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# Deliverable 3.3 Baseline study – Development needs analysis report

REPORT ON THE ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

COLLECTED FORM 8 LATIN AMERICAN SAMPLE UNIVERSITIES



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## Document Control Sheet

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## 1. Overview

Between May and June 2019, study visits were organized to the seven Latin American PROFIC partner universities, in order to conduct individual interviews with members of academic and administrative staff and group interviews with students.

The general aim was to

- identify the learning needs of partner institutions' staff in terms of supporting the development of students' intercultural competence (IC) and
- elicit staff members' ideas about professional development (PD) activities that might help them better support students' IC development.

The resulting document, based on the analysis of data collected during the study visits, ensures that PROFIC PD activities not only

- address the most prominent developmental needs, but also, to the extent possible,
- do so in the format that future participants may find most congenial with their learning preferences.

The Needs analysis report is divided into seven parts.

Part 1 provides information on the data collection procedures, timing and sample, so as to situate the study in terms of its methodology and respondents' profiles.

Part 2 focuses on the diversity reported by the respondents – staff members, on the one hand, and students, on the other. The reason for including this part is twofold. Firstly, the more diverse one believes the environment to be, the more relevant IC development will appear. Secondly, if students and staff have similar perceptions about diversity around them, it will be easier for them to work towards the common goal of developing IC; if this is not the case, they might need to make sure they find a shared goal first, for any IC fostering efforts to be perceived as relevant by students.

Part 3 presents staff's ideas on whether students need IC, what for or when, as well as the aspects of IC our respondents saw as most important for their students; after which students' views on what IC is for and on crucial IC elements are summarized. Similar to Part 2, a higher level of congeniality here will increase the face validity of the IC fostering activities offered to students. Additionally, should students' ideas be too narrow, the task of first making students aware of the full potential associated with developing IC might be of utmost relevance and PROFIC PD programme will have to make sure that the participants find ways to motivate their students.

Part 4 looks into the needs of the staff in terms of developing own IC, as well as better helping students to develop their IC. It starts with an overview of staff members' reflections on own IC – something which is of great importance for any PD programme to try to meet its participants 'where they are' in terms of IC development. After this, students' views on what staff might want to aim for in supporting student IC development and on the gaps in staff' capacities to foster students' IC development are reported.

Part 5 gives an idea of some of the current practices staff interviewed put in place to develop student IC and on the existing counterproductive practices reported by staff members.

Part 6 brings together staff and students' ideas about what IC-focused PD programme for staff should or could look like. While this part could be seen as most directly related to the contribution that the Needs analysis report can make, it is important to read Part 6 in the broader context of the developmental level at which our

respondents appear to be, and this is something that can be judged through their responses presented in Parts 2-5.

Part 7 offers some conclusions on the lessons learned.

## 2. Data collection and sample

As already mentioned, seven study visits were conducted – one per Latin American (LA) partner university. During these visits, 47 individual interviews were recorded with members of staff and 8 focus group discussions were recorded with students.

Interviews sought to get some idea of the respondent's professional profile, including their experience of dealing with culturally different persons; asked respondents about diversity they perceived to exist around them; addressed the topic of developing students' IC; and also elicited any ideas about desirable IC-focused PD activities.

Focus group discussions started with exploring students' ideas about what IC was and what it was for; asked students about their views on how university can help them in developing IC; invited students to share examples of how those working at their universities have helped them to further develop IC or have, vice versa, threatened successful development of the competence; and – if there was time – also checked whether students had any recommendations about what IC-focused PD activities for staff might look like or focus on.

Individual interviews were conducted in Spanish or English, according to the respondents' preferences; while the focus groups were conducted exclusively in Spanish, so as to permit students as much freedom of expression as possible. Individual interviews lasted between on average some 39-40 minutes. Focus group discussions lasted between 50 minutes and 1h50, with the average length of 1h26.

Students came from different departments and years of study, and also differed in terms of their experience of living and interacting with culturally different persons.

For academic and administrative staff members, 25 were female and 22 male. They had been working in their higher education (HE) institutions for between 3 and 42 years, with the average of 14 years of work experience. Most of the respondents had various roles at the university, working in both administrative and academic positions – only six respondents reported working on administrative tasks only, and only 11 mentioned only teaching, or only research and teaching work. In terms of disciplines, there was a great variety of specializations – from Economics to Arts, and from Agronomy to Psychology, Tourism, or Chemistry and other Sciences.

Those interviewed had vastly different experience of living abroad, with the maximum reported of 12 years, and several respondents having done part of their studies abroad (primary, secondary, undergraduate, or postgraduate). Some have worked abroad in a sphere unrelated to their work at the university. At the same time, six of the respondents reported to have never stayed abroad or to have never gone abroad at all, while further 12 reported to have never spent more than a month abroad. Most of those who lived abroad for more than one month, did so in the US, with Spain and Brazil being the "second most popular" destinations, at least among this study sample. Other than that, it is difficult to speak of any tendency, because while more respondents seem to have had longer immersion periods in the Americas, Italy and France were also named (apart from Spain), and some respondents reported having spent considerable time in Asia (Korea or Japan).

At the same time, only four of the respondents said that they had participated in some kind of IC-focused PD activities or training events. However, in two of these cases this was not exactly the case, since one of those who answered positively, saw an English language course as such training, while the other one equated

participation in the creation of an international research network to IC training. One of the respondents said that such training formed part of this/her learning how to teach, and the fourth one spoke of a series of PD activities related to intercultural education.

### 3. Cultural diversity reported

Individual interviews conducted with academic and administrative staff included a direct question about cultural diversity they observed among the students with whom they interacted during their work-related activities, on the one hand, and the diversity among colleagues they worked with, on the other. This perspective was important in order to understand the local context and how diversity is perceived since interculturality has different interpretations. Some also commented on the diversity between students and staff, and on the diversity at the level of their respective countries. Although Focus Groups did not include specific question on diversity, student respondents made a number of comments on the diversity they experienced. This section presents first the themes that emerged in the interviews with staff, and later those that became apparent in the focus group discussions with students.

#### 3.1 Perspectives of academic and administrative staff on cultural diversity in their contexts

##### 3.1.1 Diversity among students

First of all, it became evident that there are vastly different levels of awareness among academic and administrative staff interviewed of the cultural differences that exist among students. The following answers permit to get a glimpse of the whole spectrum of awareness levels (from a lower to a higher one):

Sé que hemos tenido alumnos, de toda Centroamérica, ***sé que hay algunos estudiantes, sin embargo, como no es un factor de relevancia, no andamos preguntando si son de aquí o no. No sé yo si en el aula los tengo, no he identificado yo*** como un patrón de comportamiento diferente. [El Salvador\_ HEI1\_Staff\_4, *emphasis added*]

El país es pequeño y hay mucha similitud en el comportamiento cultural [El Salvador\_ HEI1\_Staff\_6]

No soy tan perceptiva particularmente con los estudiantes [Argentina\_ HEI1\_ Docente\_1]

the students are very different between them [Mexico\_ HEI1\_Staff\_5]

es muy diverso -digamos- el universo es muy diverso de estudiantes [Argentina\_ HEI1\_Staff\_2]

la heterogeneidad está dada por muchos factores [Argentina\_ HEI1\_Staff\_4]

existen diferentes fuentes de diversidad [Mexico\_ HEI2\_Staff\_4]

Another preliminary comment that should be made is that many of the universities in the sample were big institutions and thus, some of the respondents highlighted that it was more appropriate to speak of students' diversity for each particular department, programme or type of programme (face-to-face versus online and degree programme or continuous education programme).

In terms of the diversity reported, differences in national cultures were of a relatively little relevance. Some programmes appeared to have no students from other countries whatsoever, while other had some or even a high percent. If foreign students were present, different programmes were reported to attract students from different countries. A further observation that could be made is that in the majority of cases international students would come from other LA countries. Finally, it also became very clear that for respondents it was

important where the students came from in terms of continents – those coming from Latin America versus those coming from Europe. The relatively small number of international students does not mean, however, that there is no need to know how to work with them or how to build on this diversity.

The two main types of diversity that have come across as highly relevant in the context of the present study are (1) that related to the environment in which the student grows up and (2) that related to the point in life at which the person joins a HE programme. These two major categories comprise further subcategories, which are discussed below. After this, other types of diversity are mentioned – those reported by only few respondents. Such *other types of diversity* mentioned are no less significant, but apparently either less present among the students with whom our sample worked or less often perceived by the present sample.

### **(1) diversity related to the environment in which the student grows up**

The most often cited type of diversity was that related to the environment in which the students grow up. Namely, (1.a) which part of the country students live in before joining the university, (1.b) which socio-economic group or class students come from, and (1.c) whether students belong to indigenous groups or not.

The comment that students one works with come from different parts of the country was by far the most commonly made by respondents from all the three countries. Some respondents went a step further in this respect and tried to explain what such differences manifested themselves in:

tienen otras actitudes, tienen otra cultura totalmente distinta [Argentina\_ HEI1\_Staff\_2]

en determinadas cuestiones hay culturas muy marcadas. ... entonces son jóvenes que quizá en el mismo momento que ellos están bailando una chacarera y así, otros jóvenes de la misma edad que estudian en esta misma universidad, están en las otras zonas de CIUDAD, escuchando un DJ que vino de Ámsterdam [Argentina\_ HEI1\_Staff\_6]

tenemos estudiantes que vienen de muchas comunidades, con muchas cosmovisiones [Mexico\_ HEI2\_Staff\_5]

Even more importantly than the part of the country as such (south/north/..., one state/province/... or another), it mattered greatly whether students grew up in a big city, on the one hand, or in a small place, countryside or a rural area, on the other. This point was mentioned very clearly by several respondents, in each of the three countries.

These regional cultural identities were reported as having a strong influence on students' academic performance. Thus, growing up in the countryside made it more difficult to succeed in learning a foreign language since they came with a zero or much lower level of English – “*we have students from rural areas that have never had the opportunity to learn English*” [Mexico\_ HEI1\_Staff\_4]. It was also very visible in Agricultural Economics – “*puedo notar cuando alguno viene del campo, cuando son estudiantes que vienen del interior al corazón de la ciudad, en el tipo de planteo que hacen dentro de lo que es la materia*” [Argentina\_ HEI1\_Staff\_1].

Other differences were slightly more subtle – e.g. in the way students interacted with those teaching them – “*en cómo me abordan a mí como docente*” [Argentina\_ HEI1\_Staff\_1]. Still others had an effect more on the students as persons, oftentimes adding additional challenges to the ‘common task’ of making successful transition to navigating university culture. This was particularly noticeable when students from rural areas moved to big(ger) cities to pursue university studies:

It's very very interesting to see how their own culture has an influence in the learning process. But then what I've been able to see if we mention more like communities here in El Salvador, you see that there is a lack of awareness and respect for the people who come from the countryside in particular. ... about people from the countryside in general, sometimes the city kids make fun



of them. Like, ahhh, ummm, you have different ways of doing things, different ways of speaking. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_1]

Pienso que, quizá la diferencia más grande que podemos identificar en nuestro país, es si las personas vienen de San Salvador o si viene de fuera de San Salvador, porque las condiciones fuera de San Salvador tienden a ser muy diferentes a lo que nosotros vemos acá... el estudiante no está acostumbrado al tráfico, a que las casas estén pegaditas, o sea, la ciudad es como muy apretada para el estudiante que viene de afuera. [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_5]

A secondary theme here related to having to move away from home to join the university versus being able to continue living with one's family.

This *big city – small place* set of differences (1.a) was sometimes linked to the differences related to socio-economic background of the students, although not always. Therefore, socio-economic cultural stratification was distinguished as a separate cultural sub-category (1.b). This is a theme that was present in interviews from all the three countries and from all the seven universities in the sample.

Belonging to a lower socio-economic group meant that students “didn't have too much access to more modern things, let's say, with communication, cell phones” [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_1] or “don't have technology abilities” [Mexico\_HEI1\_Staff\_7]. In the case of El Salvador, this could be linked to belonging to a “pandilla”.

In some cases, the socio-economic cultural belonging seemed to contribute to the choice of the programme of studies:

los chicos o las chicas que estudian enfermería son de clase social mucho más baja económica que el resto de los otros estudiantes. No así, no se ve lo mismo en diseño industrial, o en economía. Es como que el perfil es diferente [Argentina\_HEI3\_Staff\_2]

More generally speaking the socio-economic cultural differences would often affect the type of school to which a person would go and, thus, have an impact on students' behaviour/academic performance.

Another point worth making here is that the importance of this cultural factor was perceived differently by different respondents, and although different institutional contexts are bound to be different, it might be also related to the departmental affiliation within the same university or even to the IC of the person interviewed.

The third type of differences placed into this category relate to whether students belong to indigenous groups or not. Interestingly, although indigenous – non-indigenous distinction appeared as one of the “blinding factors” (see below), not all respondents said they could identify students who came from indigenous backgrounds. In some cases the students themselves claimed the differences – “*Habitualmente en antropología suele haber estudiantes que se auto adscriben públicamente como indígenas*” [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_4]. In other cases, the respondent said that such students could be identified by their surnames. Still another respondent from Argentina mentioned that he was completely unaware of the fact that one of the students he had been working with came from an indigenous cultural group and that specialist knowledge was required to be able to attribute certain student (linguistic) behaviours to their indigenous cultural background. The question of the language was equally strongly associated with indigenous background in Mexico, where many indigenous students had to pursue their university studies in a language different from the one they spoke “at home”.

## **(2) diversity related to the point in life at which the person joins a HE programme**

The second most cited type of diversity related to the point in life at which the person joins a HE programme. Namely, (2.a) the age of the students and, as a consequence, (2.b) whether they had any previous work experience.

