguishes it from others and what specific expertise and approach it is able to bring into the field, it becomes possible to articulate what expertise is needed from international partners and from which partners in which countries. Internationally oriented learning environments should incorporate perspectives from a range of relevant countries.

#### ***Building an IaH policy***

An institutional policy for Internationalization at Home should allow for, stimulate and support contextualized implementation in individual programs. Only then will any international dimension become meaningful.

#### ***Redefining the role of the International Office for IaH***

International Offices of HEIs should redefine their role in the process of policymaking, conceptualizing and supporting IaH. Rather than taking all these tasks aboard themselves, they should systematically involve specialists for these tasks and find strategic allies within the university that will assist in the process of mainstreaming the international and intercultural dimension. This means that the International Office will not be tempted to perform tasks that it has never been equipped to perform, simply because they contain the word 'international'. The International Office can then concentrate on its core task with regard to Internationalization at Home: managing international relations to facilitate international and intercultural student learning. Key activities include developing a mobility plan that assures that programs can rely on the composition of international classrooms that conforms to their wishes, organizing incoming student and staff mobility and creating opportunities in the informal curriculum that enable home and international students to engage in meaningful contacts.

#### ***Involving the specialists: a systems approach***

In order to overcome the obstacles to the implementation of IaH, it is necessary to analyse further what these obstacles are. This is based on the conceptualization process. As soon as aims have been clarified, it becomes possible to distinguish the obstacles to reaching these aims. When

internationalization of the curriculum is understood as an integral (i.e. mainstreamed and compulsory) elements of teaching, learning, and research processes, it becomes both possible and necessary to identify and involve specialists in these fields.

#### ***Staff training and support***

After identifying the main obstacles, HEIs should take steps to address these through targeted actions for staff development. When it comes to the skills needed to internationalize curricula, HEIs need to look beyond foreign language skills. Much academic staff may be specialist in their fields but are not always educationalists that are versed the methodology to develop and facilitate effective learning environments with an international and intercultural dimension.

#### **Challenges for the Future**

Over the past years, an intense, stimulating, and sometimes provocative debate about the future of internationalization has taken place. The changing political and economic climate in the world, particularly in Europe, where nationalism seems to become more dominant than Europeanism or globalism, and in the United States under the Trump Administration, with its “America First” nationalism, is no solid foundation for more internationalization (Altbach and De Wit, 2017). New challenges, which were not so clear until now, have come to the forefront.

These confront the developing countries, particularly the Muslim nations with the need to look even more critically at these shifting and try to create opportunities out of these challenges. What impact will the new political climate have on the obsessive focus on rankings and economic rationales? Most likely, the anti-global and anti-immigration policies of Trump in the United States and May in the United Kingdom will have a serious effect on the recruitment of international students in those countries. These trends are an alarming situation for the Muslim countries to self-developed. The HEIs of Muslim countries need to enhance the mutual collaboration among them by focusing on the global mindedness of all Muslim students without concentrating only on student’s mobility and provide them opportunities for international learning at their home institutions. It is highly recommended that HEIs of Muslim nations to promote student exchange programs among Muslim higher education institutions.

#### **Recommendations for the Development of Muslim Knowledge-based Society**

The present study suggests the development of an association of HEIs in the Muslim countries which will play a pivotal and vital role in bridging the gap among Muslim nations through numerous internationalization programmes, in specific, the Internationalization at Home (IaH) activities and initiatives. The members of this association should be having meetings and discussions of how to develop students to be a global citizenship, not only to develop their own nation but also the other Muslim nations. Activities that tie the students together internationally among the Muslim nations will benefit them as individual and at the same time strengthening the relationship among the Muslim nations. These actions would be presented and discussed as a vehicle of dialogue amongst the academic community, political leadership and the elite in the Muslim nations, as well as the students themselves.

One main aspect of Muslim HEIs that warrants specific note and urgent actions is the student international mobility. The youth of Muslim nations are seeking to enter a system of higher education that continues to fulfill their needs and the needs of society. This young generation of Muslim students have legitimate expectations but face economic and political constraints which need to be addressed and resolved instantly. Urgent action in formulating a program for international education reforms among the HEIs in Muslim countries is called for in order to foster cooperation of students and staff exchange, encourage joint postgraduate programs and address research problems common to all nations. The establishment and expansion of these programs for exchange of students and staff amongst Muslim universities are envisaged in a way that bring harmony and unity in Muslim world. These collaboration activities through increased IaH strategy aims at supporting Muslim community cooperation, promoting joint postgraduate study and research programs, fostering mobility of students and consolidating exchange of academic staff, accelerating the process of internationalization and institutional capacity building, sustaining employability and enhancing the knowledge-based economy in the Muslim world. Furthermore,



annual conferences are recommended which involve university presidents from the universities in Muslim countries where fruitful collaboration takes place in several fields such as:

- Student and staff mobility
- Starting Joint degree programs
- Mutual research projects

The aim is to enable HEIs in Islamic countries to benefit from the expertise and experience of international universities through increased collaboration. It is further suggested that organizing semi-annual and annual workshops for all universities in Islamic countries to share knowledge of this network and to explain its objectives, mission, expected outcomes, best practices, and future plans.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that development and global education at the local level in the Muslim countries is highly needed and integral part of the curriculum and all other global education efforts must focus at the local level. This calls for establishing ways, methods, and means of making global education at the community level self-reflective, non-discriminatory and socially inclusive. Being considered global and international education as the right of all students, the aim of all global educational initiatives should be the development of students' capabilities, attitudes and values, and enable them to work together towards societal transformation. At the same to encourage more people to work towards positive change and enhance the sense of their responsibility as global citizens.

Muslim HEIs requires major reform in order to keep abreast with global changes and advancements and to serve socio-economic developmental goals. The state of internationalization strategic plans, in particular, remains much lower than national and international aspirations and as such needs alignment with the actual needs of society and state. Governments of these countries must prepare national and collaborative strategic plans with other Islamic countries for science, technology, and research in order to tune all sectors within the state to work together towards common objectives and key performance indicators, including universities and higher education institutions. In this way, HEIs are integrated onto the economic and industrial sectors in order to serve the goals and objectives of people, society and state. The establishment of an association of HEIs in Islamic countries would empower research and development, capacity building, exchange of students and staff amongst universities and institutions of higher education, and enhance and consolidate the cooperation between Muslim countries.

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