

International Symposium on Double Degree Strategies  
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(References between brackets are to slides projected during the presentation)

(Slide 1)

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My presentation will be short and fairly simple. No colours. Fairly transparent. No special effects and just a few facts. Mainly factual to explain to you what the T.I.M.E. Association is, where it came from, where it is now, where it may be going in the future, and one or two considerations about the changing environment in which we operate.

I was very interested by the way to hear some of the remarks by Professor Obi and Professor Bennis. I think they have already started to explain what this kind of network actually means, what happens in this kind of network and what it can do for institutions and for students.

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The T.I.M.E Association is international network in the field of engineering education. We have 53 members today and we're present in 20 different countries including of course this one. We have three members in Japan: Keio, Tohoku, and Doshisha Universities.

As you can see the network has grown, but it has grown, let's say progressively rather than exponentially. Growth is not an objective in itself. We grow by accepting from time to time new members who typically are already cooperating with some of our existing members and new members who share our values and our goals, our objectives. This is the most important thing rather than just a pure – we don't go to rankings and say, "They're at the top, we want them." We say, "This institution is operating in a way similar to ours. Potentially, they're a friend and a member of our organisation.

What do we do? Well, international cooperation and exchange as you have heard from two colleagues who are both of course representing institutions which are members of the T.I.M.E Association.

The main goal, the main activity of our network is that we facilitate prolonged mobility of students to study for double degrees. When I say prolonged I mean not just a semester of abroad, not even a year abroad, but more than that.

Of course, this has an impact on member institutions as I think Professor Bennis very well illustrated. It's quite a complex process, internationalisation. But clearly, working towards double degrees is one way of internationalising and one way of developing the institution's understanding that what it means to internationalise.

Finally, I wish to say that this is something which I hope will be debated in the panel this afternoon. Why do we internationalise? We all assume that "international is good for you", and of course, it is. But we must ask ourselves, "What are the objectives of internationalisation." One of them of course is the promotion of quality. And institutional quality, quality in your processes and the way that you operate, and also perceived quality, because being a member of a network is a very good way to promote your institution internationally. We've seen in this in various contexts. A very simple example would be the European funding programmes where, when a consortium of members of our Association applies for funding it often mentions that it is a member of our network and very often, we're associated as an Associate Partner. This has been the case with several programmes operated by Nantes, and by Paris as well.

Basically, this is an argument which counts. We are in this network, so we do this and therefore we are really international and we are good quality institutions. An equation between international and quality I think is important.

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Some very simple figures. Over the last year we did a survey of our members. We asked them to tell us exactly how many students they had exchanged over a four-year period (in and out) and how many institutions they worked with in how many countries. And we got some very, very simple figures, you know: 53 members, currently there are roughly 315 double degree agreements in operation and these are only the ones that members tell us about, because I'm quite sure there are a few more that we don't know about. So I would say there are at least 315 bilateral agreements for double master degrees operating in the T.I.M.E Association at this moment.

What does that mean? Well, it means something I think we heard in previous presentations: we heard something about diversity and I think that is a key concept within T.I.M.E. The concept of the T.I.M.E double degree is based upon our assumption that in fact if you go somewhere else it means it is going to be essentially different, and therefore there's got to be diversity. There can't be one single model for a double degree. A double degree between Germany and Italy will not be the same as a double degree between Greece and Portugal and it won't be the same as a double degree between France and Japan for example. This also assumes that it is individual institutions and individual countries which carry the final responsibility for certifying the quality and for issuing the degrees. So it's quite a decentralised and quite a diverse system.

We estimate, based on our members' data, that there are over 500 students currently going through the system every year and as for the number of agreements I mentioned, I would suggest that this is a minimum. Probably, there are quite a few more. We also think there are over 5,000 alumni but we don't really know, because we don't know everything. This is one of the problems we have with a decentralised system: collecting data and having a clear picture of what's going on. Sometimes we know, sometimes we don't know.

Principles of the double master degree according to the T.I.M.E Association's values and regulations:

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Prolonged Study Abroad: that means more than one year abroad. Of course, with the ERASMUS Programme in Europe we've become used to seeing semesters or even trimesters or even very short stays, intensive programs. This is all very good, but it is our belief that the longer you stay in a different environment the more benefit you get. So we do insist to recognize the double degree that students must have studied abroad for more than one year. This typically means three or four semesters and it depends on the institutions.

The student is not just a temporary, sort of tourist who's just come to see what it looks like. The student on a double degree exchange is a full student of the host institution and takes the same curriculum as the home students, has the experience of cultural and linguistic immersion of course and finally, is studying for the degree of the host institution. So this is prolonged study abroad and in-depth integration into another system. We feel that's very

valuable indeed in terms of the employability of the student after graduation.

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Extra academic credits. There is no reason why somebody should get two master degrees with the same amount of study as one. Otherwise, we are devaluing the qualification concerned. So we do insist on prolonged study and extra work; basically, if you can do two masters in the same time as one master than it's like doing two half masters or two 75% masters or something like that.

No concessions. The student faces a real challenge. The study period is longer and of course you learn more things and more importantly you learn more skills, more personal skills, more cultural skills, more life skills which will be useful later on. Things like adaptability for example. Seeing your own country from the outside through the eyes of foreigners, that's an enlightening experience. I can tell you: I've been seeing my own country through the eyes of the French for the last 40 years and it doesn't look quite the same as it does when I'm in an Anglo-Saxon environment.