The age differences as such appeared particularly relevant in one university in Argentina – Universidad de Lanus:

hay gran diversidad de edades. Por ahí uno podría plantear, que la mayor cantidad de estudiantes tienen entre 17 y 18 años, que acaban de terminar el secundario hasta los 30, 30 y pico... Pero hay estudiantes que son más grandes. Hay algunos que por ahí son menos, pero hay algunos. [Argentina\_Lanus\_Staff\_4]

hay muchos padres e hijos estudiando, que tal vez ha entrado el hijo y con el tiempo entra el padre. [Argentina\_Lanus\_Staff\_2]

However, other Argentinean respondents also referred to this difference, even if looking at it more from the point of view of students having or not certain work experience on which to build. One respondent even distinguished four (or at least three) very different student profiles in relation to age and work experience:

[*estudiantes*] con más práctica profesional o algunos sin haberse acercado nunca al mundo del trabajo. Algunos tienen edades diferentes, como te dije algunos más vinculados a la escuela secundaria que acaban de terminar, otros que retoman estudios, otros que trabajan del mundo del trabajo, algunos trabajan en cosas absolutamente distintas, o sea, trabajan para mantenerse. [Argentina\_HEI3\_Staff\_1]

At the same time, for some respondents who commented on differences among students in terms of their work experience, this was rather a question linked to the socio-economic class differences; and while in the quote from Argentina persons with work experience meant those from a lower socio-economic stratum, in the quote from El Salvador it meant those who were better off than the majority of the other students at the university.

All in all, this second major category of cultural differences appeared less prominent, but, judging by the data collected, is still an important one and can have clear implications for the teaching and learning process, as well as for working with students in general.

### **(3) other types of diversity mentioned**

Further to the two major categories of types of cultural differences reported above, there were other types of diversity mentioned. Numerically, they were reported fewer times. However, there is no reason to believe that these cultural differences are somehow less important or require less attention from those working at universities. Thus, seven more types of diversity reported were as follows: ethnic diversity; disciplinary diversity; diversity of political views; diversity of religious views or beliefs; diversity of ideas; gender diversity; and sexual orientation diversity.

One of the respondents mentioned students coming from a second generation of migrants as an important culturally different group – “*he tenido ...alumnos que vienen de ... uno dice "peruanos", pero no son peruanos porque son hijos nacidos acá, entonces, de su familia*” [Argentina\_HEI2\_Staff\_5]. Another respondent spoke of striking cultural differences between students who come from different disciplinary backgrounds. Political views were seen as a clear cultural diversity factor by one of the staff members interviewed in El Salvador. The same respondent, as well as another one from Mexico, highlighted importance of students’ religious beliefs or views. Different ideas and conceptual approaches were also cited as a source of diversity, which might be the same as diversity of political or religious views, or could even be the observable level of any of the cultural differences reported in the two major categories ((1) and (2)). Gender-related diversity was mentioned as

relevant by respondents from Argentina, while sexual orientation was seen as highly relevant by one of the respondents from El Salvador.

Finally, in terms of diversity among students as seen by those who work at the university, one more comment is worth citing here – perhaps as a caution that diversity patterns tend to change as time goes:

a su vez, detecto que los últimos años, sobre todo, se dan de alguna forma generaciones distintas, a lo largo del tiempo los alumnos que yo tenía hace 13 años son distintos a los que tenía hacer 10 años, 5 años, y los que tengo ahora, grupalmente tienen cosas similares, pero... es dinámico, van como teniendo como generaciones distintas y cada vez [es] más rápido el cambio de ... generacional [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_3].

It seems as well that there are certain characteristics that are so strongly associated with the *diversity* that if they are present, they are the only ones respondents think of when asked about diversity. At the same time, if these dominant characteristics are not present respondents appear to believe there is no diversity worth taking into account. Four such characteristics emerged in the analysis of the data collected: (international) mobility, language spoken (or rather not spoken), belonging to an indigenous group, and diversity as a cause of problems.

- *(international) mobility:*

Some of the respondents asked about diversity spoke directly of the incoming/outgoing students. This is perfectly “natural”. However, the association is so strong that when this difference is not present, some respondents perceive no differences among their students.

- *language spoken (or rather not spoken)*

Similarly, occasionally only students who do not speak the national language / language of instruction – in this case Spanish – seem to be perceived as culturally different.

- *belonging to an indigenous group*

At least in Mexico, belonging or not to an indigenous group can be seen as the “main” cultural difference worth considering.

- *diversity as a cause of problems*

And finally, some responses suggested that those working with students might not believe cultural differences to be important unless these provoke some kind of problem or lead to inferior academic results.

### 3.1.2 Diversity among staff

First of all, it should be noted that most of the respondents believe that there is hardly any diversity among those working at the university or that this diversity is either much smaller than the one they observe among their students or much less visible. Perhaps, it is more a question of awareness or of how much (or little) our respondents had ever reflected on the issue before being asked to comment on it in the interviews. Let us look at one quote that is quite revealing in this respect:

realmente no tenemos mucha afinidad en el sentido de la ciencia, del background educativo que tenemos. Porque la mayoría de mis colegas son del área del Computer Science y yo provengo del área de Electronics. Desde ese punto de vista no tenemos... no tenemos un match de ideas científicas iguales, desde ese punto de vista. Con respecto a la convivencia, día a día, excelente, excelente, creo que todos en el área hemos formado un buen equipo, no hay personas de diferente mentalidad, en el sentido de que estamos en una universidad cuyo objetivo es formar estudiantes. Todos estamos claros con eso y todos llevamos en orden esa tarea. Con los colegas

dentro de la universidad realmente, la única diferencia que yo encuentro es nuestra formación profesional. Disciplina, sí de disciplina. La mayoría de, mis colegas, son de Computer Science, como te digo, y son graduados de esta Universidad. Y, yo soy de otra, entonces desde ese punto de vista sí he notado que hay diferentes percepciones. Por ejemplo, mi colega tiene una percepción, de que yo, por ser de una universidad estatal o nacional tengo tendencias izquierdistas políticamente. Lo cual no necesariamente es así, entonces ya me ven un poco diferente, pero con los años, me han aceptado, entonces siento que ya en esta etapa ya. Al principio, era un poco diferente "ah vos venís de donde son los trouble makers del país y sos rebelde, no te vas adaptar a esta universidad" "...porque aquí son diferentes las cosas", pero al final sí me fui adaptando, tanto que voy para once años. Por ejemplo, recién hasta estos días la gran diferencia es que, tú te fijas, uso el pelo largo... y muchos de mis colegas no están de acuerdo con eso, y diciendo que eso es un factor que impacta, no es cosa de rencillas pero sí es algo que lo ven diferente. Yo pienso que viene de que muchos de mis colegas, no han tenido la oportunidad, de conocer otras culturas y otros grupos de gente, y otros grupos de personas y la mayoría de su vida profesional, la han pasado acá. Han estudiado acá y se han desarrollado profesionalmente acá y no han tenido otra visión de poder ver otras culturas y otras formas de trabajo, en las cuales, lo importante son los cumplimientos de metas, de objetivos, más allá de cómo se vean. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_7]

This respondent starts saying that he and his colleagues hardly have anything in common, that he perhaps does not even think of all those working with students at his university as a group. This feeling of ‘foreignness’ or difference is attributed by the respondent to different disciplinary backgrounds. Next, he says that actually all those working with him do form one team and have the same mentality and that the only difference is that of their disciplines. After this, he points out to a clear co-existence of two cultural sub-groups – one of those who went to a public university and the other of those who studied in a private HE institution – and of the stereotypes one of the groups has about the other. Then he minimizes the differences again, saying that this is rather the question of the past, but immediately comes back to the fact that even his hair style makes him different and that ‘others’ disapprove of it for cultural reasons. Finally, he again identifies two different groups inside the total body of those working at his university – those who have had exposure to other cultures and those who have not. This is a very rich quote and apart from signalling a number of sources of diversity among staff it also seems to show that this is not a question for which the respondent has a clear answer. In fact, he is bringing in different ideas as he moves on and is probably constructing his own response ‘on the go’, trying to reconcile his idea that all share the same mission with the ‘objective’ reality of different persons belonging to different disciplines, as well as with his subjective experience as being treated as ‘the other’ and coming to terms with it, while also preserving part of his ‘initial’ cultural identity. When this respondent says that actually they are a good team, he reacts in the same way as some respondents did when asked about diversity among students – namely, downplaying diversity by claiming that there were no problems related to cultural differences.

In a similar vein, another respondent, when asked about diversity among colleagues, said that it was not really there and seemed to imply that identifying cultural differences was something negative and ought not to be done. This is the same phenomenon which we saw in the previous section, where diversity seemed to be associated with difficulties or misunderstandings or conflicts, and to such an extent that an absence of conflicts was interpreted as a sign of lack of cultural diversity.

Associating cultural diversity with national cultures (cf. “*international mobility*” blinding factor in the *Diversity among students* section) was also present here. A number of respondents enumerated foreign colleagues they had worked with on campus, or said that there was no diversity among their colleagues because there were hardly any foreign colleagues coming.

By far the most often cited source of diversity for those who did see it among colleagues was the *professional profile* of those working at the university, with two sub-themes of (1) disciplinary cultures and (2) professional development itineraries.

#### (1) disciplinary cultures

Certain characteristics and patterns of behaviour were attributed to different disciplinary cultural communities. Occasionally, the differences that were considered the most relevant were inside own discipline. In other words, as one respondent put it, differences between disciplines come to the foreground at many different levels within a university:

en cada Facultad hay diferencias, pero su a vez, dentro de una misma Facultad -como la nuestra que es muy diversa- hay diferencias de acuerdo a la especificidad, de acuerdo a la carrera o el área en la que uno trabaja, pensando en las diferentes carreras que se dan, y dentro de la misma carrera nuestra hay áreas temáticas que también son distintas culturalmente.  
[Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_3]

#### (2) professional development itineraries

Professional development itineraries were another important differentiating factor. Respondents distinguished colleagues

- who went through a HE experience from those who did not,
- who went to a public HE institution from those who went to a private one,
- who completed an “older” degree from those who studied the current version of the programme, and
- who worked exclusively in academia from those who also worked outside the university.

Apart from these four types of sub-cultures, which brought together academic staff, – and in spite of the fact that the majority of the respondents in the sample combined teaching, research and administrative functions – a cultural divide was also reported to exist between academic and administrative staff. Perhaps more interesting for the present research focus, one of the respondents believed that teaching/academic staff had greater exposure to different cultures due to being able to attend conferences and congresses, while administrative staff lacked such opportunities.

Further differences reported were related to regional cultures and age, while one more respondent mentioned economic and sexual diversity as a differentiating factor.

In terms of regional cultures, one of the respondents commented that it did matter where the person came from and two respondents differentiated between those who grew up in the place where the university was located and those who came there to study/work and stayed on. Curiously, occasionally such regional cultural identities became visible through interlinked cultural belongings, such as being a fan of a particular football club. At the same time, at least in the case of one of the respondents, all those working in a particular Faculty came from the same city or from the area around this city.

Age-related cultural differences were mentioned by respondents from Argentina and El Salvador, while a staff member from El Salvador also believed that age correlated with openness:

Yo tengo muchos colegas acá que son bien adultos, porque la universidad tiene la peculiaridad, de que no importa la edad para trabajar aquí... entonces la brecha que puede existir en cuanto a competencia, respecto de una persona más joven, es más grande, porque la persona joven es más abierta, está en otro contexto. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_2].

### 3.1.3 Cultural differences between staff and students

Some of the respondents commented on differences between students and staff as two culturally distinct groups. Five differences were suggested here:

- 1) students are novices to academic and university cultures, while those working in the university are “locals” or “natives”; an especially dramatic difference in cases when students are the first generation in their family to go to a HE institution;
- 2) students coming from other parts of the country or other countries do not have the cultural knowledge shared by those from the place where the university is located;
- 3) in some cases students are much younger than those working at the university and as such belong to a different generational culture;
- 4) students might have a higher level of IC than those working with them; and
- 5) students might be less better off than those working at the university.

### 3.1.4 Cultural differences at national level

Finally, one more type of reflections on diversity emerged from the interviews with academic and administrative staff of the sample universities. The present study did not aim to uncover this. However, this could certainly be something to explore in the framework of the PD activities, as both indicative of one’s current level of IC and bound to influence the development of one’s IC. What we are talking about here is the respondents’ perception of the cultural diversity that exist in their own countries in general. Here are the four quotes – one from Argentina and three from El Salvador – that suggest that this might be a fruitful question for further exploration:

lo que pasa es que Argentina, yo creo que lo que tiene como fortaleza también lo tiene como debilidad, que somos un país muy diverso culturalmente desde orígenes nacionales muy distintos por emigraciones, y eso también se refleja en la gente que vive desde hace dos o tres generaciones, familias que ya son de acá, hay mucha diversidad cultural que viene de origen internacional, pero que se refleja en la cultura, desde las comidas hasta las actividades que se hacen naturalmente, formas de vivir, eso también es muy diverso. [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_3]

hay, todavía, un desprecio a la comunidad indígena latente [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_4]

Acá, aunque somos un país pequeño, pero tenemos diferentes costumbres, culturas, aunque sea chiquito, porque El Salvador es pequeño, pero las personas de San Salvador con las personas de oriente, tenemos cosas distintas. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_2]

en el país, este país el grado de mestizaje es alto, de manera que muchas personas consideran que no hay pluralidad étnica, sino que es más mono cultural. Pero la multiculturalidad, pues sí, se puede ver más allá de la etnia, puede verse como en diferentes niveles, diferentes grupos, dentro de una misma sociedad. [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_3]

### 3.1.5 Students’ perspectives

The general impression from the focus groups interviews is that students are convinced that diversity around them is very high, even if they might not think about the multiple differences they encounter in any “systematic” way and rather focus on the idea of difference itself.

