



The Harmony Project on Internationalisation at University of Hyderabad held a one-day workshop on ‘Internationalisation: Strategies and Challenges’ on December 19, 2022. The mandate of the workshop was to sensitise various stakeholders of the University about internationalisation practices across Europe and Asia, and explore ways in which the University of Hyderabad could benefit from the Harmony project experiences and contribute its own best practices to partner institutions. The workshop was attended by about 30 participants, including 12 deans of Schools, former and present Directors of International Affairs at the University, the Registrar, Deputy Registrars and other faculty, officers and staff associated with internationalization, and the six-member Harmony project team.



Inaugurating the workshop, the Vice-Chancellor of University of Hyderabad, Prof. B. J. Rao appreciated the efforts of the Harmony project to engage in a dialogue on internationalisation

with European institutions as well as with others in Asia. He said that the University will make efforts to meet all the goals of the project and integrate the outcomes into the University's plan for implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. He said that many of the University's faculty have developed international friendships and forged collaborative academic relationships with institutions and individuals abroad, which should be strengthened to build strong partnerships for the growth of the University.



Prof. N. Siva Kumar, the Harmony project manager and former Director, Office of International Affairs at UoH welcomed the participants and presented the context of the project within other Erasmus Plus projects that have been undertaken at the University. He shared information about other partners of the Harmony project in India, the NMIMS, Mumbai and VIT, Chennai, besides those in Vietnam, Bangladesh, Spain (with University of Zaragoza as the Harmony project lead), Lithuania, Slovenia, and Bulgaria. He appraised the University administration about the various meetings, both online and in-person, that the team has attended so far and the progress made on the project. He informed that the project will have some recommendations for internationalization that need to be discussed with various units of the University so that a policy document for UoH could be drafted, taking into consideration NEP 2020 as well as the approach to internationalization articulated in UoH's Institution of Eminence proposal. Prof. Siva Kumar also said that the workshop was a step forward towards achieving one of the goals of the Harmony project, which is Internationalisation at Home (IAH). He also informed that an MoU was signed between the UoH and the University of Zaragoza in Spain and that the University is working to build more inter-institutional collaborations.



Prof. Aparna Rayaprol, former Director of the Study in India Program (SIP) at UoH and a teacher/researcher/administrator of the Harmony team, made a presentation on the evolution of internationalization at UoH. She explained the history of University of Hyderabad's pioneering Study in India Program (SIP) for international students that commenced in 1998. It started as a small experimental, summer initiative where students from the University of Pittsburgh, USA took nine credits in nine weeks. The SIP grew steadily since then and has been recognized as the most successful program in attracting foreign students to take courses in Indian universities. Considering it as a model program, the University Grants Commission (UGC) in India has been encouraging other universities in the country to emulate this approach of offering short-term programmes ranging from a few weeks to a full semester, with credit transfer arrangements in place. For the participating students from abroad, it provides a valuable experience in international living and multicultural education. For the University of Hyderabad, the benefits have been in academic, cultural, and financial terms. Apart from the SIP, international students from about 70 countries have been coming for regular Master's and doctoral programmes at UoH.

