

TUNING INDIA / Resources for Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in India (RISHII)

Second Policy Forum – Online 30 September 2021

“Synergy of Tuning Initiatives for Comprehensive Internationalisation of Higher Education in India”

Panel I “Tuning Initiatives in India”

Synergy of Tuning Initiatives in India

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“Synergy is the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.”

It all started with some visits to India by Julia Gonzalez now many years ago in the context of a Policy Dialogue with India initiated by the European Commission. It was followed up by a Feasibility Study to find out whether there would be interest for developing a Tuning project that would do justice to the needs of India Higher Education. A project that would also strengthen the cooperation between HE institutions in Europe and India.

The feasibility study which brought European Tuning experts to many provinces of India, showed there was substantial interest. It also showed, academics but also policy makers had a lot in common and to share. It also noted Chambers of Commerce, small and medium size industry had an interest. It proved an excellent basis to develop the Tuning India project. As a result India became a member of the global Tuning family now involving some 130 countries covering all world continents.

We are reaching the end of the Tuning India project, but the RISHII project shows us that there is ample reason to continue close cooperation. The International Tuning Academy based at the University of Deusto in Bilbao has been instrumental. Instrumental also for the success of the Tuning India project which we are also celebrating today.

Synergy, working closely together, has proved to be a magic work. Experts in four academic fields have come together from all parts of the country to discuss what the academic field represents and how it is positioned in global context. Of course, the EU colleagues have been very helpful in this context. They offered supported, asked questions, but we have to acknowledge that the work has mainly done by our Indian colleagues. They produced the frameworks in close cooperation and harmony which are presented in the next session. They also have studied workload to get a better grip what is feasible and reasonable in the context of taking a degree programme successfully.

As we are all aware, the paradigm promoted by Tuning is student-centred learning – replacing the expert driven – staff centred approach. Resulting in graduates who are educated to take

up a role in society, who will serve that society and also work and obtain a reasonable salary. In other words degree programmes that response to an indicated need, societal and personal. The reference point documents developed, are a reflection of this need. They should not only serve the participating institutions in this project, but also other ones in India and beyond. Because it cannot be stressed enough these documents are also a business card of India towards the rest of the world. It showcases India HE and are expected to inspire. Inspire as the other comparable documents have done, which were and are produced in other world regions, Europe, Latin America, Central Asia, Russia, South-East Asia, China, Africa, but also industrial countries such as Australia, Canada, Japan and the USA. They all have studied, developed and tested the Tuning approach.

Since March 2020 implementing the Tuning India project but also the RISHII project has been a real challenge. Discussions and reflections online are not the same as being together during days to interact intensively, to have breakfast, lunches and dinners together. Nevertheless, may be because major results became already available before the COVID-19 pandemic, we have the Reference Documents of the four subject area groups ready to be printed.

Tuning India has showed us again how important it is to have discussions and reflections to find common ground: together we can establish much more; much more because it allows to trigger creativity and innovation, but also to find the wording to come up with robust documents. Of course, we cannot deny we are also in competition. But competition also shows respect for each other. Concluding together that a great job is done.

Although the project Tuning India might be nearly over, that does not mean we can rest. Universities and academics can never rest in a dynamic society. More dynamic as ever before. We have now entered the fourth industrial revolution of Artificial Intelligence, surpassing the digital one. India has proved to be rather successful to play a role in the digital one and will also be in the AI one.

However, we are all very much aware this keeps putting pressure on our educational systems and the university staffs that are expected to educate new generations of students, not only fresh ones but also those already part of the workforce. Today, we are talking about the 40 years curriculum. This implies lifelong learning, updating knowledge, skills and wider competences. First we thought MOOCs would be the answer, more recently we think micro-credentials is the solution to cope with rapid change. What does this mean again for the Universities?

New challenges as part of the never ending story of education and learning. This has implications for policy makers and decision makers at all levels, national, regional and local government, but also for HE managements, their academic and supporting staffs and students. This Policy Forum is an excellent opportunity to inform each other that our work is indeed never ending. The work established now to be published soon is very important but it is not set in stone. I take the opportunity to wish all involved an inspirational future, based on continuing close cooperation, that is working in synergy!