Acá esta todo. La diversidad, miras por los pasillos, ves todos los distintos tipos de personas como dentro de una sociedad conviviendo [Argentina\_HEI3\_FG3]

no todos somos iguales, no todos pensamos iguales, no todos nos vestimos igual, no todos comemos lo mismo y no todos escuchamos la misma música [El Salvador\_HEI1\_FG6]



pertenece todos a diferentes grupos, o diferentes culturas o sub culturas [Argentina\_HEI2\_FG2]

Yo creo que tal vez cuando se habla de diversidad uno suele pensar en blanco y negro, y va más allá de eso [Argentina\_HEI3\_FG3]

Students' idea of cultures is clearly not limited to that of national cultures. Ideologies, including political and economic views also define cultural belongings and identities, and so do family groups:

cada cultura, puede ser de otro país u otras familias directamente, tienen valores totalmente distintos [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

Las culturas con respecto, pueden ser las distintas etnias, o distintos géneros, o distintas edades, distintos grupos socioeconómicos. La diversidad tiene con todo lo que es distinto dentro de una clasificación [Argentina\_HEI3\_FG3]

The data suggest that diversity is not necessarily a neutral issue. Thus, some students were proud of the diversity in their countries, while others appeared unwilling to think of diversity or preferred to downplay it:

la Argentina, la sociedad que es muchísimo más diversa, tiene otra dinámica social. Y esto que pasa también que la universidad, es un factor de diversificación social y de dinámica social, que genera esos choques de comunicación, diferencias sociales, ya sean de clase, de otro tipo de cuestiones. Y en el aula, también., ¿no? Acá mismo estamos hablando de una diversidad cultural enorme. Me parece que, como sociedad, somos complejos. No digo que las sociedades europeas no lo sean. Estoy tomando lo europeo como referencia de una forma bastante hegemónica.[...] Somos un poquito más complejos de definir, creo, como sociedad o como todo, que los casos que me ha tocado conocer de otros países donde eran 2 o 3 factores y, se presentaba la cultura de esa forma: el idioma, las tradiciones. A mí, siendo argentino y habiendo vivido acá toda la vida, me perdí, todavía no entiendo nada. Y es muy complejo el intercambio entre nosotros mismos, a diferencia de otros países. [Argentina\_HEI2\_FG2]

Yo creo que en todos los ambientes se debería hacer esta integración, y no esa división que quizás muchas veces pasa que lo vemos, como decía él en todos lados. Como que se separa las cosas, si no que sea más como una integración en cuanto a todo, en cuanto a la cultura, raza. [Argentina\_HEI3\_FG3]

en mi caso, que es la Facultad de Ingeniería, tengo alumnos que, por lo general, se circunscriben a alumnos de Bolivia, ahora de Venezuela hay muchos, por la crisis. Pero, no mucho más y, prácticamente, no hay mucha diferencia, tenemos algunas particularidades en el habla, pero no hay ninguna limitación, son uno más, se adaptan completamente, creo que no le podemos sacar el jugo a la multiculturalidad, porque no podemos hacer nada, creo. [Argentina\_HEI2\_FG2]

The strongest diversity reported by students related to their studies – which faculty or department they were in, which programme they were enrolled in, and which disciplinary field they chose:

entre facultades hay culturas, por ejemplo, los de Comunicación se visten [de] una forma, los de Agronomía de otra, los de Exacta se visten de otra, entonces, cuando entras a una facultad, conoces cómo es su cultura, cómo se visten y te empiezas a vestir así, quieras o no. [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

Yo estudio en dos facultades, para mí tiene mucho que ver con la identidad de cada facultad. Hay facultades que son más organizadas, y eso ayuda a que los estudiantes se sientan cómodos cursando la carrera... Estaba en la facultad de ciencias, hice Física un año y me encantó, la amé,

todo ordenadito, organizado, si eres repitente estás en un horario, tienes las tutorías. No era lo que yo quería estudiar, pero me gustó mucho. Otras que son un caos, por ejemplo, en la de Comunicación fue el caos desde que decidí entrar. Lo que sí tiene, por ejemplo, no sé si lo tienen otras facultades, que teníamos tres turnos para cursar las materias... mañana, tarde y noche, hasta el tercer año, y hay mucha flexibilidad, había régimen de estudiante trabajador, y yo me anoté en la noche y entonces había personas de más edad, hay mucha diversidad. Cada horario que vos elegís, mañana, tarde o noche, tiene hasta sus segmentos o sus grupos etarios. [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

aquí adentro en la universidad son muy marcadas las diferencias, digamos, en el mismo salón siempre están grupo de personas con igual, con iguales raza -por decirlo así-, igual, bien marcado eso que la persona es de ingeniería... que la licenciatura o incluso en las mismas carreras... "Ah, mi carrera mejor" o "mi carrera tiene más valor que otra". [El Salvador\_HEI2\_FG8]

nosotros los de inglés, siempre andamos vestidos la mayoría de las veces informales, de la manera que nosotros queramos. Pero si vamos a la XYZ que es el edificio de leyes. Allá toda la mayoría de gente va a andar formal. Entonces, incluso aquí en un lugar tan pequeño, podemos ver los grandes cambios que hay de un edificio a otro. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_FG7]

tenemos más en común con otro ingeniero de China, por ejemplo, que prácticamente ni coincidimos en el lenguaje, pero tenemos cierto montón de cosas que nos entendemos, que con un mismo argentino que estudie o trabaje de otra cosa. [Argentina\_HEI2\_FG2]

Cuando ustedes dijeron que tienen más cosas en común, con un ingeniero de China, que conmigo que no sé sumar  $2 + 2$ , ahí me parece que están diciendo un montón de cosas. Y es que, tal vez, ustedes pertenecen a una cultura diferente a la que yo pertenezco, por más que vivimos los dos en CUIDAD, por más que los dos somos universitarios, y un montón de otras cosas más. [Argentina\_HEI2\_FG2]

At the same time, some of the students believed that a greater source of diversity was the non-academic life of the person or what happened before the person entered a HE institution – like the quality of the secondary education received or where/how one learned music before joining a music degree at a university:

el ámbito académico, es un ámbito bastante cerrado que se homogeniza, [...] en realidad, el diálogo uno lo tiene por afuera, cuando se saca el traje de lo académico y empiezas a conocer la experiencia y la trayectoria de personas con las cuales estuve sentado en un par de horas, pero, sí, me da la sensación que, por ahí, en un aula... inclusive acá dentro de la propia donde estábamos, encontramos más diversidad en términos de trayectoria [Argentina\_HEI2\_FG2]

creo que es más como que existe, en qué ámbito, con qué amigos, en qué escuela, o no escuela, tiene más que ver con cada uno y los ámbitos en los que ha crecido o no ha crecido, tiene mucho que ver con eso. [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

hay muchas secundarias que no tiene el nivel adecuado para que los chicos pasen a la universidad... entonces hay como un abismo, mucha interculturalidad, pero en el sentido de que cada uno sabe algo diferente, de una forma distinta. [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

Other types of diversity mentioned by students were as follows:

- regional cultures
  - o being from a particular place, like different provinces of the country or a particular part of the country



- being from the place where the university is located or from a different part of the country

hay muchas personas que se mudan en CIUDAD de la UNIVERSIDAD, porque no son de CIUDAD de la UNIVERSIDAD, se alejan de la familia, tenía chicos que se les da por llorar porque extrañan a la familia, a sus amigos y a su pueblo, dicen que les va mal, que no entienden nada, que no tienen a nadie y allí se replantean el estudiar o no estudiar, entonces hay como muchas cosas que afectan. [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

Esa es otra característica, los estudiantes que viene del interior y de otras provincias, cómo viven su experiencia, ya que son experiencias re distintas, que para los que son de la ciudad, incluso como programan los horarios y las materias para volver a sus provincias, es una experiencia muy distinta. [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

- ethnic background cultures:

somos o segunda o tercera generación de inmigrantes, donde por ahí tenemos, todavía tenemos cierto sesgo de los inmigrantes que vinieron. o sea, mi abuelo era alemán y él, con mi papá, entre ellos, hablaban alemán y del otro lado eran italianos y también hablaban un poco de italiano, entonces, es una mezcla complicada y hemos adquirido cada uno, con sus ascendientes, cierto sesgo de cada cultura y somos la suma de todo eso [Argentina\_HEI2\_FG2]

- national cultures, although also seen from the disciplinary/departmental perspective

Nosotros, en Bellas Artes, tenemos mucha gente de Colombia, de Chile [Argentina\_HEI2\_FG2]

Por ejemplo, en comunicación, siempre hay de muchas nacionalidades [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

- age-related, especially if there are options to study in the morning, in the afternoon or in the evening or if the university offers courses for elderly persons
- related to capacities or lack of certain capacities (blind versus non-blind persons or persons with disabilities more generally)
- related to having been through a university or not

la Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales, es una facultad muy tradicional, donde nos enseñan de forma implícita a comportarnos de una forma, a vestirnos de una forma, a usar determinado lenguaje, a dirigirnos hacia ciertas personas de determinada manera. ... y todo eso que reproduce la Facultad que nos inculcan a los abogados o a los futuros abogados, en la Facultad hacen que haya un choque de culturas con la persona que nunca atravesó la facultad. [Argentina\_HEI2\_FG2]

- sexual diversity, and
- ideological diversity

In summary, it was interesting to note that both staff and students mentioned other types of cultural diversity not necessarily related to national culture. This may be due to the fact that the interview questions highlighted that we were not only looking at national cultures. Still both cohorts mentioning disciplinary and professional differences as forms of cultural diversity shows that there is understanding of other forms of group behaviours and norms developing that affect their context. Similar links can be noted when discussing socio-economic differences that in this context could also be viewed as related to group norms development,

in some cases related also to regional cultures. Other aspects of diversity were mentioned although they might not fit in the socialisations nature of cultural identities (gender, age and sexual orientation). Still it is important to consider how these other types of diversity influence the local context and the need for IC as this makes the diversity nature much more complex as there are various identity aspects pointing towards intersectionality.

## 4. The need for students to develop intercultural competence

### 4.1 Views of academic and administrative staff on student IC

Most of the academic and administrative staff interviewed believed that it was very important for students to develop IC and for universities to support students in this. On this positive side of the scale, the responses on how important this was ranged from simple “important” through “very important” to “extremely important”, with a number of respondents being in complete agreement with the idea and some expressing perhaps even stronger conviction using such expressions as “es más que necesario e indispensable” or “es ‘un deber’ para la universidad” [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_4], and “tiene que ser una obligación” [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_3].

Four of the respondents, however, also mentioned that the concept of IC and/or the need to support students in developing IC were not so familiar to them, sounded as something new or foreign. This did not mean – they insisted – that this was not important, just that the discourse of developing IC was not necessarily as accepted as elsewhere and that those helping students to develop the knowledge, skills, awareness and attitudes conceptualised as IC were not necessarily thinking of their efforts as related to students’ IC development.

Apart from this general agreement on the need to help students develop IC, the interviews conducted permitted to have a good idea of (1) why academic and administrative staff believe in the importance of the task and (2) what aspects or elements of the IC they see as most relevant for their students. The next two sections explore these questions.

#### 4.1.1 Why students need to develop IC

Although all the responses received complement rather than contradict each other, it can be observed that some of the reasons given seem to be coming more from an institutional perspective, while others are more focused on the students.

- *institutional responsibility*

A (smaller) number of respondents believed that supporting students in developing IC was part of the social role of the university and that HE institutions had the responsibility to compensate for what either students’ families or primary and secondary education systems were failing to equip students with. Developing students’ IC was also reported as part of what the institution was pursuing as part of its mission or of current internationalization priorities.

- *student-centred approach*

The majority of the reasons given were focused on the benefits students could gain if they developed IC during their university years. Generally speaking, IC was reported as useful or necessary for being successful (1) professionally, (2) personally, (3) both personally and professionally, as well as (4) in current or potential further studies.

- (1) IC for work/employment

Quite a number of those interviewed believed that IC was a key part of the desired graduate profile in the areas in which they were teaching (Marketing, Economics, Law, Teacher Education, Psychology and others).

Another group of respondents commented on the relevance of IC for professional success more broadly, emphasising the need to work in mixed teams at the workplace or stating that nowadays graduates could get jobs abroad.

## (2) IC for personal development

Respondents further justified the need to support students in IC development because, from their point of view, HE was about more than just getting employment/job-ready. It was crucial to help students develop as whole persons and equip them with competences necessary for future personal growth related to dealing with cultural differences both appropriately and successfully.

Developing IC was also seen as the means to help students focus on the 'right' values and attitudes and as indispensable for graduates to learn how to live in harmony with others. Without IC, as one of the respondents commented, the university would be *producing socially illiterate persons*, something which is bound to lead to conflicts and was simply dangerous. Developing IC was seen as instrumental both for preparing students to become responsible citizens (e.g. ready to participate fully in the political life of their country) and for promoting a better quality of life in general, since IC was associated with more fulfilling life and a stronger capacity for lifelong learning. Furthermore, higher levels of IC were seen as contributing to greater personal freedom and creativity.

## (3) IC for all spheres of life

Several respondents believed that IC was important for both personal and professional lives of graduates. On the one hand, IC is clearly helpful if graduates go abroad, and since it is not possible to know who will and who will not go abroad, it was best to equip all students with IC. On the other hand, IC was deemed relevant regardless of going abroad or continuing to live in one's own country, simply because any graduate will need to relate to those different from him/herself, and these other persons could be from anywhere in the world due to ever increasing levels of diversity and mobility.

## (4) IC for studies

A relatively small number of respondents also mentioned the relevance of IC for student success in their university studies. The exact reasons given were as follows: the diversity students encounter on campus, IC development contributing to the change in the way students learn and the need to prepare students for study periods abroad.

