

**Exploring the impacts
of transnational education
on host countries:**
a pilot study



Going Global 2014

Higher Education Summit in the year of the UK's presidency of the G8

In May 2013, the British Council convened the 'Higher Education Summit in the year of the UK's G8 presidency.' The summit brought together more than 30 higher education leaders from 17 countries, including heads of national agencies and representatives of Ministries of Education. This summit followed similar events held alongside the G8 in Washington DC in 2012 (hosted by the Institute of International Education), and in Paris in 2011 (hosted by Campus France).

The British Council focused the discussion of its 2013 Higher Education Summit on the local impact of transnational education (TNE) in supporting economic empowerment and the development of global knowledge societies. This pilot study was commissioned in advance of, and for discussion at the Higher Education Summit.

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Executive summary

Transnational education (TNE) is a topic of increasing importance in the overall higher education landscape but research thus far has generally been from the perspective of sending/awarding countries. This report summarises the results of a pilot study commissioned by the British Council to explore the impacts of TNE on host countries, from the host country perspective.

Four impact categories were assessed: academic impacts, economic impacts, skills impacts and socio-cultural impacts.

Ten host countries were included in the study as sources of information: Botswana, China, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, the UAE and Vietnam.

The views and opinion data presented in this report are drawn from 346 TNE graduate/current student responses to an online survey and 24 telephone interviews conducted with TNE actors across the ten study countries. All data were analysed in the aggregate, across all countries, rather than at the individual country level. The findings of this pilot study are indicative and illustrative and caution is advised about drawing firm conclusions from the information presented in this report.

Key findings

• Academic impacts

The research suggests that, of the four main impact categories considered, TNE may be having the greatest effect in host countries via academic impacts: capacity building at the institutional/programme level in terms of teaching and assessment methods, programme management, and quality assurance processes. Students, in general, appear to be satisfied with the structure and teaching methods of their TNE programmes. The use of problem-based learning and more flexible classroom dynamics compared with local programmes was generally considered a positive characteristic of TNE programmes. However, some frustration was expressed in relation to governance and administration. The desire to partner with well-known and highly ranked institutions was evident and a priority for many host institutions.

• Economic impacts

TNE appears to play an important role in facilitating study while remaining employed, possibly creating a more dynamic labour force and allowing new skills to be applied

quickly in the work place. This is suggested by the high number of part-time/flexible students, the broad age range of survey respondents, and the high proportion of students who continued in the same job after graduation. TNE does not appear to be driving significant levels of foreign direct investment – such as investment in university buildings, IT networks and research facilities – but is creating local income generation by attracting international students and faculty and by retaining local students.

• Skills impacts

The research suggests that TNE programmes are generally developing skills needed in the host country labour market, particularly through masters'-level programmes. A high proportion of survey respondents selected their TNE programme for the purposes of skills development and career advancement. Skills such as communication and analytical thinking appear to be enhanced by TNE and required by employers. It also appears that students believe TNE enhances their hiring and promotion prospects. On the negative side, there is some evidence of TNE exacerbating brain drain and in some cases not meeting technical and science skills gaps.

• Social-cultural impacts

The research suggests that TNE is resulting in positive socio-cultural outcomes in the host country and little negative sentiment was expressed. The most frequently identified socio-cultural benefit was the opportunity of studying in English and an increased understanding of other cultures. There was little evidence of the erosion of national identity or conflict with local higher education institutions (HEIs) and communities. Concerns about Western-centric programmes and an asymmetrical exchange of information were expressed by some host institutions.

• Lack of data

The numbers and types of TNE programme have increased substantially but there is little national data available in the host countries on economic impacts, whether labour market needs are being met by skilled TNE graduates, or if overall access or quality of higher education is enhanced. For the most part, only anecdotal impact evidence is available and that is primarily at the institutional level. A more systematic collection of data at institutional and national levels is necessary.

Next steps

A follow-up study was commissioned by the British Council and DAAD in October 2013 with a view to exploring the pilot study findings in greater detail and ultimately developing more concrete findings on the impacts of TNE on host countries. Many invaluable methodological lessons were learned from the pilot study. The follow-up study seeks views from a much broader group of host-country stakeholders and also includes a different mix of host countries. The findings of the follow-up study will be presented at the British Council's Going Global conference in Miami, Florida, on 30 April 2014.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Transnational education (TNE) is a topic of increasing importance in the overall higher education landscape, given its increase in scale and geographical scope in recent years. It is also a topic of increasing complexity and diversity, as evidenced by the many different forms it can take and its country-specific impacts and characteristics. Exactly defining TNE has always been difficult, but the basic principle involves the delivery of higher education programmes in a different country from the one where the awarding/overseeing institution is based. This means that students can study towards a foreign qualification without leaving their country of residence – although TNE often does involve some short-term study in the awarding country. In addition to local students, a significant proportion of students enrolled on TNE programmes in host countries are international students who travelled to the host country to study a particular TNE programme.

