

# Academic Cooperation with non-European Countries – Challenges, Benefits, Lessons

Monica Jitareanu  
Global Partnership Officer  
[jitareanu@ceu.edu](mailto:jitareanu@ceu.edu)



## Exercise

- Name at least one cooperation your university has with non-European/European universities
- Name at least one challenging aspect of this/these cooperation(s)
- Name at least one benefit of this/these cooperation(s)
- Name the lesson(s) (if any) this experience has taught you/your colleagues/your university

# CEU approach to partnerships

- Reluctance towards signing Memoranda of Understanding just for the sake of collecting them
- Preference for partnerships developing from faculty contacts based on their research agenda, interests of departments/schools : ex: Korea Foundation project (International Relations Department), faculty/student exchanges (Department of History - Tokyo University of Foreign Languages), student exchange agreement with AUC (born out of SPP involvement in Egypt)
- Particular use for student exchange agreements – ex. Doctoral Research Support Program
- More recently – a focus on strategic partnerships;

# CEU partnerships with non-European universities - GTFP-determined pattern

- Potential partners are approached;
- If GTFP negotiations are successful, the partners identify 2-3 more collaborations (student exchanges, joint faculty research, etc.), and sign MoU covering all these activities and some more;
- Terms and conditions of GTFP are detailed in a Global Teaching Fellowship MoA;
- Signed agreements: American University of Central Asia (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan), Sampoerna University (Jakarta, Indonesia)
- Agreements to be signed: Asia University for Women (Chittagong, Bangladesh), Al-Quds Bard College (East Jerusalem), University of Yangon, University of Mandalay (Myanmar), Univates University (Brazil)

# Challenges (frustrations) for the GT Fellows (Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan)

- Classroom experience: language barriers, students used to a different education system
- Lack of support from local faculty
- Culture shock

# Challenges (frustrations) for academic admin (Indonesia, Myanmar, the Middle East, Bangladesh)

- Coping with different academic systems: cooperation initiated top-down, lists of “approved” universities
- Communication difficulties
- Coping with country-specific socio-political situations affecting HE
- Coping with the prejudice/misconceptions of one’s own community

# Benefits for GT Fellows

- Professional growth: teaching in different academic systems
- Personal growth through exposure to cultural differences, reevaluation (of own standards, personal experiences, home university, etc.)
- A head start on their academic career

# Benefits for CEU

- International experience;
- Good recruitment tool;
- New forms of academic cooperation: PhD degrees for faculty of partner university; agreements with governmental agencies for study abroad sponsorship, short study trips, etc.
- Reassessment of own values and practices: weaknesses of faculty-based approach to academic cooperation (GTFP – more balanced approach: involvement of central administration, faculty, and students)
- understanding the risks of underestimating different academic cultures and practices, learning how to build and maintain trust.



# Overall experience

- Witnessing clashes between different HE cultures (AUCA, AUW, SU, AQB) helps putting things in perspective and contextualize our own experience
- Intention (internationalization of the curriculum/teaching methods/classroom experience) vs. reality