Finally, a couple of respondents justified the need to support students in developing their IC by saying that:

- IC does not develop automatically
- Some students are intrinsically motivated in developing IC and, thus, institutions should help them to pursue this developmental goal

## 4.2 Students' views on student IC

Students appeared to unanimously see developing IC as relevant for them. Most of them could see a clear need for IC in their future professional lives, be it in Health Care sector, Education, Tourism, Marketing and Advertising, Business and Business Administration, Creative Arts, Foreign Trade, Journalism, Language industry, Law, Sciences/Natural Sciences, or youth organisations and projects.

Most of the students believed that IC was necessary regardless of where exactly they will work in the future, although two of them mentioned IC as a particular plus if one wants to work abroad. One of the student respondents, however, also commented that IC is something all the employers are looking for nowadays, independent of the sector you want to work in or studies.

The second major idea that emerged from the focus group interviews with students is that IC is needed not only for work, but also for life – that it is relevant and required in all spheres of life; that students will need it not only as professionals but also as persons, as human beings who live with other human beings and who together should be able to build the society they want to live in. Curiously, in this respect one of the students commented that even those who think they do not need IC actually need it because there are still many unresolved issues in the society and everyone needs IC in order to notice such issues, see them as something one can have positive influence on and take the step to address such issues (rather than simply contemplating them but remaining uninvolved).

On a more positive side, students spoke of IC being required because the societies around them are so diverse and because cultural diversity is ever closer to each person in the world, for example, thanks to the use of the social media. Many students commented that they will always need to interact with people different from them and IC will be helpful for that. And several students mentioned that having a higher level of IC will permit them to better grow and develop as persons, again perhaps thanks to equipping them better for relating with those different from them.

Finally, three of the respondents believed that IC will benefit them in their academic development – either because of the existing student mobility schemes, or simply through permitting them to learn from many different persons and sources and to conduct their research projects from a more holistic perspective.

## 5. Staff Developmental Needs

This part of the report brings together staff members' reflections on own intercultural competence, on the one hand, and the students' views on the staff members' strengths and weaknesses in supporting students in IC development, on the other.

### 5.1 Staff members' reflections on own intercultural competence

The staff members were asked to reflect on their IC, strengths and weaknesses and how they might need IC elements in their work. These answers firstly indicate staff level of understanding and conceptualization around what IC is. Secondly, these responses showed staff self-analysis and views on their own competence as well as in places commenting on IC training needs of colleagues in general. In order to analyze the data, the EMIC model developed in precursor studies (Yarosh, Lukic, & Santibañez, 2018) was used as a starting point in order to see if the model fits the data and to ensure systematization is done informed by theory. The data on staff views did unearth ideas that matched all of the existing EMIC elements as well as two new emerging elements that appear to be of particular relevance when it comes to academic and administrative staff.<sup>1</sup> **Figure 1** outlines the element viewed as important within the context of the sample LA HE staff.

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<sup>1</sup> Yarosh, M., Lukic, D. & Santibañez, R, M. (2018). [Intercultural competence for students in international joint master programmes](#). *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. Volume 66, 52-72.

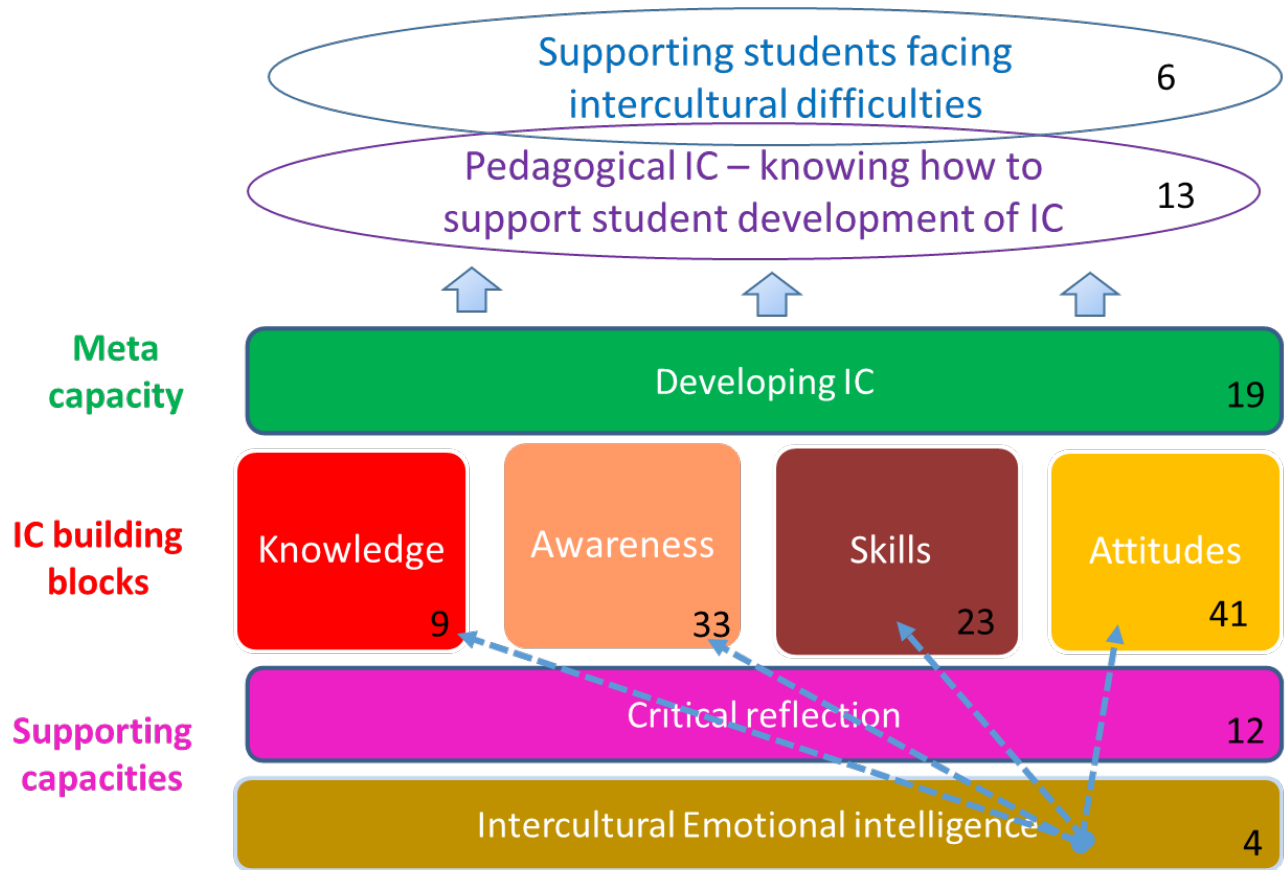


Figure 1. IC elements discussed by staff as development needs

Although all the EMIC model elements were discussed and two new elements also arose, they have been mentioned in varying degrees. Since the study is of qualitative nature, the frequency of the elements being discussed is of illustrative nature and does not directly imply order of priority. Table 1 outlines the number of references among the staff reflections on their IC.

Table 1 IC elements references overview - staff respondents

	IC Knowledge	IC Awareness	IC Skills	IC Attitudes	Intercultural critical reflection (supporting capacity)	Intercultural emotional intelligence (supporting capacity)	Developing IC (meta capacity)	IC supporting - Supporting students in intercultural situations	IC pedagogical - knowing how to teach it	Total
Argentina	4	17	5	15	7	0	9	4	6	67
El Salvador	4	10	13	14	2	2	7	0	4	56
Mexico	1	6	5	12	3	2	3	2	3	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>160</b>

### 5.1.1 Attitudes

Discussions of dispositions and attitudes as essential for IC of staff were the most prevalent elements mentioned across all seven HEI sites. Although it was most discussed, the vast majority of references to attitudes were perceptions that the participants do have relevant IC attitudes and that they may be some of their strengths. The types of attitudes highlighted as strengths were primarily *tolerance* and *openness to the ideas of others*.

Para resolver conflicto hay que escuchar y conocer un poco la diferencia, y no decir aceptarlas, si no se quiere aceptar, pero al menos pues tolerar, y eso se da por escuchar, por hablar, por dialogar, conversar. [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_3]

Puede ser la paciencia, ¿cómo se puede decir?, la tolerancia, a no saltar, pues a decir, no. Yo pienso que esa fue una de las... la tolerancia y la paciencia, ¿no? Que te enseñan a tener hacia otras personas que no están familiarizadas con lo que haces o cómo se llevan en otros lados. [Mexico\_HEI1\_Staff\_1]

Other common attitudes disused were *curiosity, willingness to adapt oneself* and *valuing diversity*.

creo que es enriquecedor comunicarse y compartir con otros. ... [estas situaciones] son enriquecedoras porque en realidad abren puertas. Como que nos dan la posibilidad de repensar o de pensar cosas que antes no sabíamos que estaban ahí. [Argentina\_HEI3\_Staff\_4]

The number of responses indicating attitudes element of IC could on one hand indicate a real strength, but could also be affected by the type of respondents we have included and a potential social desirability bias. On the other hand, there were several examples where staff did indicate a need to further develop certain IC related attitudes in themselves or in other colleagues.

hay falta de apertura, falta que nos abramos un poco más ... Pero así, teniendo la cabeza abierta, no estoy encontrando la manera tampoco de cómo hacerlo [Argentina\_HEI3\_Staff\_5]

Discussing a particular area for developing IC related attitudes some participants highlighted the need for developing confidence in intercultural situations for staff members. For example:

Si daría algo de interculturalidad, eso sería de los primeros temas que hablaría, el miedo a hablar con las otras personas. Por ejemplo, mi inglés no es perfecto, pero usted me entiende, usted habla en español, y su español no es perfecto, pero nos entendemos... Ese miedo es lo que yo siento que hay que quitarle, tanto a los estudiantes, como a los docentes, para decirles, que saben qué, nos vamos a comunicar y vamos a aprender muchísimo los dos. ...una buena capacitación les daría la confianza que necesitan y les va a ayudar a desenvolverse en otro lado y es que realmente todos lo necesitamos, viajemos o no viajemos, en algún momento, como se dice tenemos choques culturales, y la idea es estar preparados para eso [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_3]

### 5.1.2 Awareness

The participants highlighted the need to develop different types of awareness related to diversity. The most common type of awareness was *being aware of the different cultural points of views that can coexist in a group*.

Idioma... y ... valorar su cultura/ confidence ... enseñarles a mis colegas de que existe una gran variedad de opiniones... y eso no implica que, quienes tuvieron una opinión diferente a la mía, no implica que tú me quieres contradecir o que estás en contra mía, sino que, además, simplemente, es la variedad que existe. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_7]

Related to this aspect, there were also references to *general awareness of the diversity of others*. It was also interesting to note the need to constantly adapt our awareness about diversity of students for example.

entonces creo que eso a veces también es necesario desde el punto de vista del docente, como romper un poco el esquema, asumir que los chicos son diferentes a los de antes, no se



pueden dar las mismas clases, o sea, yo sé que hay profesores que me dieron clases a mí y ahora le están dando clase a los chicos... y no son los mismos chicos. [Argentina\_HEI2\_Staff\_1]

Several participants also talked about the need to *understand one's own cultural perspectives* and have *self-awareness*:

Yeah, you learn to love your country when you are abroad. And you learn more about your culture as people ask you to describe it. It is the same feeling. I had to learn more when I was abroad because people asked me. [Mexico\_HEI2\_Staff\_7]

And also *awareness of how culture impacts one's own views and behaviours*:

historia te nutre justamente de pensar las ideas como una construcción histórica, como una construcción de distintas tradiciones, pueblos, culturas, etcétera. De entender que lo importante es el sentido que la gente le da a su experiencia, a sus prácticas... de ahí, una cuestión disciplinar que orienta a que uno tenga una mirada que esté buscando desnaturalizar las formas en las que nos relacionamos, convivimos, damos sentido a la práctica, etcétera [Argentina\_HEI2\_Staff\_6]

### 5.1.3 Skills

In terms of skills needed to develop IC the majority of participants primarily highlighted the need to know foreign languages, English primarily but then also other languages – either foreign or indigenous.

Yo creo que es muy importante que yo aprenda perfectamente el totonaco. Es muy importante porque creo que cuando el estudiante ve el modelo el profesor lo replica. Se incentiva más. ... Y si quisiera tener esa proficiencia en la lengua inglesa [Mexico\_HEI2\_Staff\_1]

Other participants highlighted more general communication skills such as *active listening*, *finding a common 'language'* and *avoiding misunderstandings* as areas for further development.

viendo cómo reaccionan, para no generar problemas o malas interpretaciones, y con los colegas de mí misma nacionalidad, pero de otras culturas, me resulta difícil a veces llegar a acuerdos con buen resultado... ahora ya me acostumbré y uno trata de acordar algún idioma en común para llegar a situaciones que se concreten, porque si no, siempre quedan conversaciones entre sordos. [Argentina\_HEI2\_Staff\_4]

el tema de comunicación es algo que sin duda alguna adolecemos, muchas veces tenemos deficiencias: ¿cómo hacer que el otro entienda en realidad lo que tú quieres decir? Esto es necesario mejorarlo, para mí si es un reto, porque muchos conflictos se dan por esa debilidad o está falta de comunicación que a veces se establece, o estos malos entendidos que muchas veces en las relaciones humanas se dan. [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_4]

A couple of participants highlighted the need to *learn how to adapt* as an important skill.

Al final es pura adaptación, pienso yo, porque no es que yo le voy a decir a alguien no hagas ruido para comer, si no entender que el otro lo hace diferente y yo también lo hago diferente. [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_5]

There were several other individual mentions of relevant skills that were expressed by individual interviewees such as *conflict resolution skills*, *managing intercultural projects*, *teamwork* and *mediating skills*, although not in high number of references.