In short, TNE involves the mobility of academic programme and providers/institutions across jurisdictional borders to offer education and training opportunities. In some cases, there is collaboration with a local institution or provider (twinning, franchise, validation, joint and double-degree programmes), or it can involve setting up a satellite operation (branch campus). The development of bi-national universities involves the establishment of a new institution through collaboration between higher education partners in two countries.

Thus far, research on TNE has generally been from the perspective of sending/awarding countries. Relatively little research has been

conducted to investigate the impacts of TNE on the host country. The British Council began a process of addressing this gap in the literature by producing case studies on the impacts of TNE in three host countries: China, Malaysia and the UAE, the main findings of which were presented at the Going Global conference held in Dubai in March 2013 and later published in a British Council report¹.

The case studies were informed by interviews with host country higher education experts and senior leaders of foreign institutions located in the three host countries. The research found that the impacts of TNE on host countries are diverse, and can have both positive and negative consequences. The research also noted the difficulty of understanding the impacts of TNE given the confusion about the essential features and differences among the various TNE modes, the lack of comparable enrolment data, and the shortage of empirical evidence.

This briefing paper summarises the results of a pilot study commissioned by the British Council to further explore the impacts of TNE on host countries. Provisional findings of the research were presented in May 2013 on the occasion of a higher education summit in the year of the UK's G8 presidency. The specific objectives of this research study were:

- 1 To gather opinions from higher education experts and students enrolled in TNE programmes on the impacts of foreign education programmes being offered in host countries through different TNE modes of delivery.
- 2 To use the opinions and empirical data to make some indicative and illustrative observations on the impacts of TNE on host countries.

- 3 To use the pilot study research methodology and findings to inform a larger study on the impacts of TNE on host countries, the results of which are to be released at the British Council's annual international education conference, Going Global, from 29 April to 1 May 2014 in Miami, Florida.

1.2 Report structure

The report has seven chapters. This introductory chapter provides background and context to the research and explains where it fits with other British Council research. The methodology undertaken is briefly discussed in the following chapter. The main findings of the research are presented under four impacts categories: academic impacts, economic impacts, skills impacts, and socio-cultural impacts, discussed from chapter three to six. The report ends with concluding remarks and an introduction to the follow-up study in chapter seven.

¹ The shape of things to come – The evolution of transnational education: data, definitions, opportunities and impacts analysis (September 2013) www.britishcouncil.org/sites/britishcouncil.uk2/files/the_shape_of_things_to_come_2.pdf

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2. Methodology

2.1 Country selection

The following ten countries were selected for inclusion in the pilot study:

Table 1. Pilot study countries

1. Botswana	6. Russia
2. China	7. Singapore
3. Malaysia	8. South Africa
4. Mexico	9. UAE
5. Pakistan	10. Vietnam

The countries were chosen on the basis of a number of criteria, including: maturity of TNE locations, diversity of TNE delivery modes and geographical mix. The ten host countries in the selected group came from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

2.2 Desk research

A programme of desk research was undertaken to review available literature on the subject of the impacts of TNE. Sources included publications and data produced by government agencies and higher education institutions in the selected host countries, as well as the main sending countries (notably Australia, Germany and the UK). Previous research and data produced by the British Council on the subject of transnational education was also reviewed and used to inform the pilot study. In general, however, there is a dearth of information available on the topic of the impacts of TNE on host countries.

2.3 Online survey of current students and recent graduates of TNE programmes

A survey targeted at current students and recent graduates of TNE programmes was posted online from mid March to early May 2013. The survey included profiling questions about the respondent; a section on their TNE educational experience; a series of questions focusing on skills, knowledge and cultural awareness gained; and a final section related to employment before, during and after the TNE experience. While TNE providers and programmes were targeted in all ten selected host countries, in practice a critical mass of 25-plus fully completed student responses was achieved in five countries: Botswana, Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore and Vietnam.

2.4 Telephone interviews with higher education experts and TNE practitioners

A programme of telephone interviews was undertaken with higher education experts and TNE practitioners in all ten host countries. Four impacts categories were explored in the interviews: economic impacts, skills impacts, academic impacts and socio-cultural impacts. Higher education experts were composed of senior Ministry of Education and quality assurance agency officials, an international education hub co-ordinator, international education academics and researchers. TNE practitioners were composed of vice-chancellors, faculty deans, heads of international departments and associate professors at host country HEIs delivering TNE programmes. Assistance was provided by Australian Education International (AEI), the British Council, Campus France, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Institute of International Education (IIE) in arranging interviews with relevant contacts in the host country. Overall, 24 telephone interviews of approximately 30 minutes each were conducted across all study countries.

Table 2. Summary of survey responses and interviews by country

	Survey responses	Local HEIs interviewed	TNE experts interviewed
Botswana	103	2	2
China	2	1	1
Malaysia	33	2	0
Mexico	26	2	1
Pakistan	0	0	1
Russia	0	0	1
Singapore	30	1	0
South Africa	1	2	1
UAE	15	1	1
Vietnam	38	3	0
Other	98 (mainly France, Germany, UK and US)	0	2 (Germany)
Total	346	14	10

Note: Since part of a TNE programme is often delivered in both the sending and host countries, 98 respondents reported their main study location as being a sending country, mainly France, Germany, the UK and the US.