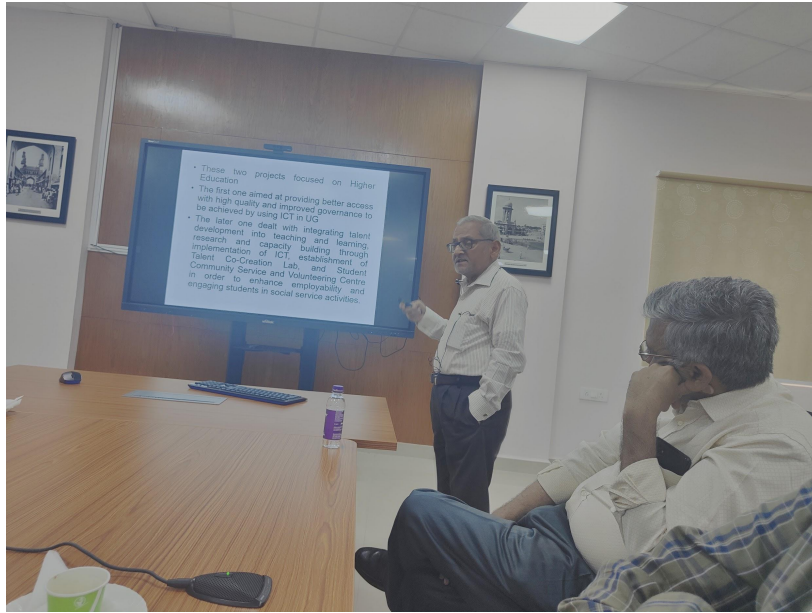


The current Director of the Office of International Affairs (OIA), Prof. Chetan Srivastava appreciated the work of the Harmony team and said that he would look forward to its support in continuing the international growth of the University. He promised dedicated efforts on the part of OIA to create a conducive atmosphere, intellectually as well as infrastructurally, to intensify internationalization at the University.



Dr. S. Shaji, former coordinator of SIP at UoH and teacher/researcher/ technical staff of the Harmony project, gave a detailed update on the study and conference visits of the Harmony project team to Mumbai, Varna, Vilnius, Zaragoza, and Danang. He pointed out that the study visits emphasised the need to support and strengthen higher education and facilitate cooperation among European and Asian universities through increased virtual and physical mobility, accessibility, modernization, diversity, cross-cultural learning and teaching, and internationalization. Dr. Shaji said, during the study visits, there was a discussion on internationalisation policy and strategies, R&D policies, and the need for increasing mobilities, both in person and virtual, across European and Asian Partners. The partner universities in EU-ERASMUS+ HARMONY project are mandated to develop a Handbook on Internationalization and focus on training staff members, initiate infrastructural development, and set up a Friends Teahouse to facilitate socio-cultural interaction between local and international students beyond the classroom. He also informed participants that the Harmony project at UoH announced a digital storytelling competition to enhance intercultural awareness and conducted a one-day workshop in October for interested students. Three prize-winning students will be sent for a 'boot camp' in Varna, Bulgaria in June 2023 where they will interact with other international students.





Prof. R. Siva Prasad, teacher/researcher of the Harmony project, reflected on his long association with EU projects and shared valuable learnings. This experience exposed them to different and new approaches to teaching-learning and models of academia-industry collaborations. He said it was rewarding to work with university colleagues from different disciplines to design modules and get training to develop e-content as well as engaging students in joint research projects. They also trained students to organize an international seminar on their own and work with faculty and NGOs. Forging both national and international collaborations and evolving a policy for the UoH would be important outcomes of the Harmony project, he pointed out.

In the last pre-lunch session, there was an open discussion where participants reminded us of the need to continue some of the good practices at UoH and work to reverse the slump in international student numbers due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Registrar and Controller of Examinations of the UoH, Dr. Devesh Nigam appreciated the contribution of the Harmony project and thanked the team members for inviting his colleagues to make presentations along with senior academics. He said that the University is willing to extend infrastructural support to move towards better facilities for international students and visitors.



The morning session concluded with a networking lunch at the Tagore International House, a residential facility with a capacity for hosting 150 international students and 12 faculty.



