

EUTOPIA Certificate of Internationalization (EUCI)

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How the concept of internationalization has changed over time with a bini boy perspective – from trading with the Portuguese traders to studying in Romania.

Introduction

My journey in the EUTOPIA Certificate of Internationalization (EUCI) program has provided a unique platform to deepen my understanding of internationalization and intercultural exchange with a deep sense of reflection of my experiences in my international journey. As an international student and the co - founder of the International Student Union at Babeş-Bolyai University, my experience aligns with the goals of EUCI by promoting intercultural exchange, community building, and advocacy.

It's not enough to merely read about diverse cultures and admire them from afar, i have had the opportunity to live and participate actively in something completely new and different, not necessarily questioning my original believes but rather broaden my horizon and perspectives about life socially, culturally, political, and in general.

As a child, born and raised till i was 11, in Benin City, Edo State which is in the Soutern part of Nigeria. I was told stories of how our fore father traded palm oil, bronze and culturally artifact with the Portuguese and other international merchants before the British invasion in 1897. Looking back in time you will see how the idea of internationalization was perceived as merely

having trade partners globally. Until now, the perception and actions towards internationalization have changed globally.

From Benin to Ghana: The Journey Before Romania

After my early years in Benin City, I moved to Lagos for my high school education, followed by studying accountancy at Edo State Polytechnic (EDOPOLY). However, I felt the need for a fresh environment that was not too far from home yet culturally engaging. This desire led me to Ghana, an anglophone country where language would not be a barrier. Convincing my parents to let me move to Ghana took persistent effort, but they eventually supported my decision. My time in Ghana spanned seven years, during which I worked with Glo, a Nigerian-owned telecommunications company. Ghana provided an ideal mix of familiarity and novelty, allowing me to grow both personally and professionally.

When the Glo branch was sold to a new company, I saw it as an opportunity to re-evaluate my career path. Conversations with my parents helped me articulate my desire to return to school for further education. My sister, who had completed her master's in Romania, recommended it as a great place for study, with its reputation for quality education (having Babes Bolyai University topping the list) and rich cultural heritage. The idea of exploring Europe, experiencing its architecture, castles, and values, was exciting. With a longing for new challenges and global exposure, I embraced Romania as the next chapter in my journey. This decision marked the beginning of a transformative phase in my life, blending personal ambition with a commitment to academic and cultural exploration.

International activities you engaged in during your time at school

Studying in Romania exposed me to diverse students from both similar and distinct backgrounds. This gave me the opportunity to learn firsthand from these individuals, admiring their cultures and perspectives closely, rather than merely reading or watching documentaries about them. Recognizing the need for a platform where we could connect and learn from one another while

addressing the unique challenges faced by international students, I, along with other like-minded peers, founded the International Student Union (ISU-UBB). This organization, created by international students for international student support and advocacy, aims to foster community, provide assistance, and promote intercultural exchange within our university.

Co-founding the international student union, one from which I have gained a deeper understanding of multicultural relations through planning cultural activities and managing a group of volunteers to assist new students. New international students have a warm welcome to Romania thanks to the team's airport pickup service and help with academic and immigration-related inquiries. I have observed in these exchanges how students' feelings of security and belonging can be impacted by linguistic obstacles and cultural norms. My dedication to fostering an inclusive atmosphere where students from all backgrounds feel encouraged and appreciated has been reinforced by this experience, which has also brought to light the significance of empathy and patience in cross-cultural communication.

One-off events or workshops you attended in another country

How other cultures and societies approach similar issues – Madrid YE (Art and political expression)

During my study here in Romania, I participated in the "Take Part" training session in Madrid, which was a life-changing event that emphasized active engagement, intercultural communication, and young empowerment. Twenty (20) participants from 18 different countries in the workshop came from a variety of academic, professional, and cultural backgrounds, creating a dynamic setting for learning and interaction. We discussed methods for promoting inclusivity and motivating young people to participate in social and political arenas with art during the sessions. Collaborating on projects and taking part in group discussions gave me the opportunity to acquire useful knowledge about encouraging young people to be engaged citizens and establishing welcoming environments in my local neighborhood.