2.5 Challenges and limitations of the research

A few challenges and limitations of the research are outlined as follows:

- **Data analysed in the aggregate**

Because of the limited survey and interview sample size, and because of gaps in the data and low response rates for some of the study countries (see Table 2), the data have been analysed in the aggregate across all countries, rather than at the individual country level. While this is beneficial for gaining an overall perspective on the impacts of TNE, there may be significant variations at the individual country level, given the diversity of the host country higher education systems and the differing mix of TNE delivery modes prevalent in each country.

- **Unequal representation of countries**

Persuading TNE graduates/students to complete an online survey proved very difficult in some countries. Reasons for this included cultural aversion to completing surveys; language barriers, as the survey was only available in English; and the relatively limited scale of TNE activity in some countries. Therefore, four study countries – China, Pakistan, Russia and South Africa – are not represented by the survey data. The TNE experts' views are also relatively under-represented for Pakistan, Russia and Singapore.

- **Selected TNE stakeholder groups**

Considering this was a pilot study and consequently limited in scope, the target groups selected for data gathering were confined to three groups in the host countries: TNE students/graduates, TNE practitioners and higher education experts. There are a number of other relevant stakeholder groups whose views should be collected by further studies, such as host country HEIs not delivering TNE programmes, non-TNE graduates/students and employers of TNE graduates.

3. Academic impacts

3.1 Student views

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3.2 Expert views

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3.1 Student views

The following table presents a summary of the student and programme survey profile data.

Table 3. Profile of survey respondents

Category	Indicator	Criteria	%
Student profile (346 responses)	Gender	Female	55
		Male	45
	Age	Under 24	24
		25-35	55
		Over 35	21
	Graduate versus current student	Still studying TNE programme in 2013	42
		Graduated 2012	26
		Graduated 2011	7
		Graduated 2010	11
Programme profile (346 responses)	Level of study	Master's/MBA/PhD	48
		Undergraduate	45
Professional		7	
	TNE programme study format	Full time²	64
		Part time	28
		Flexible	8
	Institutional mode of TNE study	Host country university	38
		International branch campus	28
		Study in two countries	23
		Distance learning	11
	Top five awarding countries	UK	45
		France	10
		Ireland	7
Germany		4	
USA		4	
Top five study subject areas	1. Business 2. Computers 3. Medicine 4. Social studies 5. Engineering		

² There is a lack of definitional consistency regarding what constitutes a full-time versus part-time programme. A significant proportion of full-time students also reported themselves as being full-time employed. Students undertaking periodic intensive blocks of study at weekends and evenings are often categorised as full-time students, while maintaining a full-time job.

TNE graduates and students were asked the following questions in the survey:

Why did you choose your TNE programme?

Answered 321, skipped 26

The main academic themes that emerged from responses are presented in order of importance:

- **Structure of the TNE programmes**

A number of respondents specifically mentioned the perceived benefits of receiving a double degree qualification. The ability to top-up a local diploma qualification to a foreign degree qualification was also cited as important. Other respondents mentioned the option to study part-time and the flexibility this afforded to balance study, work and life requirements as a major attraction.

- **Specific qualification on offer**

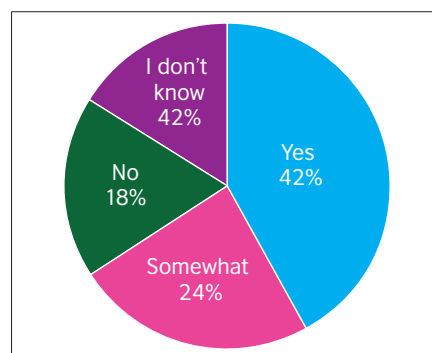
Many students chose their TNE programme because of the specific qualification on offer. Finance and IT subjects were frequently mentioned, as well as niche subjects such as quantum optics and health economics. In a separate survey question, 50 per cent of respondents stated that their TNE programme was not available from a local HEI; 30 per cent stated it was and 20 per cent stated they didn't know if it was available locally.

- **Prestige of TNE partner institution**

The prestige of the TNE partner and its ranking in a particular subject field was considered important by students. Other respondents mentioned the reputation of the foreign higher education system more generally and the importance of a qualification from two economically powerful and significant countries.

Do you think that the methods of teaching and learning are in any way different on TNE programmes than programmes offered locally?

Answered 321, skipped 26



Two thirds of respondents believe that the methods of teaching and learning are different on TNE programmes. The main underlying themes to emerge are discussed in order of importance:

- **Use of problem-based learning and class interaction**

By far the main theme to emerge from responses to the above question relates to the wide use of problem-based learning and self-directed learning, which was generally considered a positive characteristic of TNE programmes. TNE programmes were reported to encourage more discourse and interaction with fellow students and teachers, and to have more flexible classroom dynamics overall compared with local programmes. A few students commented on differences in terms of passive versus active learning, with TNE programmes offering a higher level of experiential learning.

