

Transnational Education: Towards Principles and Practices to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals



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What is Transnational Education (TNE)?

TNE is education delivered in a country other than the country in which the awarding institution is based (Universities UK, 2021)

TNE is delivered through:

- online/distance learning (either with or without local support)
- through local delivery partnerships (e.g. franchised delivery, joint and dual degrees, twinning arrangements, validation and quality arrangements)
- through a UK institution's physical presence in another country (e.g. branch campus, study centre or through flying faculty).

TNE Sector context

- Over 80% of publicly-funded universities have students in TNE programmes.
 - In 2017-18: over 690,000 students studying for UK awards
- TNE contributed £610 million in exports to the UK economy in 2016 (Department for Education)
- The “International Education Strategy: global potential, global growth” (2019) jointly published by the Department for International Trade and the Department for Education, aims at 'supporting TNE as a key growth area'.

“a key
growth
area”
DfE and
DIT (2019)

TNE at DMU

11 Partners across 8 countries: China, Hong Kong, Philippines, India, Denmark, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Malaysia

Models of collaboration:

- Franchise
- Dual/Joint Awards
- Enhanced Progression Arrangements

Current total student numbers over 3 year period:
1512 (2017/18), 2141 (2018/19), 2547 (2019/20)

- 24th highest in UK HE

Income:

- £1m (2017/18), £1.45m (2018/19), £1.6 (2019/20)



มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ
SRINAKHARINWIROT UNIVERSITY



TNE at DMU

- Various partners and types of partnership
- A strategic priority for growth at present

Partner	Country	Partner Since	TNE Mode(s)
APU	MALAYSIA	2019	DUAL AWARD
SCoT	SRI LANKA	2019	FRANCHISE
AoD	SRI LANKA	2020	FRANCHISE
STUDY WORLD	DUBAI	2021	INTERNATIONAL BRANCH CAMPUS
PHARMA PARK	UZBEKISTAN	2021	FRANCHISE

Benefits and Critique

- Potential Benefits for university
 - Increased and diversified revenue - rapidly growing emerging market segment
 - Enhanced opportunities for staff mobility, research and internationalisation of the curriculum,
 - Low-cost acquisition of high-quality students through progression
- Potential Benefits for students
 - Greater access to HE for non-UK students
 - Opportunities for enhanced international mobility for UK students
- Critique
 - Literature to-date has focussed upon analysing TNE as an operating model (e.g. Healey and Michael, 2015) and less on differences by academic disciplines (UUK, British Council, 2016)
 - Post-colonialism and wider ethical concerns (Ling et al., 2014, Wilkins 2017),
 - Little research exploration of links to the sustainability agenda embodied in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

TNE, ESD, SDGs, Decolonising

- Major strategic commitments at DMU
 - SDGs at centre of strategic plan
 - Multi-year project to embed Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across institution
 - Decolonising project, challenging culture and practices linked with “academic colonialism” and inequalities of opportunity in teaching and research (Ling et al, 2014)

- How can these commitments be reflected in development of TNE?



Key Issues to Consider

1. How can TNE support capacity-building (see UNESCO, 2030) to enable universal access to quality higher education in partner countries and regions?
2. How can partnerships improve campus management and operations and trigger community-level action to enhance sustainability?
3. How can TNE learning activities respond to local contexts and to local sustainable development challenges?
4. How can TNE practice support the development of good governance in partner regions?
5. How can TNE practice reduce inequalities of power, resources and subject knowledge between partner regions and partner institutions?