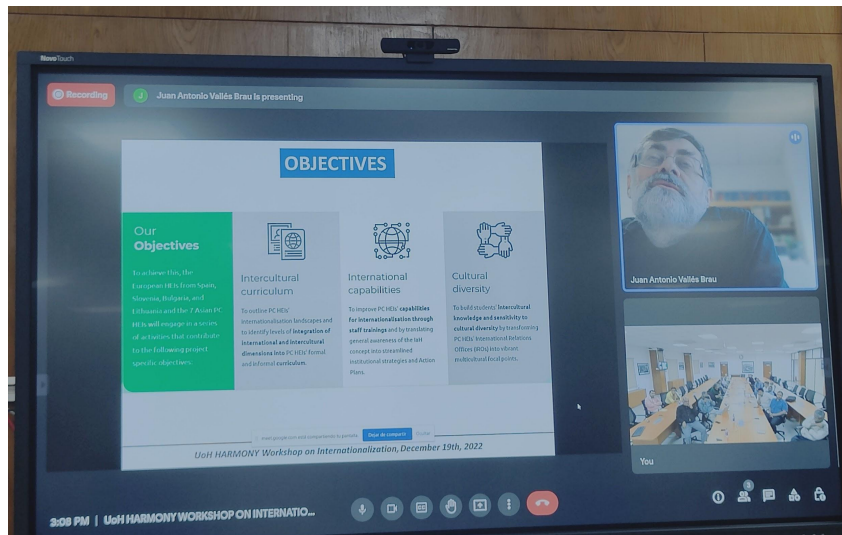
The post-lunch session started off with Prof. Vinod Pavarala, former Director of International Affairs at UoH and teacher/researcher in the Harmony project, focusing on Governance Strategies and Challenges to Internationalisation. He referred to the UGC Guidelines on Internationalisation of Higher Education, 2021 whose objective is to make India an attractive study destination for foreign students and foster international competencies in our faculty and students by developing a global mindset of our learners and shape them as global citizens. In doing so, the ultimate achievable goal and deliverable was to improve global ranking in internationalisation indicators. In order to do that, faculty, student and staff exchanges and research collaborations must be established, nurtured and consolidated. He said that the OIA had to play a crucial role in extending help to international students to adapt to the new cultural environment and make their stay in India comfortable by handholding them through the bureaucratic and academic protocols. Prof. Pavarala said OIA must maintain a database of international students, including alumni, and have regular communication with them and use them to consolidate and expand the current program.



The final speaker from the Harmony team was teacher/researcher Prof. J. Prabhakara Rao whose topic was international project management. He underlined the nature of interdisciplinarity, multi-stakeholder participation and multicultural environments of international projects where



one needs to adhere to strict timelines and have a financial discipline. The challenges included identifying areas of conflict between the project guidelines, funding agencies, and institutional practices and matching EU guidelines with national and institutional policies. Matching activities of the project team with work packages of the respective team members and preparing the academic and financial reports as per project guidelines was a major task. Organising workshops and capacity building training sessions such as the one being done for Harmony currently was a way to brainstorm and move ahead.



Juan A. Vallés, Vice Dean International, Faculty of Sciences, University of Zaragoza, Spain made a brief presentation online outlining the Harmony project objectives and informed participants about the role being played by Zaragoza as the lead University in the project. He said their team was looking forward to a visit to University of Hyderabad in April 2023 to discuss the progress of the project with UoH counterparts and decision makers at various levels.





The rest of the afternoon had presentations by three Deputy Registrars (DRs) from the central administration of the University. The first was by Dr. Bipin Varghese who shared his concerns about academic administration in the context of managing international students. He shared their learnings from a recent staff training experience in Berlin and said he truly believed that the UoH needed to grow as a world destination for education. Reviving collaborations with the institutions with which there are MOUs already is an important step that UoH can take, he said. Dr. Varghese emphasised that in order to increase international student intake we need to re-design academic practices based on various national and international ranking parameters. He said that the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) was something that one could actively pursue. In line with the project goals of Harmony, it would be good to focus on curriculum design with employability skills.



Mr. Abhishek Kumar shared his learnings on Administrative Management of Internationalisation from the workshop he attended at Freie University, Berlin. He said that the contribution of administrative staff is rarely discussed, but they are the backbone of any well-oiled machinery. The staff are expected to step up and perform with or without training. Building or strengthening structures, processes and competencies that facilitate strong, efficient and sustainable international activities, prepares universities better for internationalisation. There is a strong need for capacity building of international office staff both at an individual and an institutional level. Training and capacity building of all levels of staff certainly helps enable smoother functioning at a global level.



The final presentation of the workshop was by the Public Relations Officer, Mr. Ashish Jacob Thomas. He presented the most recent data about the University of Hyderabad and its place in the Indian and global educational scenario. He reiterated the importance of visibility of the institution to enhance internationalization. He urged that all stakeholders use the social media platforms to promote our strengths and urge alumni to help the university to increase the intake of international students and consolidate research collaborations. He pointed out that all activities of the Harmony project have been successfully promoted through the University newsletter, *UoH Herald* and its social media platforms.



Dr. Alok Kumar Mishra, Associate Director, OIA, conveyed his gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, the Deans, and the Harmony project team for conducting an invaluable workshop and asked for more support from the administration in running the international hostels and office.