- **Courses in condensed module need more time**

Another major difference related to the use of intensive teaching blocks on TNE programmes, e.g. three days per month. Students reported difficulties with this approach, citing being subjected to too much material in a short space of time, the pressure of having to balance study and family life during these periods, and over-reliance on assignments and project work instead of face-to-face time with the teacher. The condensed module format is usually associated with fly-in faculty.

- **More support from foreign/external lecturers needed**

Local faculty were reported as not having teaching skills on a par with faculty from the TNE country of origin. However, the non-availability of TNE teaching faculty was a concern expressed by a few respondents, who cited a desire for more support from foreign/external lecturers, especially fly-in faculty.

- **Administration needs to be quality controlled**

Some students expressed frustration at the governance and administration of their TNE programme. Issues raised include the length of time it takes for examination results to be released, a lack of postgraduate alumni support structures, and general poor levels of organisation and communication between the host and foreign partner institutions. There are conflicting views in relation to the adequacy of the provision of classroom facilities and teaching material, with some respondents citing a lack of resources; and about the same number expressing satisfaction with resources provided on TNE programmes.

3.2 Expert views

The views from higher education experts and TNE practitioners interviewed are presented as follows:

- **Institutional and faculty capacity building**

The evidence from interviews conducted with TNE administrators in local partner HEIs suggests that TNE is having significant impacts via institutional and faculty capacity building in the host country. Several examples of knowledge transfer were provided across three main areas: learning, teaching and assessment methods; higher education administration and governance; and quality assurance. The TNE experts interviewed were generally of the view that local HEIs are learning quickly from their foreign partner HEIs, and in some cases are adopting increasing levels of responsibility and autonomy for delivering the programmes. Faculty mobility, both inward and outbound, was frequently mentioned as an important facilitator of the knowledge exchange process.

- **TNE achieving higher standards of education – mixed views**

The impact of TNE on local higher education standards appears to be mixed. Overall, TNE programmes are perceived as being of a relatively high quality and collaboration with foreign HEIs appears to have enhanced the quality-assurance systems in a number of local HEIs interviewed. A number of experts believe that TNE has raised local higher education standards more generally, particularly in relation to teaching material and curriculum development. Independent forms of TNE delivery, such as international branch campuses or distance learning, result in less interaction between the sending and local institutions and are therefore perceived as having less impact on the host country education system. A few local HEIs and TNE experts expressed concern about the presence of low-quality TNE providers, the fact that much TNE activity is not regulated by the government, and the consequent negative impact this can have on overall higher education standards and student

welfare. There was also a view that TNE has had a limited impact on increasing the quantity and quality of research output in the host country.

- **New programme offerings and credentials – mixed views**

TNE is generally reported to result in new academic programmes and credentials being introduced in the host country. One of the host country regulatory agencies reported approximately 240 different TNE programmes on offer in 2013. However, a few interviewees expressed the view that TNE providers are simply reproducing the same programmes already on offer in local HEIs in subject areas such as business, engineering and law.

- **Status and branding impact**

Local HEIs are conscious of the positive status and branding opportunities from partnering with an international HEIs of high standing. Offering joint programmes, double degrees and articulation options are seen as beneficial in terms of increasing the prestige of a local HEI's brand. This ties with the views expressed by students, discussed above, that place a high value on the prestige of the foreign TNE partner.

³ TNE administrators generally refer to vice chancellors, vice presidents/presidents, head of international office, faculty deans and professors in the host country TNE partner.

⁵ TNE experts generally refer to Ministry of Education officials, international education hub co-ordinators, TNE regulatory officials and international education academics.

4.1 Student views

The following table presents a summary of the economic survey profile data.

Table 4. Economic profile of survey respondents

Category	Indicator	Criteria	%
Economic profile (321 responses)	Funding source ⁵	Personal/family	71
		Scholarship	38
		Student loan	11
		Employer	8
	Current economic status	Full-time employed	59
		Studying only	22
		Unemployed	13
		Part-time employed	6
	Length of time to find a job after graduation (187 responses)	Continued in existing role	47
		Within three months	34
		Within six months	8
		More than six months	6
	Top five industry employers of TNE graduates (201 responses)	1. Teaching and education	
2. Business and management			
3. Information technology			
4. Banking and finance			
5. Public sector			

Survey respondents were asked the following question:

Why did you choose your TNE programme?

Answered 321, skipped 26

The main economic themes that emerged from responses to this question are presented in order of importance:

- **High-quality foreign education at a lower cost**

Overall, respondents perceive TNE programmes as an economical way to achieve a high-quality foreign education. Many respondents stated that they chose their TNE programme because the tuition

fees were low-cost, affordable, reasonable, acceptable or cheaper than studying the entire programme abroad. For a few respondents, the ability to work and study at the same time was considered cost-effective.