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So, respect for diversity, different teaching approaches, curriculum and different assessment methods, there is no single model basically for a T.I.M.E double degree. That's more or less what I wanted to say about who we are, what we do, et cetera, et cetera. I think probably later on in the final discussion there might be more things said about other activities in the T.I.M.E. Association. Let me just say that the double master was the original founding concept and that these days members of our network are doing more things together. They're doing – for example, we have an International Doctorate Charter and doctoral cooperation between our members is becoming more and more important.

As I think it was, well, probably both of our previous speakers mentioned our network members often cooperate on external funding programs such as ERASMUS MUNDUS and things like that.

There's joint research going on, faculty exchanges et cetera. It works on various levels. But the starting point is the Double Master Degree.

I'd just like to say one or two things about maybe some questions we can ask ourselves about

how we interact with our environment, and of course, our environment is the same as the environment of all our member institutions. As you know, we're living in a fairly globalised world.

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What can this kind of cooperation, double degree cooperation, bring to an institution? Well, first of all, if you are – all education institutions essentially are national-based. They're funded mostly nationally. Their culture and their staff and their students are essentially based in one country. Their degree tends to be a national degree.

I think it's very interesting what Fouad Bennis said about joint programmes and joint degrees. There are a plenty of joint programmes. Personally, I have never seen a joint degree. Does such a thing exist? Maybe it does. But essentially degrees are national-based. So all institutions are operating of course internationally, but within the reference of a national framework and of course there are cultural and intellectual assumptions and by working with people from other places the institution can get the same benefit as a student. Basically, it challenges how you see things and how you see what you're doing what your values are, et cetera, et cetera.

When I say administrative practices are challenged there was a reference in the previous presentation to internationalisation at home which I know a little bit about, having being one of the people that developed the concept.

Of course, when you start the process your first objective is to get your students out to some other place and then of course you start to want to get lots of foreign students coming in. And the presence, the simple presence in your institution of a large number of foreign students does mean that you've got to configure your resources and your practices in a completely different way. Internationalisation is not somewhere else. It's here where you are. And you can't miss it. You can't avoid it.

Of course, it can also lead to professional development in faculty and staff. And the students who don't move. What percentage of students are mobile? Not even 10%. Less, much less. The ERASMUS Programme aimed originally at 10% mobility in European students. We never got past I think 7, maybe 6 or 7%. So you know, even with a big effort over a long time, most students are not mobile. Therefore, the presence of foreign students and the presence

of foreign students who stay around for quite a long time is a great enrichment for the institution, for its students, for its administration, for its general, if you like, institutional culture.

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And then, well, belonging to a network gives you better visibility, credibility, and as I just said, and as our colleagues have said, and as others will say, there are plenty of spin-offs from Master cooperation for double degrees. For example, the doctorate. Bilateral can lead to multilateral. All agreements, double degree agreements are bilateral. But of course, people get to know each other. You probably noticed, if you're not from the T.I.M.E Association you'll probably have noticed that we are in fact a community and people know and trust and actually like each other as well. It's quite a friendly environment.

And of course, this can lead to smaller consortia or other networks, other projects, which can be multinational small groups, et cetera, et cetera. It's a fairly free environment where bilateral can lead to multilateral.

Generally, the advantage of this kind of network is that it creates a kind of state of mind where you are willing to cooperate because you see others as your friends, your colleagues, you have confidence, and you trust them. And this is a great facilitator. In fact, I would say it's a social network. It's a real social network. It doesn't just exist online. We actually meet as well and know each other and go for a beer together and talk about other things et cetera. So it's a friendly network, if you like.

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One or two challenges very quickly. We assume, I think we all assume that study means – study is something which happens between secondary education and employment. What about lifelong learning? What about part time study? What about social pressures and economic pressures which mean that some people can't afford to study for a long time. So we should always be ready to challenge our implicit model which is that young people leave school, go to university and then get a job. It doesn't always happen in that sequence and it may happen less and less in that sequence.

We should not be unaware of the development of online education. Different delivery methods, pedagogies and things like that. Is higher education something which happens in a

given physical place or is it something which is much more online and virtual? To be discussed this afternoon perhaps. As I think Professor Obi pointed out there is an issue of where do you provide funding for students.

One of the problems we have I think in the T.I.M.E Association is that we don't have the resources and have never given ourselves the resources to get involved in funding students and many of our members I think are in the same. There are of course funding options for students, I mean, you can go on a T.I.M.E double degree between two European countries and be considered as an ERASMUS student for the first year. For example, there is local and regional funding in various countries, national funding in various countries et cetera, but on the whole a double degree is quite an investment, so that is one of the barriers I think to developing this practice further.

And of course, the environment is changing. If you take the European example, pressure from Brussels to harmonize structures and durations between European countries means that the European Commission has been promoting for some time now a kind of implicit common model, where you have a Bachelor in three years and a Master in two more and a then a Doctorate in I don't know how many more. This kind of formatting of higher education is a bit of a challenge to what we do actually. Some people would say we're working against the Bologna Process, and I would say we're going beyond it. We're doing more, in fact. And it's never been illegal to do more.

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Anyway, I can't give you solutions to these issues now because that's not my position and this is not the place to do it either, but basically we shall have to do some serious thinking about where we are going in the future in a competitive environment.

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With that, thank you very much.

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