#### 5.1.4 Knowledge

In terms of knowledge the majority of respondents talked about *culture specific knowledge*, including how things are done, what are the behaviour, gestures, traditions and other aspects of specific cultures.

...y que los estudiantes y los jóvenes tengan la madurez, para poder enfrentar todos esos retos que traen las nuevas culturas ... cultura no solo a saber el nombre, el lenguaje que usan, y más nada, cultura es conocer realmente cómo ellos viven, cómo son, incluso como saludan. Ese tipo de cosas, uno como profesional, las debe saber. [Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_3]

The views of culture specific knowledge as a development need also included views that wider economic, geopolitical and professional information about cultures would be needed for HE professionals:

Entonces, es una concepción que, no la conocen muy bien, pero que, a lo mejor, si usted va a formar futuros líderes o, si de pronto le va a tocar establecer un convenio... con alguna organización importante de un gobierno, usted tiene que conocer la geopolítica del país con el que está negociando. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_4]

Although majority of knowledge related responses were referring to only culture-specific information as important, a number of respondents recognised that knowing only information about a culture is not enough and it might require a particular use of that knowledge in the context, critically.

...how can you develop a competence, a soft competence, how can I be skilful in something that I don't have knowledge. And now I believe this, I understand more. It's like a circle – first I need knowledge and from that knowledge I can decide how to use it in my context and to be critical. [Mexico\_HEI2\_Staff\_2].

Furthermore, several respondents also recognised that mere culture-specific knowledge is not sufficient and that *a deeper conceptual knowledge* around might be needed for full intercultural competence.

Primero, tiene que ver con trabajar la idea de "intercultural" que hay y en ese contexto profundizar... a veces el desconocimiento juega más a la parte negativa de esta cuestión, si uno no tiene conocimiento no va a conocer al otro [Argentina\_HEI2\_Staff\_5].

Y lo primero que yo me preguntaría es, ¿qué son competencias interculturales? ¿Sí? ¿Es ser más tolerante, es ser más simpático, es ser paciente con el que habla distinto? En ese sentido a mí me parece que la capacitación, debería incluir lecturas y ejercicios que nos permitan reflexionar sobre la alteridad, ¿cómo se constituyen las identidades? El propio concepto de cultura, las culturas, las comunidades, las identidades individualmente consideradas o colectivas, etcétera. [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_5]

#### 5.1.5 Intercultural critical reflection

The participants highlighted the need for *critical reflection* in the way one views their own and others' culturally impacted behaviors and the need to further develop it.

Yo no venía haciendo tan conscientemente este ejercicio porque las condiciones materiales no me forzaban a hacerlo y tampoco me estaba estimulando a hacerlo... uno se va como medio acomodando en una zona de confort o en cierta naturalización de las discusiones, en cierta endogamia, que me parece que no hay otra forma de romperla que, con ese choque físico, inclusive diría... efectivamente, estar en otro lugar y darte cuenta de que las formas son otras, que el modo de dialogar es otro, que lo que es significativo es distinto y que hasta la cultura de cómo se trabaja es muy distinta, entonces, por más que yo tenga el privilegio de haber estado en roce con estas cosas desde muy chico, aun así, un viaje corto me cambió la cabeza para pensarlo. [Argentina\_HEI2\_Staff\_6]



los profesores también necesitamos esas herramientas, porque en ingeniería, en leyes, todos somos expertos en nuestra área, pero al momento de comportarnos quizás no mucho. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_7]

Although not specifically expressed as development needs by some respondents, there were several examples of generalisations both about one's own culture and cultures of others that might imply further development needs focused on using culture-specific knowledge appropriately.

#### 5.1.6 Intercultural emotional intelligence

As for the *emotional intelligence* development needs, in most places this aspect was implied in the way participants answered the questions and described problematic situations. However, there were a couple of explicit examples where participants talked about the need for emotional intelligence and in particular one of its aspects – *empathy*.

To be respectful and to be collaborative and you know to show empathy. Which does not necessarily mean that we cannot have any disagreements, but the way to deal with it. [Mexico\_HEI2\_Staff\_7]

El tema de inteligencia emocional, que usted ya lo estuvo hablando, precisamente, que tiene que ver, cuando uno se conoce, la empatía, comprender cómo es la cultura del otro y que somos diferentes, pues... y que tenemos que aprender a trabajar juntos. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_4]

Porque fue algo que nunca hemos tratado con una persona de otro país, pero creo que eso fue clave, pues para aprender que no siempre nuestra cultura va a ser compatible con la de otros, pero que, justamente mediante el diálogo, la conversación, la empatía, el sentirnos en comunidad con ellos... podemos llegar a trabajar de la mejor forma, creo que al final gracias a Dios, sentí que tuvimos una experiencia muy constructiva [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_2]

#### 5.1.7 IC pedagogical

Participants also discussed a new arising element of IC that might be needed in the context of HE institutions staff – not only having IC but knowing how to help students developing it, how to integrate it into educational activities. A number of staff recognized the need to develop this pedagogical IC ability as it was not something specifically addressed before.

Venimos de un sistema que no nos enseñó hacer eso. Es probable que no se haga no porque no quiera hacerlo, sino porque no sé cómo hacerlo. Yo no puedo enseñar algo que no sé hacer, pero si lo he aprendido a hacer, entonces, puedo hacerlo, sí puedo enseñarle a otro a hacer algo que yo también yo también puedo ser. [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_3]

Just to be very specific on how to incorporate those competences, especially the notion of IC, into the curriculum. HOW. ... There is a big gap here – we know that it's very interesting, it's relevant, needed, etc. but the exams – how are they related to that competences? The exams, how are they evaluating that competence? ... In the UNIVERSITY we have had some courses on interculturality. And they are interesting. But they are very general. It's only discussing about topics. [Mexico\_HEI2\_Staff\_2]

Here a number of staff saw the potential of training and development to focus exactly this ability to include IC in pedagogic activities.

Me interesa muchísimo poder contar con más herramientas con las cuales podemos incidir de manera más sistemática, más ordenada en la formación de nuestros estudiantes. Eso para

mí también es un reto además de una necesidad. Contar con herramientas que nos faciliten porque no le tenemos. No contamos con un currículo, por ejemplo, con estas líneas de trabajo. [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_4]

Tiene que haber por lo menos un docente de cada materia que vaya incorporándose. No tengo yo todos los elementos para saber cómo hacerlo, pero sí me parece que debe haber alguna forma en donde hacerlo intencional, no solamente que vaya fluyendo o de no cortarlo, sino de que, además, no digo imponer, pero bajar de una línea más operativa de cómo actuar en esto. Como cursar una materia en cualquier facultad, que es complicado, pero la idea la tiene. Ahora la cuestión es cómo se hace operativo, cómo se lleva a la práctica. [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_1]

A couple of interviewees stressed that it is not only important to know how to develop IC in educational activities, but also that staff might lack the understanding and belief in the value of such intercultural development activities.

Y me parece que habría que focalizar, ¿para qué? Porque de nuevo en este contexto de precarización en la que estamos, a menos que tengas una alta motivación intrínseca, es agregarte más trabajo. Entonces me parece que debiera haber todo un proceso de sensibilización en el claustro docente, para que puedan dimensionar, ¿por qué sería importante trabajar esto? ¿En qué nos beneficiaría a ellos? ¿En qué beneficiaría al estudiantado? Porque si no de nuevo es agregarte una tarea en un contexto en el cual estas tapado de tareas, con muy bajos salarios. Entonces me imagino eso, que sea certificado que sea bien practico, comprender los grandes conceptos, pero también como los transfiere al aula. Y en eso poder transmitir, ¿qué beneficio tendría? ¿En qué me mejoraría a mí, mi trabajo, con el estudiantado, que yo focalizo en eso? Más allá del altruismo que sería hermoso que lo transmitamos, algún beneficio para la trayectoria del docente. [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_7].

Y para poder transmitírselo a mis estudiantes yo debo creerlo, si no, no puedo transmitirlo. Van a enseñarme a mí y va a ser como que ya me rebalse, que no agarro nada porque no quiero, entonces yo debo de creer en eso. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_2].

There was also one participant who questioned the challenge of developing such pedagogical IC when staff did not have contact with relevant diversity.

La situación es esa de cómo resolver un problema o cómo interactuar con la gente que vive en el campo ...que tiene hasta otro vocabulario, otra forma de ver la vida, otra forma de ver las cosas... y eso, si no lo viviste, lo tenés que capacitarlo. No, no, no, no hay otra forma. No se aprende así nomás. Mas uno la trata de transmitir y contarle a los chicos, pero entre los colegas es complicado, es muy difícil. Si no lo vivís, es muy difícil. No te das cuenta, En general, le parece uno que no pasa. Hay muchos docentes que no han tenido esta experiencia, no sé si la mayoría, pero. [Argentina\_HEI3\_Staff\_4]

#### 5.1.8 IC supporting students

When discussing their IC, several respondents recognized that their interaction with the students' IC is not only around pedagogical and educational activities but also supporting them in their experiences, both as students who are coming from elsewhere and when their students go abroad.

Yo he tenido en mi actividad profesional... muchos estudiantes nuestros han trabajado conmigo y han trabajado en China, en Indonesia, en Egipto trabajó uno, dos trabajaron Arabia Saudita... se aprende un poco también en el lugar, pero esa transmisión de esa situación no

es que la demos nosotros, se ha dado, pero deberíamos darla porque hay que prepararlos para ir a trabajar. No sé, no es lo mismo trabajar en Asia que trabajar en Estados Unidos. Totalmente distinto, pero no es que lo hagamos nosotros. [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_1]

Yo siempre con la persona, sigo conversando como para ver qué dificultades tiene -con la persona, digo, que viene de esa otra cultura, ¿no? Pero bueno, no, nunca tengo la certeza completa [Argentina\_HEI2\_Staff\_4]

The aspect of supporting students was seen as a challenge to support them in their life as a whole being entering intercultural situations and challenges. One respondent likened it to being a ‘mother’ or ‘psychologist’ figure for students:

Entonces, interactúo más que la parte administrativa para que se haga la interacción, pero sí con los estudiantes sí vengo, es una especie de madre psicóloga temporal, sí porque están solos, si bien son grandes, son chicos, entonces hay un montón de cosas donde uno está en la diaria y aprendí... Aprendí bastante, ya sea dependiendo del país de donde provienen que sobre qué hacer hincapié, qué temas hablar qué temas no hablar... [Argentina\_HEI2\_Staff\_1]

Although the participants did perform such support roles for students a couple of them did express the need to further develop their ability to support students and create the right intercultural supportive atmosphere.

Maybe that would be great if I study something like people who have had troubles, group troubles and how they solved it, how they solved them. That would be great. And how, for example, in theory we saw, for example, in the class how are the feelings with the foreign who lives in a new place, but I would really like to know their real sensations. I know just the USA, but I think there are more differences. It is not only that. As a student, for example, as a professional and how to solve them. Have like a guide to make, how to make or how to solve a lot of troubles. But not only troubles, how to create the perfect atmosphere for professionals and for students to have a better life in terms of professional and academic too. [Mexico\_HEI1\_Staff\_5]

Therefore, it appears that the sample interviewees expressed views on the need for developing the IC elements present in our previous studies with an addition of two elements that dealt with specific student educational and emotional support. What was important to note that all participants expressed the need to further develop IC and welcomed development activities aimed at this competence. The following section outlines the views on how to best formulate such development and learning activities for staff.

## 5.2 Students' views

Students contributed to clarifying the developmental needs of staff through sharing their ideas on best and worst staff's practices related to student IC development.

### 5.2.1 Actions of those working with students that are perceived by students as conducive to IC development

A wide variety of practices were mentioned by students when asked about examples of “good practices” in IC development – something those working with them at the university have done that promoted IC development. Four students, however, could not think of anything to report, which might reflect the reality or shed certain light on students' believe about IC and how it is developed.

Thus, one student mentioned that the only persons who have helped so far in developing certain aspects of IC have been peers and members of administrative staff:

hay un compañero que se mete mucho en cuestiones de temas sociales, de temas políticos que sabe mucho, de él he aprendido mucho acerca de la interculturización y también del personal

administrativo dentro de la universidad, y de un grupo de amigos que tenemos diversidad dentro de la carrera, unos son de ingeniería, otros son de licenciatura que tendemos a veces cuando platicamos hablamos de temas así [El Salvador\_HEI2\_FG8]

Another student believed that nothing has been done by any of his university teachers since s/he has not had a topic of intercultural competence or interculturality in any of the subjects s/he has taken so far:

hasta el momento no ha habido nadie, simplemente es un tema tabú ... estuvo la idea vagamente en algunas materias, pero no se desarrolló totalmente ... Yo voy en segundo año de carrera, pero no han tocado puntualmente qué es ese concepto y cómo se aplica. [El Salvador\_HEI2\_FG8]

A third student who had nothing to report proposed, by mode of a possible explanation, that this was due to the fact that developing IC was not part of the curriculum:

Igual a muchos profesores les limita el tiempo, ya que son cuatro meses en los que tiene que dar toda una materia o capaz un año, pero entre feriados, paros y otras cosas tienen muchas limitantes y no puede hacer actividades extra, sino que se limitan a la curricular. [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

Finally, the fourth respondent who focused rather on the absence of good practices to report believed that this was partly due to the students' themselves, to the expectations they brought with them and to how they reacted when such expectations were not met:

hay una barrera, a estas propuestas diferentes que dan los profesores, porque estamos tan empapados de la verticalidad en la enseñanza, que capaz que un profesor hace un planteamiento distinto y te choca. ... eso es cierto, estamos acostumbrados a un tipo de enseñanza y si te sacan de eso, y se hace difícil. [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

In other words, according to this student, any teaching approach that deviates from the "traditional" (lecture-based, teacher-centred) might already be promoting student IC development, since it helps students see different ways of learning and dealing with knowledge than the one they are used to. Two more quotes from the interviews conducted seem to support this point of view:

yo tengo bien presentes algunos licenciados, algunos decanos, que sí, que marcaron realmente o me cautivaron con la forma de dar clases, por ejemplo, una maestra creo que era de redacción, no sé, realmente no recuerdo de que era... pero la forma de impartir sus clases, o de compartir sus conocimientos, era totalmente distinto a lo que yo estaba acostumbrado [El Salvador\_HEI1\_FG6]

Yo tuve un profesor que, era de matemáticas, pero la mitad de la clase hablábamos de como de movilidad, o, por ejemplo, planeamos lo que íbamos a hacer una clase de manera como lo hacía, en forma de conferencia [...] Entonces, sí tomaba muchas cosas que vio en otros países para integrarlo en clase, como planeación, no como matemáticas. [Mexico\_HEI1\_FG4]

Although there might be no evidence to sustain that the use of different and unfamiliar methodologies is instrumental to IC development, it will not be correct to say that students report something irrelevant here. Rather, these teachers might have managed to broaden students' ideas about learning, ways to organise HE, ways to interact with others in a learning process, which helped students to become more open minded and perhaps adopt a different approach to knowledge as such, develop certain flexibility, adaptability and/or positive attitude to the different or at least the capacity to suspend judgement and try new behaviours.