- **The opportunity to experience the international business environment**

A few respondents emphasised the role that TNE programmes with study-abroad components can play in experiencing an international business environment. Spending time in emerging markets and leading global cities was viewed as a way of gaining an international profile and developing international networks. A separate question in the survey showed that approximately one

in four respondents studied part of their TNE programme in the foreign partner/parent country.

- **Funding was available**

Some respondents simply chose their TNE programme because funding was available or scholarships were provided. The survey profiling data show that 38 per cent of respondents' TNE programmes were partially or entirely funded by scholarships, the majority of these provided by the host country.

4.2 Expert views

The views from higher education experts and TNE practitioners interviewed are as follows:

- **TNE supporting economic development**

There were some general comments relating to the role that TNE can play in supporting economic development. A number of experts mentioned the high proportion of part-time TNE programmes allowing students to work and study at the same time. The flexibility of TNE programme delivery was felt to promote a more dynamic labour force and allow new skills to be applied quickly in the workplace. The survey profile data supports this assertion with 36 per cent of respondents studying part-time or flexible TNE programmes. In addition, a significant proportion of respondents that categorised themselves as studying full-time programmes also categorised themselves as full-time employed. This is somewhat confusing, but was explained by one TNE expert as relating to the common use of intensive teaching blocks, e.g. four days per month, and the fact that such programmes are often described as 'full-time' programmes by the relevant HEI. Students on these programmes will often balance their study with a full-time job.

The different TNE pricing models were also reported as being useful for reaching different socio-economic groups in the host country. However, TNE was not generally perceived as providing increased access to higher education for the overall tertiary-age population. This was partly attributed to the small proportion of the total higher education system that TNE represents in most host countries.

⁵ Note: since students could select more than one funding source, the total percentage exceeds 100 per cent.

A few respondents were of the view that TNE is resulting in limited research output. However, evidence was also provided of the role that TNE has played in developing research capacity in Abu Dhabi. Overall, a lack of system-level views was apparent from the interviewees, with many citing a lack of hard data about the economic impacts of TNE and a great need for empirical study in this area.

- **TNE is generally considered good value for students, but some double and joint degrees are very expensive.**

Fees for TNE programmes appear to vary significantly from country to country and within country, depending on the mode of delivery and the status of the sending partner HEI. Fees for international branch campus programmes and joint/double degree programmes were frequently reported as several times the price of a local programme. Nevertheless, interviewees generally felt that TNE represents good value – for those who can afford it – considering the alternative cost of studying the entire programme abroad. Scholarships were frequently mentioned as being available for TNE programmes.

- **TNE not driving significant levels of foreign direct investment (FDI), but some evidence of improved laboratories and IT facilities**

Evidence provided by the host HEIs interviewed suggests that TNE is not resulting in significant levels of FDI. The construction of classrooms and the provision of accommodation for TNE students are generally financed by the host HEI or the host government. Some limited evidence was provided of foreign HEIs contributing to improved laboratory and IT facilities.

- **Some evidence of income generation locally via tuition fees and salaries**

TNE does appear to be attracting significant numbers of international students to the host country. A number of examples were provided of TNE programmes where international students represent 20-plus per cent of students enrolled. This generates income for the host institution and local economy via tuition fees and accommodation and living expenditure. In addition, TNE is viewed by some host HEIs as a way to reduce outbound mobility of domestic students, thus reducing the outflow of currency.

Evidence of income generation from faculty mobility is mixed. The majority of host HEIs interviewed use a mix of fly-in faculty and local faculty to deliver their TNE programme. Fees for foreign faculty are generally a multiple of local faculty fees. However, since these fees are generally repatriated to the sending country, this has little impact on the local economy. A few respondents reported that they can't afford to pay the wages of foreign faculty and therefore all teaching is conducted by local faculty. Overall, the interviews suggest that profit generation is not a strong motivation for host HEIs to deliver TNE programmes.

5. Skills impacts

5.1 Student views

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5.2 Expert views

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5.1 Student views

TNE graduates and students were asked the following questions in the survey:

Why did you choose your TNE programme?

Answered 321, skipped 26

The main skills-related themes that emerged from the responses to the above question are presented as follows, in order of importance:

- **Improve skills for career advancement**

A relatively high number of respondents stated that they chose their TNE programme to develop their skill set and this was generally viewed as a means to securing a good job or advancing their career. In some cases, respondents mentioned requiring skills in general subject areas, such as computing, finance and languages; in other cases, specific subjects such as quantum optics, health economics and strategy management were mentioned. Others stated that the TNE programme addressed national skills requirements, was listed under 'scarce skills' by the Ministry of Labour, was relevant to the industry, or was relevant to the modern working environment.

- **Improve language skills to get a good job**

Developing improved language skills, particularly English language skills, was frequently mentioned as a specific reason for choosing a TNE programme. Graduating with advanced foreign language skills was considered an added bonus to attaining the underlying TNE qualification, and one that was linked to improved employment prospects.