Principles for Transformative TNE

- “Transformative TNE” – aiming for a transformative impact on the UN SDGs
 - in contrast to ‘Business as Usual’ TNE focussed upon generating income

Issue	Principle	Example SDG Linkages	DMU Examples of Practice
1	Capacity Building	#SDG4 (Education) #SDG8 (Economy)	Pharma Park – widening participation
2	Community and Operational Sustainability	#SDG7 (Clean Energy) #SDG12 (Consumption/Production)	Working towards agreements on campus energy efficiency
3	Contextualised Learning	#SDG11 (Cities & Communities) #SDG13 (Climate Action)	Dubai – e.g. BA Architecture
4	Soft Power	#SDG16 (Good Governance) #SDG5 (Gender Equality)	Dubai - Guidance on campus carbon footprint management, diversity of workforce
5	Equality and Mutual Learning	#SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities) #SDG17 (Partnerships)	AoD – mutual learning and sharing on sustainability

Practices – Soft Power

#SDG16 (Good Governance)

#SDG5 (Gender Equality)

DMU Dubai IBC

1. Context – DMU aligned with UAE 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
2. Good governance – legal, academic, campus & facilities management
3. Gender equality – leadership and management at IBC, UAE Gender Balance Council, Dubai Expo – focus on women and girls empowerment, DMU founding sponsor and showcasing engagement on ESD and SDGs at Expo and IBC

Practices – Equality & Mutual Learning

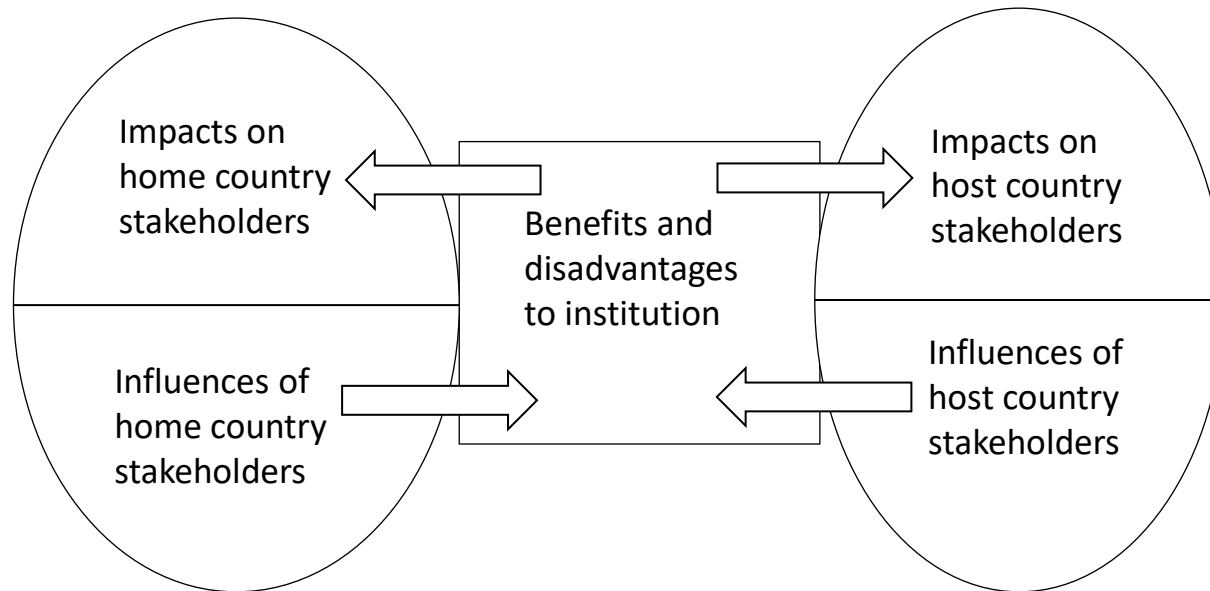
#SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities)

#SDG17 (Partnerships)

Academy of Design (AoD)

- Context – Sri Lanka and UNDP
- Partnership – commitment to teaching sustainable fashion
- Mutual learning – sustainable fashion and supply chain management

Discussion: Key Challenges



Adapted from
Wilkins, S 2017

Summary and Next Steps

- TNE can make a transformative contribution to the SDGs
 - Business as Usual may put profit over positive impacts
- Future work and questions:
 - How can TNE be encouraged towards our transformative model?
 - What barriers prevent this?
 - How can transformative impacts be evaluated?
 - Are any principles of good practice missing?

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