Additionally, the workshop gave participants invaluable practical experience with methods and resources for including youth in civic engagement and meaningful discourse, including non-violent communication. I gained knowledge of various approaches to handling cultural sensitivity,

promoting involvement, and controlling group dynamics. Everyone found it simple to share their viewpoints and experiences because of the friendly atmosphere the facilitators fostered. My knowledge of how to design youth-centered, inclusive projects that encourage involvement, and intercultural awareness has grown because of this experience, and I now have practical skills that I can use in our own community of international students.

I also observed how different societies faced similar issues at some point in time and used similar approaches to tackle them. Just as in my home country Nigeria, Fela Kuti, the Nigerian musician and pioneer of Afrobeat, used his music as a powerful tool for social and political advocacy. Afrobeat, with its energetic rhythms, jazz influences, and deeply African beats, was more than just music—it was a platform for Kuti to speak out against government corruption, societal oppression, and economic inequality. His lyrics often directly criticized Nigeria’s military regimes and social injustices, exposing the everyday struggles of the Nigerian people. Fela’s fearlessness in confronting government brutality through music resonates with similar movements in Europe, where musicians used their art to voice dissent and advocate for political change. For instance, punk rock movements in the UK during the 1970s addressed class struggles, unemployment, and discontent with political authorities. Similarly, Eastern European musicians under communist rule found covert ways to criticize state control and censorship, thus aligning with Kuti’s belief in music as a means of resistance and advocacy for the oppressed. Through different styles and unique cultural lenses, artists across continents, like Fela Kuti, tapped into music’s ability to challenge the status quo, amplify marginalized voices, and inspire social change in their respective societies.

We were charged to create a social – political campaign through art and i worked with my other participants to write a poem about the current injustice going on in my country Nigeria, for this i had to first explain the situation to them and i was shocked other could relate easily as some later shared similar instance of police oppression like in Georgia. We wrote a poem to warn the government about her current use of antigraft agency EFCC to bully and arrest citizens at clubs, and breaking into homes at odd hours which was not the usual modus operando of the agency. Our fear was that the incessant misdemeanor of the EFCC could lead to another public outrage

and protest in which the government may again use its military personnel to massacre peaceful protesters as witnessed in the Lekki toll gate.


The Lekki Massacre occurred on October 20, 2020, in Lagos, Nigeria, when military forces opened fire on peaceful #EndSARS protesters at the Lekki Toll Gate. These demonstrators, many of them young Nigerians, gathered to protest police brutality and call for the dissolution of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), notorious for its history of abuses and killings. In a haunting scene, protesters waved Nigerian flags and sang the national anthem, symbolizing a plea for unity and justice. Despite the peaceful nature of the protest, soldiers reportedly arrived and, under government orders, began shooting into the crowd, resulting in injuries and fatalities. This tragic event sparked national and international outrage, drawing attention to Nigeria's issues with police reform, governance, and human rights abuses.

**Silent Shadows,
Shattered Dreams.**

In homes once safe, now shadows creep. In clubs where laughter used to sweep, The EFCC's unjust raids, a scourge, Innocent lives, they cruelly purge.

We recall the cries, the mournful wails, EndSARS protests, harrowing tales, The Lekki massacre, a haunting night, Where justice dimmed, and hope took flight.

No more blood on our sacred ground, In peace and justice, let us be bound, Let memory guide us, fierce and true, To build a future bright and new.



#Stop_illegal_arrest #HumanRightsForAll

Internationalization Courses

Prior to attending the internationalization course with Eutopia, the center of international cooperation at Babes Bolyai University organized a course on internationalization. It shaped my understanding on internationalization, and we discussed efforts the university has taken towards that direction. At the end of the course, each participant shared new innovative ideas on the concept of internationalization which gave me an understanding of how others view internationalization.

The seminars provided a structured space to critically reflect on my experiences and the broader implications of internationalization. Engaging with other students in the program highlighted the universality of certain migration challenges, and it was rewarding to share insights and learn from diverse perspectives.

Participating in the EUCI virtual seminars also allowed me to engage with other international students across Europe and beyond discussing cultural exchange activities in a structured and academic setting.

In the future, i would like to study international development and possibly work in an international organization that would give me more opportunity to interact and contribute to the international community.

Portfolio Conclusion

My participation in EUCI has strengthened my commitment to fostering inclusivity, support, and advocacy for international students. This reflective journey has given me a clearer perspective on my role within the migration framework, enhancing my leadership and intercultural skills. By continuing to engage in internationalization efforts, I aim to contribute meaningfully to a more supportive and understanding environment for youth on the move.