- **Internship attached to programme**

A handful of respondents reported choosing their TNE programme because it included an overseas work placement or internship option. This was linked to the double degree structure of the TNE programme.

- **What skills are augmented by TNE programmes?**

Answered 316, skipped 31

Survey respondents were provided with a list of 23 different skills and were asked to rate the extent to which these skills were enhanced (or not) by studying their TNE programme, on a scale of one to five. Overall, respondents reported a very high

rating for skills enhancement, with an average score of four out of five for each skill. However, the lack of differentiation of scores between the 23 skills makes analysis of the feedback quite difficult. Possibly too many skills were requested to be rated, such that respondents didn't give due consideration to each. This may have resulted in socially desirable responses or repetitive rating selection. Nevertheless, the top five rated skills are listed as follows:

- 1 Knowledge
- 2 Ability to continuously learn
- 3 Communication
- 4 Adapting to change
- 5 Analytical thinking.

The most significant outlier was 'non-English language skills' being the only skill rated less than three out of five. This is likely due to the fact that the vast majority of respondents studied their TNE programmes via the English language.

- **What skills are required for current job?**
Answered 199, skipped 148

Survey respondents in full-time or part-time employment were provided with a similar list of skills to the question directly above and asked whether these skills were required in their current job. This time a simple yes or no answer was required, rather than a one to five rating. This resulted in a higher level of scoring differentiation between the 23 skills listed. The top five skill requirements are listed as follows:

- 1 Communication
- 2 Time management
- 3 Analytical thinking
- 4 Teamwork
- 5 English language.

The overlap between communication and analytical thinking in both groups suggests that TNE programmes are developing some of the skills required by employers. While English language scored in the top five, non-English language was again scored very low by respondents. However, given the limited number of respondents to this pilot survey, and the diversity of countries and labour markets from which these views are drawn, the findings should only be interpreted as being provisional and indicative.

Do employers perceive TNE programmes to be advantageous?

Answered 311, skipped 36

- **Yes – 70 per cent**

The majority of respondents were of the view that employers are positively disposed to TNE graduates. A number of respondents expressed the view that employers favour TNE graduates for promotion over graduates of local non-TNE programmes. The main reason provided was that TNE is providing the skills demanded by employers. Specific skills mentioned include independence, adaptability, confidence, leadership and intercultural competence. It should be acknowledged that since respondents had already chosen a TNE programme, there may be some positive reporting bias to this question.

- **No – 17 per cent**

For the 17 per cent that responded 'no' to this question, the main reason given was that employers are not always aware of whether a qualification was studied via TNE or not. Also, employers were reported as sometimes being sceptical of new programmes. It was also mentioned that professional qualifications, such as the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) accounting qualification, are deemed the same, regardless of whether they are delivered via TNE or not.

5.2 Expert views

The views from higher education experts and TNE practitioners interviewed are presented as follows:

- **TNE is addressing skills gaps, especially at master's level**

The majority of the 24 TNE experts and HEI representatives interviewed were of the view that TNE is addressing skills gaps in the host country, especially at master's level. One regulatory agency in the UAE stated that applications for establishing new international branch campuses are partially assessed on the basis of whether the proposed programmes match the skills needs of the local economy. Qualifications in tourism and hospitality, logistics, transportation, trade, and air and rail programmes were reported as currently being in big demand. One sending HEI stated that its graduate programmes (but not its undergraduate

programmes) are being developed in line with local labour market needs in the UAE. One Chinese TNE expert stated that graduates from TNE programmes in China are more labour-market ready because they have advanced critical thinking, decision-making ability, organisation skills, language skills and experience of working in groups.

Specific skills and knowledge developed by TNE programmes in Botswana were reported as:

- accounting, IT, human resources, commercial supplies and other business-related disciplines
- practical experience of software engineering and systems support
- mining and engineering
- creative arts, creative multimedia, film and TV, design and animation.

Some contrary views were expressed. One South African university representative felt that TNE is not addressing technical skills gaps and is too Western-centric. Another university representative felt that the historic advantages of studying a TNE programme in Malaysia are being diminished because local universities have learned how to deliver similar programmes independently.

• Evidence of strategic approach to TNE

Some interesting examples of the relationship between TNE and industry were provided. Graduates of German engineering programmes taught in Singapore were reported as highly demanded by Germany semiconductor companies based in Singapore. Graduates of Japanese engineering programmes taught in Mexico are reportedly snapped up by Japanese manufacturing companies based in Mexico.

A double degree master's programme in European Society was reported as specifically established to meet social science skills gaps in Russia. One forward-looking Mexican university identified skills gaps in the area of real-estate management and partnered with a US university to develop a joint programme in this area. The first cohort of graduates had an average of three job offers each, despite a tough economic environment, according to the interviewee.