Another group of students reported practices that were not related to curricular activities, but rather linked IC development to extra- or co-curricular learning experiences, such as one-off events, non-formal learning or

internships. In case of the one-off events,<sup>2</sup> it is the presence of representatives of different cultures who could share their cultural knowledge that was considered important for IC development. In the case of non-formal learning experiences,<sup>3</sup> this was also significant, and so were the topics explored and the fact of being able to work in interdisciplinary teams. Internship periods when students come into direct contact with different realities were seen as a good platform for introducing reflective and theoretical components to build on the direct experiences of the students.

The other good practices reported were all linked to curricular activities, and will be presented under five organizing themes:

- (1) special subjects/courses
- (2) specially-structured subjects/courses
- (3) what teachers did
- (4) what teachers asked students to do
- (5) other teaching-learning practices

#### (1) special subjects/courses

Two of the practices reported were special courses, which were perceived by students as directly contributing to their IC development. One of these courses was on local cultural heritage, and apart from being thematically focused on cultural and intercultural issues, also included going out of the classroom to visit sites. Besides, the teacher used a range of teaching-learning approaches instead of asking students simply to read the textbook (El Salvador\_HEI1\_FG7). The other course was focused on Italian culture (foreign culture for most/all of the students who took the course) and was conducted in Italian (a foreign language for most/all of the students who took it):

estamos viendo ya otra cultura en otro idioma, o sea, yo argentina estudiando italiano, y de repente viendo cultura italiana, en donde no es italiana nada más, es empezar a ver de dónde nace, allí están los griegos, los italianos, y cómo se van juntando en otras culturas y bueno eso también es un intercambio... Yo hice un trabajo y cada una eligió un ámbito, una eligió la educación, otro la política, la economía, el ámbito militar. Todo eso es una interculturalidad constante, porque uno va aprendiendo cultura de ese idioma, de ese país, o de varios países, y cambia la cultura en cada país... Estuvo muy bueno y eso te abre la mente. Los tres primeros años de Comunicación es base, en donde se ve mucho, gramática, lengua, fonética, como muy todo matemático, muy práctico, y cuando llego a cuarto y quinto, digo, aquí tengo que leer, leer, y leer cosas que no lo dice en cualquier género, ni en tu idioma, ni el ente y allí es donde uno desarrolla un montón de cosas que abren la mente y te empapas de la otra cultura. [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

#### (2) specially-structured subjects/courses

Four of the good practices reported consisted in structuring complete courses in a specific way that was conducive to IC development.

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<sup>2</sup> E.g. a forum where specialists in own national legislative systems presented the current thinking and debate on human rights issues and legal systems in general (Mexico\_HEI1\_FG4), or talks by persons from different parts of the same country (Mexico\_HEI1\_FG4), or events with foreign speakers to which teachers invited students (Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1).

<sup>3</sup> A course on Korean and East Asian culture proposed in the framework of a project run by Korea Foundation (El Salvador\_HEI2\_FG8) or a course of French language and culture organised by a student who had spent time studying in France (Mexico\_HEI2\_FG5)

The first example here was a course taught using a virtual collaboration platform, where two teachers worked together to develop a learning experiences for their two groups of students, each group following the course in a different country:

Yo tengo una experiencia con el doctor XYZ, el doctor hizo un programa que se llama VIC Virtual International Collaboration, una liga entre la Mexico\_HEI2 y la Universidad de Cork en Irlanda, era como una plataforma para poder interactuar con los estudiantes de Cork y poder discutir acerca de derechos humanos y de temas de investigación sobre derechos humanos y todo eso. [Mexico\_HEI2\_FG5]

Further two courses that belong to this category were built around students working together with different actors – non-academics and specialists in their own fields, where constant dialogue and intercultural collaboration was a must for the students to complete the course tasks successfully and to “pass” the course requirements. Both examples came from Argentina, one from Agriculture, the other one from Law:

Tengo una materia que se llama Extensión Rural aplicada a la Agronomía, que la idea de la materia, en teoría, es transmitir todos los conocimientos que adquirimos estos cinco años a productores, bajar a personas que no conocen el vocabulario técnico, que no saben nada de ingeniería agronómica... bajarlo y explicarles, y cambiar su mentalidad, capaz ellos tienen una tradición y forma de ver toda la forma de producir, que lo hacen solo porque su familia y tradicionalmente se hace de esa manera y tratar de explicarles otra manera más eficiente y correcta, es muy difícil... Entonces, aunque no lo crean, en agronomía estamos aprendiendo teorías de aprendizaje y estamos aprendiendo cómo hacer que una persona supere esa barrera que vos decías, y buscar otras formas para poder llegar a un conocimiento distinto... [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

Yo, en el tercer año de abogacía, cuando empecé con la Química Jurídica, es interdisciplinario. Empezamos a trabajar con trabajadores sociales y trabajadoras y me abrió muchísimo el panorama de cosas, aprendí un montón de ellas, ellas de nosotras. Y creo que, si yo no hubiese participado en ese espacio, no me hubiese pasado y no hubiese podido conectar con los diferentes saberes de otras personas. ... Y yo, haber empezado a trabajar con trabajadores, con acompañantes terapéuticos que, por ahí, otro va a mezclarse con ellos, o sea, se aprende un montón y se puede avanzar mucho más en conjunto y no cerrarse en que el único saber es el que tiene cada uno con su profesión y que nosotros tenemos el saber sobre esto, sobre las leyes o lo sabemos todo y sí mezclarnos. Creo que sería fundamental en todos los ámbitos, mezclarse y compartir los saberes, porque ninguno sabe y tiene la verdad de todo. [Argentina\_HEI2\_FG2]

Finally, the fourth example here did not involve any external actors or collaborations. What the teacher did was purposefully facilitate the course in two languages – Spanish and English, while also requiring students to do some tasks based on reading English (foreign-language) sources:

Tomé una clase, la verdad es que no me acuerdo si era matemáticas o física. Pero la maestra, dio la mitad de la clase en inglés. Sobre todo [¿Pero, era de México la maestra?] Sí de México, pero llegaba mucho, porque hay ciertos tecnicismos en inglés que no conocemos. Entonces, pues, esto enriquece de menos, a nosotros ingenieros, nuestro vocabulario. Pues, el inglés es, la lengua internacional... De alguna manera, conocerlo o verlo desde, el inglés, es como que te expande un poquito, la forma de atacar los problemas. También, nos dejaba leer en inglés, había que entregar un resumen. Entonces todo eso, yo creo que, todo eso, a nosotros nos ayudó. [Mexico\_HEI1\_FG4]



These six examples are very inspiring and do certainly present promising context for students' IC development (although the topic and even the general structure might not be enough for students to develop their IC). However, as students' responses showed, much can be done in any course – regardless of its particular topic or of its focus being “optimal” for addressing IC – and students can be supported in their IC development through relatively small actions or tasks.

### (3) what teachers did

Ten different practices were reported here and are listed below to show a variety of actions teachers can undertake to encourage students in developing their IC.

- Invite foreign colleagues to give a class:
- Act as models

una maestra creo que era de redacción, no sé, realmente no recuerdo de que era... pero la forma de impartir sus clases, o de compartir sus conocimientos, era totalmente distinto a lo que yo estaba acostumbrado, a la forma que se para, explica ya, lo he comenzado con poesía, la poesía de Coelho, de García Márquez, hablaba acerca de Venecia, acerca de Europa. Entonces me quedaba con la idea, ¿cómo aprendió eso? Entonces me entraba ya una curiosidad, y que posiblemente me gustaría ser así, porque llama la atención.[El Salvador\_HEI1\_FG6]

- Encourage students to go and spend time in different cultural settings
- Share own experiences of intercultural interactions, both successful and not at all successful
- Give students recommendations about interculturally competent professional behaviours
- Take students out to give them (inter)cultural experiences
- Speak of other cultures thus making students aware of own stereotypes and fighting these or show students videos that go against certain stereotypes
- Ask questions students do not normally reflect on
- Introduce other cultural viewpoints on what is studied, try to give students the global perspective or use examples from other cultural context and compare different cultural phenomena
- Engage students in own social projects

en el área de diseño, por ejemplo, hay una docente que en dos ocasiones ha realizado proyección social aquí en la universidad, y ella siempre está como muy interesada en buscar un proyecto viable apoyando que se ejecute. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_FG7]

### (4) what teachers asked students to do

An overarching theme here was about setting tasks that expose students to cultural differences and ask student to analyse these or engage with those who are culturally different from them to jointly work on something. The range is very broad here, from something very close to home

otro profesor, como un trabajo, nos hizo tomar el colectivo urbano y realizar el recorrido completo y evaluar las distintas... que para mí fue muy interesante, ya que lo que yo conocía de Córdoba era muy poco, y allí tuve la oportunidad de conocer un montón de barrios que no tenía ni idea, era otra ciudad, realmente... Aprendí mucho de ese simple trabajo educativo, de esa actividad [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

or even experienced “indirectly” through watching a film or reading a book to real immersion projects

formamos grupos de estudiantes, vamos a una comunidad y ahí vivimos una semana, allí compartimos la parte religiosa, de la alimentación, del comportamiento y hacemos un diagnóstico de salud, implementamos una estrategia en salud y la evaluamos. [Mexico\_HEI2\_FG5]

teníamos que hacer un estudio de campo, hacer una entrevista, relacionarse con alguna comunidad y hacer observación participante, estar con ellos, convivir con esa comunidad... que podías elegir, entre afrodescendiente, comunidades mapuches, grupo feministas. [Argentina\_HEI1\_FG1]

En mi facultad hay una clase, que creo que es optativa, que se llama biotecnología en alimentos, el doctor que la da, te lleva a comunidades indígenas, a que te comparta su conocimiento y como decía anteriormente, o sea, si ellos ocupan mucho un alimento, tú sacas su aporte nutrimental... esa materia es muy pedida por los estudiantes, porque les interesa mucho eso de, "tú me vas a ayudar a identificar cuáles son los alimentos importantes en tu dieta", o sea la comunidad indígena, "y yo te voy a ayudar a saber qué tan qué tanto bien le haces a tu cuerpo"... pues eso, tener un acercamiento tal cual, con la comunidad, es muy bonito y ya al final del semestre puedes hacer como una exposición de los productos, donde una parte de los ponentes son de la comunidad y otros son los biólogos en formación y es un intercambio muy cool, yo creo que esa la materia que es más representativa de interculturalidad. [Mexico\_HEI2\_FG5]

and the different “points” in-between. For example, requiring students to go to an international event happening in their own place and interact there with representatives of foreign cultures. In some of such interview tasks the “access to respondents” can be negotiated by the teacher, while in others establishing contact is also part of the students’ task.

A slightly different task which was also reported by students consisted in some kind of cultural detective investigation, where students were asked to make a (micro)research project that involved learning about cultures as well.

#### (5) other teaching-learning practices

Finally, students also reported certain practices where teachers “pushed” students to interact with peers who were perceived by students as different from them and created learning environments where students’ cultural identities and cultural uniqueness are made visible and valued, appreciated and seen as a source of richness and learning for all those present.

#### *5.2.2 What those working at universities lack and need to develop in order to better support students in developing IC*

One of the guiding questions in the focus groups interviews asked students to share any experiences where those working at the university did something that in students’ opinion went against helping them develop their IC. Below students’ responses are grouped into two broad categories: (1) aspects of academic and administrative staff’s own IC that might require special attention and (2) aspects related to promoting students IC where students reported deficiencies. In both cases, the aim is to draw attention to the “observed development needs”.

##### (1) Academic and administrative staff’s own IC

Four sub-categories can be distinguished when analysing the stories of counter-productive practices shared by students: (a) lack of cultural knowledge, (b) lack of necessary attitudes or presence of damaging attitudes



and beliefs; (c) lack of skills or presence of interculturally in-competent behaviour; and (d) lack of possibilities for teachers and administrative staff to develop their IC.

Knowledge-wise, some students considered that university teachers are unfamiliar with students' cultures and cultural contexts. This was not a very widespread opinion, although it does not come as a surprise considering the responses on the diversity between students and academic and administrative staff (cf. Part 2 above), as well as the clearly greater diversity among students than among teachers/those working at universities.

