

Executive summary

Background and purpose

The report is part of an analysis on the barriers to and enablers for international cooperation in the development of a EUTOPIA curriculum stemming from the EUTOPIA 2050 project. It focuses on internal rules within the partner universities and conditions imposed by (sub) national legislation and examines two types of regulatory context(s): (1) The characteristics of curriculum building and (2) the characteristics of inter-university cooperation. The second part of the analysis deals with suggestions for Quality Assessment in a European Alliance university (e.g., Hopbach 2020).

Methods

The data for the report consist mainly of semi-structured interviews with key members from relevant staff categories at each partner university but also documents describing internal regulations and strategies together with reports and policies from national stakeholders and public agencies as well as research articles on relevant areas.

Results

A description of the results that emerged from the two themes on what legislative and regulatory barriers and enablers were deemed impactful for a future expansion of the EUTOPIA educational model is summarized in Table 1.

| Table 1. | |
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| Curriculum building | |
| Barriers | Enablers |
| Social stratification of higher education | Regulations allowing the integration of course/module electives in degree programmes |
| National and local regulations controlling degree programmes | International and national networks of identity federations |
| The academic calendar | Micro-credentials |
| Recognition of student learning outcomes (+national legislation on diploma supplements) | Regulations allowing the integration of course/module electives in degree programmes |
| Brexit | |
| National regulation on language of instruction in higher education | |
| Inter-university cooperation and networking | |
| Barriers | Enablers |
| National legislation on intellectual property rights | Educational visions and strategic plan prioritizing internationalisation |
| Brexit | Joint academic core values |
| Administrative overload for participating staff | National and local stipends encouraging staff mobility |
| | Directive on Copyright and Related Rights in the Digital Single markets |

The social stratification of higher education, national and local regulations controlling degree programmes and the academic calendar are identified as the most relevant barriers for the EUTOPIA educational model with respect to curriculum building and student accessibility. They represent important obstacles to both equitable student access to the educational model and staff recruitment in the long term. The barrier of regulations on degree programmes and course electives is contextual, that is, where these regulations are restrictive they act as a barrier but are an important enabler at partner universities where they are less strict. Alleviating the effects of national regulations and legislation and the academic year for transnational collaboration in higher education would require EU harmonisation.

The identified barriers to and enablers for inter-university cooperation and networking impact the EUTOPIA educational model peripherally compared to the context of curriculum building. Most of the impact will be on staff recruitment and participation and digital sharing of educational material as the identified barriers include Brexit, national legislation on intellectual property rights and the risk of administrative overload to participating staff. Brexit represents a significant future challenge for EUTOPIA, both in terms of facilitation of student exchanges and regarding financing teacher mobility without participating in the ERASMUS+ framework.

Conclusions and recommendations

The report recommendations are guided by important factors such as promoting transnational collaborative aspects and the core principle of retaining local autonomy for the six involved partner universities as well as recognizing that EU harmonisation is required for offsetting national regulations and legislation (and is out of the scope of the alliance). EUTOPIA can challenge some of the identified barriers and utilize the enablers by committing to three main future internal strategies:

1. Securing diversity in the Connected Learning Communities through a predefined selection process
2. Developing evaluation strategies for long-term follow-up of staff and student participation and outcomes
3. Linking identity federations between the involved partner universities to promote digital accessibility to the local learning management systems/platforms