• Study abroad promoting intercultural competence and language competence

A number of interviewees felt that TNE programmes with study-abroad components had the greatest impact on students' competencies. A number of interesting perspectives were provided:

- 'Students who study part of their degree abroad benefit greatly from the different cultural experience and their academic performance improves on their return.'
- 'Only TNE graduates with international study or work experience are offering more to the local labour market via increased intercultural and language skills.'
- 'The cross-cultural skills from spending part of the programme abroad are invaluable: students gain confidence and broad-mindedness.'
- 'The fact that students spend a year in the UK, where they gain self-confidence in using English every day, makes them far more desirable to employers.'

• Important link between TNE and internships/work experience

A few interviewees were keen to discuss the important role that internships and work experience play in TNE programmes, relative to local non-TNE programmes. In many cases this was reported as a mandatory component of the TNE programme. This was felt to give TNE graduates an edge when competing in the labour market. As discussed above, a similar theme was expressed by survey respondents.

• Brain drain a potential negative of TNE: mixed views

A few interviewees were of the view that TNE does result in brain drain. Graduates in the health-care sector were mentioned: doctors, nurses, psychologist and scientists. TNE graduates' connections with overseas universities were deemed to make them more likely to travel abroad for further study. One university reported sending 350 students abroad to foreign partner universities with only 50 ever returning.

A TNE expert stated that a relatively high proportion of TNE graduates end up working in an international context (e.g. banks, embassies, multinational companies, teachers/researchers), which makes them more mobile than non-TNE graduates. This was not necessarily considered to be a negative for the host country, since many were reported to return home. One host HEI representative was of the view that TNE programmes with study-abroad components actually reduce brain drain by offering international experience without having to study the entire degree abroad.

6. Socio-cultural impacts

6.1 Student views

TNE graduates and students were asked the following questions in the survey:

Why did you choose your TNE programme?

Answered 321, skipped 26

The main socio-cultural themes that emerged from the responses to the above question are presented in order of importance:

- **International experience and improved intercultural competence**

The opportunity to study abroad and gain experience of living in a foreign country was frequently cited as a main motivation for selecting the TNE programme. Key phrases such as 'explore a different culture', 'broaden horizons' and 'gain an international profile' were all mentioned. A number of students specifically highlighted the importance of improving their intercultural competence and developing the capacity to succeed internationally. However, a separate survey question about skills revealed that, while students believe TNE has enhanced their cross-cultural understanding by 'quite a bit', it was only ranked 18 out of 23 skills listed – albeit the margin of difference between the scores was very slight. This may be related to the fact that only one in four survey respondents actually spent time studying abroad on their TNE programme.

- **Languages reason – study in English**

To study in a foreign language and thereby develop language skills, particularly English language skills, was a major theme with respondents. The association was clearly made between multilingual ability and better employment prospects. However, a separate survey question about skills revealed that students believe TNE has enhanced their English language skills 'moderately' (ranked 21/23) and other language skills only 'somewhat' (23/23). This finding requires further investigation.

Do you think that the methods of teaching and learning are in any way different on your TNE programme than on programmes offered locally?

Answered 321, skipped 26

The main underlying socio-cultural themes to emerge from responses to the above question are presented in order of importance:

- **Language**

A number of students cited the requirement to learn in two or even three languages as a major pedagogical difference to programmes offered locally, where proficiency in only one language is required. For some, this represented an additional burden, but it was generally framed in a positive context.

- **Country-specific teaching and learning styles**

Many examples were provided of why a particular sending country had a different approach to teaching compared with the host country. Some examples were quite generic, e.g. 'learning methods in Australia are very different from Mexico' and others were quite specific, e.g. 'Mexican programmes are less analytical than French programmes' or 'US programmes are group work-oriented and discussion-based'.

6.2 Expert views

The views from higher education experts and TNE practitioners interviewed are presented as follows:

- **Importance of English language**

Most, if not all, of the local HEIs interviewed as part of this research deliver their TNE programmes via the English language. This includes UK programmes delivered in Botswana, China, Malaysia and Vietnam; German programmes delivered in Russia and Singapore; and French programmes delivered in Mexico. A number of experts interviewed stated that the dominant role played by English results in increased English language capability by teachers and students on TNE programmes, and is often further diffused into the local community. This was reported to result in increased awareness of Western culture in the host country, but also increased awareness of host-country culture in the sending country.

- **Positive engagement with local communities**

A number of concrete examples were provided of engagement by international branch campuses (IBCs) with local communities: volunteer teaching in rural or disadvantaged communities; the provision of free public-lecture series on socio-cultural topics; internationally focused festivals and food events; allowing campus facilities to be used by local community groups. The general view is that IBCs do engage in a positive and

meaningful way with local communities, ultimately building trust and promoting mutual understanding between the sending and host country.

However, since IBCs represent a relatively small proportion of overall TNE activity globally, much needs to be learned about the socio-cultural impacts of collaborative forms of TNE, such as franchise and validation arrangements and joint/double degree programmes.