Some students also believed that some of those working at universities lacked empathy and open-mindedness. As a result, such persons were not accepting of the diversity that student population represented and did not respect the cultural differences when those "different" were their students. Moreover, some of those working at universities were perceived by students as ego-centric and extremely rigid in their belief in the "supremacy" of their own professional culture. These "old-fashioned" attitudes meant that, according to students, some of academic staff did not see the need for specialists in one field to interact with specialists in other fields – non-specialists or lay persons from their professional point of view, which is one clear context for which both teachers and students need IC. Besides, some academics were reported to value technical knowledge only, thus regarding any soft-skills and non subject-specific competences as IC or relating to others – even in one's immediate social context – as irrelevant.

Two concrete examples were of scientists and lawyers, with students giving much greater importance than those teaching them to dissemination of science, in one of the cases, and to helping all members of a society make the best use of judicial system to protect their rights, in the other.

Behaviour-wise, such beliefs in one particular culture being superior to another led to cases of discriminatory comments or behaviours towards students who spoke differently (because they were not from the capital), belonged to LGBT community, were born in their country of studies but to the parents who came from other countries; or even simply wanted their desired professional community to become more open. Some of the students in the sample had also experienced discrimination from visiting professors who were perceived by students as despising the national culture of the country visited. It should be reiterated that such behaviours were probably more rare than not, but it is also not possible to claim that they did not exist.

Finally, a number of comments were made about the lack of opportunities those working at universities have to develop their IC. More specifically, students suggested that those working at universities were prevented from (further) developing their IC due to the lack of the mastery of the English language, lack of contact with peers from other disciplines/countries).

## (2) Helping students develop their IC

Student respondents also pointed to a number of issues that require additional attention if our goal is to ensure that those working at universities can fully support students in developing their IC. Namely, students highlighted certain (a) counterproductive beliefs, (b) behaviours that hinder IC development or absence of behaviours crucial for students' IC development, as well as (c) some systemic drawbacks that are viewed by students as preventing teachers and administrators from fully supporting students' IC development.

### (a) beliefs

Two types of harmful beliefs were reported. Firstly, some teachers believe that students must put all their efforts in developing disciplinary knowledge and – in the case of regulated professions – preparing for regulatory exams. Developing any other types of competences – like IC – are considered by such teachers a waste of time. A similar, if somewhat less extreme, belief consists in arguing that only some areas of professional activity require IC, while others – normally the teacher's own – does not. Secondly, some teachers

do not believe that their students might ever go to pursue further studies abroad; an attitude that can clearly have a negative impact on students motivation for developing IC.

#### (b) behaviours

The two types of harmful beliefs reported can be also seen as different facets of the same one – believing that students do not need to develop IC. Those who subscribe to this point of view can engage in a number of counterproductive behaviours, from not giving any support to students who try to apply for a scholarship to go abroad to marginalising students who want to explore questions related to interculturality as part of their research projects.

A second damaging type of behaviour reported by students appears to be caused by teachers not being able to capitalize on own experience abroad. Somehow some teachers choose to talk about their trips and stays abroad in such a way that students feel humiliated and downgraded (inferior because they were not lucky enough to go abroad), instead of benefiting and learning from their teachers' experiences. The same might happen when teachers treat differently those students who have had international exposure and those who have not. In the case reported both the students who was thus pin-pointed and the rest of the classmates had negative feelings about their teacher's approach.

Finally, students also mentioned some cases where teachers failed to adopt behaviours that can promote IC development, like

- not taking advantage of the diversity that exists among students in a classroom; or
- not encouraging students to explore other cultures to which they could gain access without international mobility; or
- not questioning stereotypes teachers but rather using them to make a point.

#### (c) systemic drawbacks

A third group of counterproductive practices are less dependent on individual teachers and have, therefore, been grouped under the "systemic drawbacks" heading. Here three aspects can be distinguished. Firstly, there are often no provisions in the curriculum for exploring the notions of culture, interculturality or addressing any other aspects of students' IC. Secondly, when such provisions are made universities sometimes opt for modalities that are very expensive for students and neglect other, which might look less attractive, but yield the results more students can benefit from: e.g. inviting a foreign specialist to give a seminar for which students have to pay, instead of inviting a local person with experience of working in different cultural contexts. Thirdly, some of the students felt that those working at universities do not necessarily take time to inform themselves and help students make use of the mobility opportunities available.

### 5.3 Current practices of supporting students in IC development

Academic and administrative staff interviewed were asked whether they have tried to support the development of IC of the students they interacted with and, if so, what was it that they did. Additionally, some of the interviewees commented on what they believed to be counterproductive practices for students' IC development.

#### 5.3.1 Practices reported

As two preliminary comments, the data have revealed a number of attitudes towards developing students' IC that are worth our attention, as well as a variety of levels of awareness.

Thus, firstly, although many members of staff reported doing or having done something that they believed could support students' IC development, and some really reported doing an impressive job in this sense, at least one respondent suggested that IC could be developed more or less "automatically" – simply because there is diversity among students. Besides, a number of respondents believed that certain areas of studies or particular courses were somehow more "naturally" linked with IC development, even if one of the respondents did insist that this belief is not helpful and that all those teaching at the university must make the effort to support students in this respect. One more belief discovered was that students can develop their IC simply because the person working with them is acting in an interculturally competent manner.

Secondly, it became apparent that some of those working with students could be doing something towards developing students' IC but not always consciously or without thinking of such efforts as related to developing students' IC. In other cases, only during PROFIC interviews did respondents seem to realise that they have probably missed on the opportunities to support their students in developing IC. Another curious case was the academic who said that she was "forcing" herself to find ways to support students in this respect.

Speaking of the practices reported, these are presented below using a four-element structure, which is not a neat classification but can permit us to get a good idea of the variety of existing practices:

- (1) Extracurricular practices or practices outside own classroom
- (2) Practices focused on exposing students to difference
- (3) Particular teaching, learning and assessment activities conducive to developing IC
- (4) Efforts focused on developing certain aspects of IC

#### (1) Extracurricular practices or practices outside own classroom

Some of the respondents spoke of encouraging students to take part in activities that happen beyond their classroom but can clearly help students to develop IC: participating in mobility programmes, going abroad or learning a foreign language.

Another respondent mentioned that he tried to include students in his own international experiences through inviting selected students to join him in trips to congresses and conferences, whenever adequate funding was available.

Furthermore, several respondents mentioned that they involved their students in or at least informed them about extracurricular activities conducive to IC development: voluntary work, professional internships, 'proyectos de extensión' and 'prácticas co-curriculares' – extra-curricular events organised by students from different programmes and different years of studies under the general supervision or guidance from the teaching staff.

#### (2) Practices focused on exposing students to difference

Four types of practices have been grouped under this category.

Firstly, these are practices where the difference is that of students' own experiences and where IC is deemed to be further developed thanks to building on the diversity that exists among students. One such practice consists in organising debates, so that students could share their different experiences and thus be exposed to different perspectives and points of view. A larger group of practices here referred to giving students opportunities to work in groups or at least to interact with each other in the learning process. One of those interviewed reported discussing with the students the possible cultural conflicts that can happen when working in teams. Another, mentioned her predilection for making students work collaboratively in multidisciplinary teams. Few respondents used intentionally mixed groups, although some did recognise that self-formed groups tend to be more homogeneous, which is a missed opportunity in terms of helping students develop IC.

Secondly, where “the different” was part of teacher’s own experience – where those working with students shared their own experiences of encountering cultural differences. One respondent also talked to students about the international collaboration projects in which the university as a whole was participating.

Thirdly, where the difference was brought into the classroom thanks to inviting others than the teacher to share their experiences, perspectives, etc. Sometimes this was done in person and sometimes thanks to using technology – e.g. Skype. In another case, those who came to the university in the framework of an international collaboration project were invited on a one-off basis, something which still had a great impact on all the students.

Fourthly, students can also be exposed to difference through readings, videos or even examples.

### (3) Particular teaching, learning and assessment activities conducive to developing IC

Examples reported and grouped under this category included:

- Requiring that some of the sources cited in an essay were in a foreign language and represented perspectives of another culture,
- Asking students to compare cultural perspectives,
- Requiring students to analyse other cultural realities or own cultural context, be it national culture or generational culture,
- Discussions where students need to link a point of view to the cultural conditioning/reasoning of those who tend to adopt it,
- Engaging representatives of other cultural group in giving feedback on students’ end-of-course project/presentations.

From the point of view of scope, the practices reported ranged from single tasks, to interdisciplinary projects; and from seeing IC development as one of the course intended learning outcomes, to arranging the whole course as an intercultural project, to working with instructors in foreign universities to collaboratively offer a virtual international collaboration course where students from two countries worked together throughout the semester.

### (4) Efforts focused on developing certain aspects of IC

Some of the practices reported were linked to particular aspects of IC and are listed below following the EMIC model AKAS core blocks – awareness, knowledge, attitudes, & skills – order first, with the meta-element of developing IC as such, second.

- Awareness

Some of the respondents try to raise students’ awareness of own cultural conditioning through confronting students with own stereotypes or inviting students to question own ideas and behaviours to discover which ones are culturally-conditioned, or engaging students in experiencing the university space as a handicapped person would - a visually-impaired person, someone who can only use one arm or one leg, or someone who has to use a wheel-chair, etc. Another respondent targets raising students’ awareness of cultural conditioning in general and of perhaps invisible cultural differences.

- Knowledge

Some respondents spoke of including information about other realities in their course materials or sharing lists of cultural do’s and don’t’s with students.

- Attitudes

One of the respondents said that her focus was helping students develop respectful and non-judgemental attitudes towards peers – one of her aims was to create an atmosphere of respect so that students can work collaboratively and learn from each other.

- Skills

Another respondent said that he helped students develop the skill of accepting diversity and dealing with it through engaging students in the process of constructing knowledge while taking into account multiple cultural perspectives and diverse sources.

- Developing IC

One of the practices reported by different respondents consisted in talking to students about or otherwise helping students see the importance of IC for their future, either as part of the profile of any university student and graduate or more specifically for the possible professional occupations in their area of studies. One of the respondents also mentioned that she tried to help her students see the value of one of the strategies for developing IC, which consists in going out of one's comfort zone and explore one's own cultural comfort zone "limits".

### 5.3.2 Counterproductive practices mentioned

Only four quotes were coded as pointing to counterproductive practices reported by academic and administrative staff in relation to the goal of developing students' IC.

Two of the four themes suggested by these quotes refer to unhelpful beliefs, while the other two draw our attention to the lack of helpful practices. The first counter-productive belief is the "not-in-my-course" type of comments, when certain university teachers consider that – due to the nature of their courses – the task of supporting students' IC development does not concern them. The second counter-productive belief is the expectation that IC will somehow develop in students "automatically", simply because students are different among themselves and they often work in groups. The respondent in question seems to be convinced that no intervention is, therefore, needed on the part of those working with students, quite despite the fact that s/he recognises that working with those who are different is difficult and that students learn to select group-mates with whom they find it easier to collaborate. An intertwined belief here is that if there are no visible difficulties or conflicts, students should better be left to their own devices.

The lack of helpful practices reported is, firstly, among those working on a different degree programme – the programme that seems less prone to developing IC or whose graduates apparently might not be in need of IC. Secondly, and this is perhaps a new theme in the analysis so far, one of the respondents commented on the fact that while students might be made conscious of the importance of developing IC or certain IC elements given their desired professional profile, there is hardly anything in the curriculum in terms of practices to help them develop the competence.

## 6. Ideas about desired IC-focused professional development activities for staff

When asked about the desired or preferred format of the development activities participants expressed views around organization of the training, principles of the training, nature of the content and methodologies to be used.

### 6.1 Organization of development activities

The participants firstly disused the format and whether it would be online, face to face or a mixture of activities. A majority of the respondents did agree that a combination of face to face and online activities would best fit the schedule and the learning tasks.

It could be online; if we could have some sessions, presential sessions, it would be great as well, though. Maybe a mixed system will be OK ... it could be a mixed system, which maybe like, at first, we could work together and learn a lot more so that we could have the foundations in order to keep working online and keep doing what we can start [Mexico\_HEI1\_Staff\_8].

Although the majority did agree that blended approach might be useful a number of respondents highlighted the importance of face to face (*presencial*) for connecting with others and attending to these activities having in mind the busy schedules and workloads. When online activities are included there were views that they should focus on synchronous activities rather than only asynchronous.

Es mejor sesión presencial, o que haya un curso programado en el que yo deba de asistir o, así como igual es el IE Schooler, el programa que tengo que el profesor se conecta, pero todos estamos en un salón recibiendo la clase, pero es en vivo, o sea, yo veo al profesor y el profesor me contesta las preguntas de inmediato... porque un curso que está colgado ahí en una plataforma y yo lo voy a ver cuando tenga tiempo, así va a ser bien difícil, al menos en la calidad de lo que se quiera formar en mí, o de lo yo que deba aprender, por la cantidad de aspectos diarios que nos consumen. Y, aun así, puede ser algo que por interés lo hagamos, pero, pero pienso que sí puede ser bien saturado. [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_5]

Interviewees also discussed the type and combination of participants. The views agreed that mixed groups that are both interdisciplinary and ideally between different institutions would be useful.

Un espacio de interdisciplina, que no hablen todos los comunicadores, que no hablen todos los psicólogos. Estar con el ingeniero, con el médico, con el abogado. La interdisciplina me parece importantísima y si fuera posible también en un espacio interinstitucional. O sea que, no fuera solo entre universitarios porque la universidad también puede ser bastante endogámica, bastante cerrada y habla en un código bastante endogámico. A veces tener la mirada de otros actores, de otras instituciones. [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_5]

When discussing the formality of the development there were mixed views. Some participants thought that it should be obligatory and part of professional standards. Others viewed that making it obligatory might also affect motivation negatively. Several participants thought that providing a type of certificate for attending these courses would enable more engagement. The differing views on the formality of the development highlighted also the problem of relying on only people that are interested which might be in less need of development. However, this might represent a first wave of impact that could further multiply in the future activities.