- **Insignificant impact in regard to loss of national identity**

The charge is sometimes made that domestic students studying foreign programmes, foreign curricula and via a foreign language may lose some sense of their own national identity. This was not borne out by the current research. None of the students surveyed made reference to this being an issue and only one of 24 interviewees mentioned that TNE programmes could have this impact on students.

- **Asymmetric flow of ideas**

A number of interviewees expressed concern that TNE is overly Western-centric and is resulting in an asymmetrical flow of ideas from north to south and west to east. This can result in programmes and research output that are not directly relevant for the host country. The need for more localised curricula was stressed. On the other hand, the knowledge transfer associated with TNE was acknowledged as promoting a faster expansion of the local higher education system than would otherwise have occurred.

- **Little reported friction between IBCs and local HEIs**

Overall, there was little indication of friction between IBCs and local HEIs owing to competition for students, faculty or central government funding. It must be stated, however, that these views came from local HEIs delivering TNE programmes. Local HEIs not involved in TNE were not interviewed as part of this research. A few examples were provided of values clashes between Asian TNE providers and local students and staff: hierarchical employment policies, hiring of non-local administrative staff, and aggressive marketing practices.

The TNE student survey data and expert opinion generated by this pilot study offer some initial insights on the impacts of TNE across a diverse mix of host countries. The findings present a range of thought-provoking observations on TNE from the host country perspective and hopefully make a much-needed contribution to the stock of knowledge in this area. As intended, the research has highlighted many themes and issues that warrant further investigation.

7.1 Key findings

The key findings are discussed in relation to the main impacts categories evaluated.

• Academic impacts

The research suggests that, of the four main impact categories considered, TNE may be having the greatest effect in host countries via academic impacts: capacity building at the institutional/programme level in terms of teaching and assessment methods, programme management, and quality assurance processes. Students in general appear to be satisfied with the structure and teaching methods of their TNE programmes. The use of problem-based learning and more flexible classroom dynamics compared with local programmes was generally considered a positive characteristic of TNE programmes. However, some frustration was expressed in relation to governance and administration. The desire to partner with well-known and highly ranked institutions was evident and a priority for many host institutions.

• Economic impacts

Very little research has been commissioned in this area and hard data are largely unavailable. Few people interviewed as part of this research had views about the national level impacts of TNE on the host country. Nevertheless, a few observations can be made. TNE appears to play an important role in facilitating study while remaining employed, possibly creating a more dynamic labour force and allowing new skills to be applied quickly in the work place. This is suggested by the high number of part-time/flexible students, the high proportion of students who continued in the same job after graduation and the fact that 76 per cent of survey respondents were aged above 25 years. TNE does not appear to be driving significant levels of foreign direct investment

– such as investment in university buildings, IT networks and research facilities – but is creating local income generation by attracting international students and faculty and by retaining local students.

• Skills impacts

The research suggests that TNE programmes are generally developing skills needed in the host country labour market, particularly through master's-level programmes. A high proportion of survey respondents selected their TNE programme for the purposes of skills development and career advancement. Skills such as communication and analytical thinking appear to be enhanced by TNE and required by employers. It also appears that students believe TNE enhances their hiring and promotion prospects. On the negative side, there is some evidence of TNE exacerbating brain drain and in some cases not meeting technical and science skills gaps.

• Social-cultural impacts

The socio-cultural impact category was the most difficult to assess. Overall, the research suggests that TNE is resulting in positive socio-cultural outcomes in the host country and little negative sentiment was expressed. The most frequently identified socio-cultural benefit was the opportunity of studying in English and an increased understanding of other cultures. There was little evidence of the erosion of national identity or conflict with local HEIs and communities. Concerns about Western-centric programmes and an asymmetrical exchange of information were expressed by host institutions. It should be noted that the views of non-TNE local providers were not sought as part of this pilot study.

• Lack of data

The numbers and types of TNE programmes have increased substantially but there is little national data available in the host countries on economic impacts, whether labour market needs are being met by skilled TNE graduates, or if overall access or quality of higher education is enhanced. For the most part, only anecdotal impact evidence is available and that is primarily at the institutional level. A more systematic collection of data at institutional and national levels is necessary. Given that TNE appears to be changing in form and scale, further research is needed on types of impact, the

integrity and recognition of qualifications, the modes of TNE, and the localisation of curriculum to meet host country needs and labour market conditions.

The overall impression is one of growth and a relatively positive perception about TNE; but there is also an unsettling sense that host countries lack a TNE policy/regulatory framework, a TNE strategy, data on the extent of TNE provision and knowledge of how TNE contributes to or threatens national priorities and objectives.

7.2 Next steps

A follow-up study was commissioned jointly by the British Council and DAAD in October 2013 with a view to exploring the pilot study findings in greater detail and ultimately developing more concrete findings on the impacts of TNE on host countries. Many invaluable methodological lessons were learned from the pilot study. The follow-up study seeks views from a much broader group of host country stakeholders and also includes a different mix of host countries. The findings of the follow-up study will be presented at the British Council's **Going Global** conference in **Miami, Florida** on **30 April 2014**.