También hay otra cosa, luego a veces lo que estamos interesados son los que ya somos sensibles y nunca llegas la personas que no están sensibilizados y que no les interesa, y son los que siguen reproduciendo los procesos que no [Mexico\_HEI2\_Staff\_4]

## 6.2 Principles of IC development

When discussing the principles that would guide the proposed IC development the majority of participants who discussed this aspect thought that highlighting the importance and the reason for the development in each institutional context is very important they thought that there needs to be clear and systematized evidence to raise awareness and motivate colleagues to engage with this development. On the one hand this calls for raising awareness but on the other it also highlights importance of institutional level support.

primero a los directivos. Primero al decano, al vicedecano y a los funcionarios políticos, porque si ellos no se creen lo que hay que hacer, después la difusión queda muy en el aire. Yo creo que si se si se convence a la dirigencia política de cada una de las facultades de la universidad de qué



es lo bueno y es necesario, entonces es mucho más fácil en la transmisión posterior que consigan la gente para qué vaya. [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_1]

Another idea proposed as a principle of IC development is that is first needed for the staff to have the IC in order to implement it with the students.

Yo creo que si las personas lo tienen incorporado, en este caso los docentes lo tenemos incorporado, es mucho más fácil transmitirlo casi naturalmente a los alumnos. [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_1]

Ponerlos en situaciones a los profesores, para que ellos vivan la diversidad. Que ellos vivan la diversidad para después fomentar, creo que hay algo que tienen que pasar por ellos mismos, por los profesores mismos o los administrativos, ¿no? No sé puede transmitir aquello que uno no tiene. [Argentina\_HEI3\_Staff\_1]

There were some other isolated views on the need for IC development to focus on the impact one might have, to be lifelong activity and to focus on the entire person holistically.

### 6.3 Nature of the content for IC development

Regarding the nature of the content for IC development the most discussed theme is the need to make sure that the content is relevant for the participants, relates to their practice and that the participants understand what is the relevance of such development.

The problem is that we, teachers, we are supposed to be operating or including those dimensions into the classroom, into your syllabus – we have not been taught how. It's not clear. Even for me, after reading for four years, what do we mean by intercultural competence for language education. So my question was – how those, a teacher from engineering, understand that term [to introduce it] into the syllabus, into his syllabus. There is a lack of guidelines. ... Each institution depending on the context, on the role, on the aims, define it clearly. It's not the same if we use a definition from Europe. Right? [Mexico\_HEI2\_Staff\_2]

As a form of highlighting the relevance it is needed to recognise the local context in which the participants face intercultural challenges.

Entonces me parece que poder interpretar el tema intercultural que hay que trabajar en determinado lugar, que no sea el mismo acá que, en Argentina\_HEI2, en Argentina\_HEI2 o mucho menos en la universidad, no me sale el nombre, serán diferentes problemas. [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_6]

Several participants discussed the balance between theory and practice as an important aspect of the nature of the content that the IC development should cover. Interviewees discussing this theme agreed that both theory and practice are important to go in-depth but that practical experience is essential.

In my case, I all the time want to know what is behind the things. And I think that theoretic is an important thing. But it must to be very related with the practice. Because if you only get the theory, in my case – if I am only going to do the practice thing, I think, well – what is the ground of this and that. For me, in my case, I want to learn about the theory and about practice. And I think if I can have both things, I can “replicar” the knowledge or the abilities to here in CAMPUS. [Mexico\_HEI1\_Staff\_7]

An additional point about the nature of the content is the need for exact tools to work with students on developing IC:

Me interesa muchísimo poder contar con más herramientas con las cuales podemos incidir de manera más sistemática, más ordenada en la formación de nuestros estudiantes. Eso para mí también es un reto además de una necesidad. Contar con herramientas que nos faciliten porque no le tenemos. No contamos con un currículo, por ejemplo, con estas líneas de trabajo. [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_4]

Following the views on the nature of the IC development content participants had several ideas around the learning methods that could be beneficial in their context.

#### 6.4 Methods

Several methods were suggested as useful and one of the most discussed ideas was related to the nature of content aspect of theory vs practice discussed above. Several participants highlighted the need to use experiential learning as much as possible and implement practical hands on learning activities.

Sí, se desarrollará un tipo de programa, no de contenido, ni es expositivo, sino un tipo de capacitación en la que la que la persona aprenda hacerlo haciéndolo... es muy probable que también eso lo replique en sus clases, en sus aulas, es muy probable que también eso lo reproduzca en su espacio laboral con las demás personas. [El Salvador\_HEI2\_Staff\_3]

Furthermore, participants deemed that knowledge exchange activities and in particular with other institutions would bring a lot of benefits in terms of learning from each other. This aspect is linked with the views on participants grouping discussed under the organisation theme but further includes the desire to have activities that would enable such knowledge exchange (be it in person or online).

Podría ser una especie de intercambio de conocimientos en métodos de enseñanza ante nuevos ambientes de aprendizaje. También, uso de tecnologías para la enseñanza. También, actualización de programas contenidos, desarrollo de habilidades para que los estudiantes aprendan el trabajo en grupos, equipos, también cómo es el contexto de otros países, la enseñanza versus la nuestra, si estamos al mismo nivel o hay mucha diferencia. [El Salvador\_HEI1\_Staff\_6]

Furthermore, several interviewees proposed simulations where different viewpoints could be unearthed.

Difícil... No sé si tengo la respuesta, creo que se podría empezar por dos ramas: uno, que sea una cuestión con la comunicación, ejercicios sobre la comunicación donde uno pudiese visualizar ciertas temáticas... otra, podría tener que ver con un tipo de trabajo de mucha participación del estudiantado, donde el estudiantado recoja inquietudes, que se haga un trabajo como de recoger inquietudes diversas... que se puedan simular en un aula. [Argentina\_HEI2\_Staff\_6]

Highlighting the knowledge exchange and stimulating different viewpoints, participants talked about the need for collaborative learning activities that could foster such exchange.

Yo arrancaré esto como disparador, y luego lo trabajaré, como una plegaria en conjuntos y luego lo trabajaré en grupos, para que justamente puedan intercambiar por cada grupo, tratar de lograr que sean muy diversos, para que puedan trabajar también de diferentes puntos de vista. [Argentina\_HEI1\_Staff\_3]

Overall the views of the participants is that IC is a complex competence and varying methods would be useful to cover all bases. These recommendations for the form, nature and methodology of the IC development provide a useful guideline for proposing a complex, unified yet contextualised learning programme.



## 6.5 Students' recommendations

Focus groups have also yielded a number of ideas about PD activities focussed on IC that students believe are necessary for those working at their universities. These are presented below grouped into the following categories: (1) the focus of IC-related PD; (2) the goals of such PD activities; (3) methodologies that could be used; and (4) the nature of IC-focussed PD activities.

### 6.5.1 Focus of IC-related professional development

Students highlighted the importance of addressing a number of topics and/or IC-elements in IC-focussed professional development activities.

**Knowledge-wise**, two major ideas have appeared:

- 1) knowledge of own culture – of the various cultures and multiple cultural differences that exist in one's national culture
- 2) knowledge and understanding of such key notions as culture, diversity and interculturality.

**Skills-wise**, students emphasised the need to further develop staff's capacities

- to communicate with those culturally-different from them (students),
- not to discriminate against culturally-different students, and
- not to impose their own culture on students in ways that make students feel inferior and affects students' self-esteem.

In this respect, students drew attention to that fact that academic and administrative staff must be **aware** that even in the absence of any other differences, students will always be culturally-different from those working with them:

(a) students are new to the university culture, especially when they are in their first year, and

(b) students are novices in terms of disciplinary and professional cultures into which they are "initiated" by those who are experts in their respective fields.

Furthermore, students also mentioned as important such IC elements as *empathy* and *emotional intelligence*.

### 6.5.2 Goals of such professional development activities

Speaking more broadly, students considered that IC-focussed PD activities for those working at universities should provoke visible behavioural changes in those attending them. Such changes were seen as desirable at two levels. Firstly, in university academic and administrative staff' interactions with students (thanks to (further) developing the knowledge, skills, awareness and other IC elements discussed in point (1) above). Secondly, students hoped that those working with them would engage more in supporting students' IC development – would accept this as part of their "mission" and would equip themselves with concrete tools/ideas of how this can be put in practice.

The need for university teachers to accept the task of developing students' IC as part of their mission was clearly expressed in one of the focus groups conducted in El Salvador. As some of the students put it, IC-focussed PD activities should convince those attending that developing students' IC is part of what being a university teacher is about and that it is one of the university teachers' tasks to make sure their students become interculturally-competent professionals, regardless of their area of studies.

In terms of concrete ideas to be applied, students expected that IC-focussed PD activities will permit those working at universities to learn

- how they can prepare students for possible future experiences abroad,

- how own intercultural experiences of those working with students can be built upon in own teaching practice and
- jointly to look for solutions how to develop students' IC in courses they teach, either through course-specific learning activities or perhaps through working jointly with faculty from other HE programmes so as to give students opportunities to engage in inter-disciplinary learning projects.

### 6.5.3 Methodologies that could be used

Three ideas can be distinguished here. Firstly, students considered important that those working with them could be made to leave their comfort zone and immerse in unfamiliar cultural environments (e.g. during a trip abroad). Secondly, students believed that it was important to give those attending PD activities to talk about issues related to cultures, intercultural interactions, etc., to exchange their ideas on and share their experiences of dealing with cultural differences and/or promoting IC development – both positive and negative experiences. The direct benefit of such an exchange, according to students, consists in exposing training participants to different perspectives, both those of other colleagues and those of other groups of university employees, as well as those of students. Finally, students also saw engaging in the analysis of own experiences – overall or negative experiences in particular – as a useful approach.

### 6.5.4 Nature of IC-focussed professional activities

Several students insisted that such PD activities should be obligatory and must happen regularly – e.g. once or twice a year for workshops/seminars or once every five years for periods of immersion in unfamiliar cultural environments. Another opinion voiced highlighted the need to ensure that those working at universities engage in enhancing their IC and their competence of supporting students' IC development on a permanent basis.

## 7. Concluding remarks

This report highlights the results of the qualitative data analysis conducted on the staff interviews and students focus groups at 8 LA institutions. These results will contribute to forming a better understanding of the IC development needs and developing the most appropriate professional development (PD) programme. Key lessons learned are outlined below following the structure of the report.

Part 2 has brought forward three challenges to be kept in mind:

- (1) IC-focused PD activities will likely to be a completely novel learning experience for staff, which highlights the need for motivating or encouraging a buy-in work to be done to attract potential participants and make them see the relevance.
- (2) PROFIC PD activities should expect to have participants who have never stayed abroad for any considerable period of time, although they might have had a significant exposure to cultural differences within their own country. It will, thus, be important to make sure that those considering whether to attend, are aware that international experience is not a prerequisite for being able to help students further develop IC.
- (3) Since most of the respondents had multiple roles at the university, there is perhaps an underrepresentation of those with administrative roles only. This means that extra effort needs to be made to ensure that the PD activities offered can cater for administrative staff as well, rather than being of relevance only for those who teach and work on research projects.

Part 3 has highlighted the following four points to consider:

- (1) There are vastly different levels of awareness about diversity among staff working at universities.

- (2) Each staff member, in a way, faces his/her own particular configuration of diversity (depending on own cultural profile and the department where he/she works), which, in addition, might change as time goes by and new student groups come to the university.
- (3) The two points above suggest that PD activities might need to address the very capacity to analyse the diversity of own context, as well as to identify possible implications of this diversity for own work.
- (4) Discussions about diversity at national level could be also a promising way forward for developing awareness of and capacity to identify existing cultural differences.

Part 4 has drawn our attention to the following ideas:

- (1) One of important goals for participants is to be able to formulate why IC is important in such way that is convincing for both peers and students, and which will point out the multiple benefits of developing IC.
- (2) Learning to explain the very concept of IC is a valid goal on its own, since this is not something students or staff are necessarily clear about.
- (3) It is also important to help participants develop a holistic understanding of IC, since they will need to help students do so. It will perhaps be helpful if staff members can develop double concepts of IC in this respect – a generic one and a discipline/subject-specific one – so that they can explain it to students both in general term and in a contextualized way, so to speak.
- (4) Despite not having well-developed understanding of IC as such and own level of IC in particular, students are likely to have ideas to share, and it will help asking them about their thoughts on the topic in order to better tailor any IC development efforts.

Part 5 is very rich in insights for anyone interested in developing IC-focused PD activities. It starts with the learning or developmental needs reported by staff members for themselves and colleagues in terms of enhancing own IC and, perhaps, even more importantly, learning how to better support students in developing IC. Apart from the four types of key IC elements – awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and skills – and the two supporting capacities – intercultural critical reflection and intercultural emotional intelligence – and the meta-capacity of knowing how to develop own IC, the study has highlighted the need for two additional elements linked to the need to accompany others in the process of IC development: learning to foster IC development through own pedagogical activities and learning to support students as whole beings in their intercultural developmental journeys.

This part also presents a wealth of ideas about the current developmental level of staff members as observed by students – both in terms of what staff members are good and excellent in and what they really need to address to become facilitators of students' IC development. The good practices reported can also be useful for informing the content of the PD. So too can examples reported by staff members themselves and comprised in Part 6.

Part 6 is another part worth re-reading in full before developing PD programme since it gives many valuable indications about the learning goals PD participants are likely to see as the most relevant ones, as well as their learning preferences in terms of the methodologies to be used, and the format of the PD activities in general. Insights gained from focus group discussions with students add to this picture and can also be used as discussion-starters, since those taking part in PD activities will do so with the aim of better helping their students in the final end, and will, therefore, benefit from listening to the students' voices as much as possible.