

## Research article

# Building a Strong Partnership with International Partner Institutions

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**ORCID**Imam Sahroni: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2554-9895>**Abstract.**

The three stages for building a solid partnership between international partner universities are collaboration management, development program, and strengthening. Collaboration management is needed to tie the partnership between universities. Since the partner universities may have different time zones and cultures, good collaboration is needed. The partnership can be secured by developing programs for its effective implementation. The program can be academic such as student exchange, joint degree, faculty exchange, joint research and publication, international conference, and visiting scholars programs. To have a solid partnership, each university must run the program together. Programs with three or more partners can form a consortium. The consortium in turn can help each university strengthen its collaboration, increase the university ranking, and develop more benefit programs.

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## 1. Introduction

International partnerships in higher education universities have become an important global issue. Many leaders in universities prepare to increase the quality of their academic input and output for internationalization and globalization. The university provides an international atmosphere and environment for teaching and research activities. However, with the advanced technology development, the international partnerships need to be strengthened between partners universities, especially with same university, industry, entrepreneurship, government, and non-government organization.

There are some insights and evaluations for the international partnerships model in a university and its outcomes for global recognition [1, 2]. Many universities still use the similar model to begin international partnerships. For instance, the process begins with signing the Memorandum of Understanding, continuing with the agreement, and implementing the activities. There are several examples of the program to promote

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the implementation of international cooperation like teaching and research collaboration, student exchange, joint lecture, and other reciprocal programs. However, there is much homework for the university leaders to make the international partnership more beneficial and sustainable.

The sustainability of international partnership and its mutual collaboration can be classified into four varieties: university regulation of education, commercial support, organization of cooperation and collaboration between partners university, the advanced of information, communication and technology implementation to support the completeness of university regulation [3]. Each of those classifications can elevate one to another to support sustainability as a tool for developing international recognition.

The effort of improving the sustainability of international partnerships is to have many memorandum of understanding, and the universities extend their focus on reciprocal and purposeful collaboration [4]. It is important to ensure that the cooperation not only happens on the signed papers, which requires more implementation of activities. With the development of advanced technology nowadays, the university can do many fruitful programs and activities with international partners universities.

This article highlights the key to a successful partnership, how the strategy to achieve international recognition, gain more international partners and strengthen the relationship between the faculty member, student, and the person in charge of specific implementation programs and activities. This article also describes the author's experience in managing the international partnership in a university with different majors of collaboration, i.e., science, engineering, social, law, economic, business, and medicine.

## 2. Purpose of International Partnership

The first step of managing the international partnership is finding the purpose and the goal of the international collaboration in any university. This purpose is influenced by the university's vision, mission, and strategic plan for internationalization. In this stage, the university leaders need to formulate and implement the agreement with partners university for internationalization. Many aspects need to be achieved for international recognition for the university. Especially if the university wants to increase its rank in International recognition such as QS World University Rankings [5] and Times Higher Education [6]. For international recognition and accelerating the globalization trend in each university must be accompanied by the guidelines procedures that summon the strive to enhance the quality of education [7].

To provide a more comprehensive understanding about finding the purpose for international partnership, Knight [8] defines it as the combination of integrating an intercultural and universal procedure by exchanging the students, faculty members, and the product of teaching and research with international students partners. Most universities in the world tried to acquire international partnerships to build on the quality of the educational system. As a result, the quality of the educational system and its outcome can be as good as the TOP university. TOP universities use the term internationalization as the positive collision on the university's global position [9]. Logically, if we want to have an education in a university as good as the TOP university level, we need to act, behave, and do positive things like them. That is why international partnership in higher education is the first important key that strengthens the collaboration between international partners.

It is noteworthy that strengthening the collaboration and cooperation with international partners will support the internationalization of a university. The visibility of internationalization would improve its strong position internationally to provide clear information to recruit international students, professors, researchers and thrive the reciprocal partnership with international partners [10].

### 3. Strategy of Partnership Development

The partnership between two or more universities should be maintained and evaluated correctly to develop more fruitful results. The institution can learn the lesson from the programs and activities for further strategic forming as an international university. The institution builds trust and brotherhood with partners through good communication among domestic leaders and international partners. Jie [11] assert that partners university should formulate their potential outcome and preferred strategy for successful collaboration and cooperation. In practice, several activities can be implemented to achieve the shared goals among partners university.

Based on my experience in managing the international partnership in our university, Universitas Islam Indonesia (uui.ac.id), I can share some effort in approaching global partners and enriching the collaboration's content:

1. Participate in international education exhibitions: meeting with potential partners, discussing a program with mutual benefit of collaboration, and sharing similar goals.

2. Become a member of an international consortium: open the opportunity for advanced partnership, getting a new insight into the partnership trends and potential exchange for internationalization, update the information and trend of the international partnership, network, and promote the university's profile globally.

### 3.1. Participate in International Education Exhibitions

The effort to introduce local universities to international events has become a good strategy for global partnership development. The international exhibition usually provides diverse cultures from many countries and introduces each university's profile. As the participant, the representative of each university can book a meeting with potential partners university. Potential partners university may have similar goals, visions, missions, and programs. It can be mentioned that the international education exhibition assists the university in collaborating among the representative of each university.

The educational exhibition is not the only sector that the university's representative can attend but is not limited to cultural exhibitions such as tourism, hospitality, and other thematic programs. By joining the program, the attendance can exchange the idea of a further collaboration program for the international student exchange (summer program, tailored program, and internships). Alhalwaki [12] implied that the international partnership could make the international student mobility program more prosperous and enjoyable when students can discuss diverse thematic topics. It can be achieved when many different global citizens join the activities.

In addition, the recent information and Communication Technology (ICT) innovation evolution also helped the host of international education exhibitions to provide a virtual meeting [13, 14]. The feasibility of virtual meeting conferences does not need to spend on tickets and accommodation, easing the participant to follow the exhibitions anywhere, even in their home. As a result, this attempt has created a multidimensional partnership with mutual benefit and built greater opportunities and partnership sustainability.

### 3.2. Become a Member of an International Consortium

Many international organizations supported the university to strengthen and thrive the partnership among the countries and continents like Asia-Pacific, Europe, America, Middle East, Australia, and ASEAN. For university internationalization, the international organization focus on student mobility, research exchange, and faculty exchange. It is noteworthy that the organization's existence helps the university enhance the standard

of an international university. It also opens the opportunity for each local university to join the community and consortium for further collaboration. Notably, becoming a member of an international consortium is important for international partnership development.

An international consortium for the university generally has three or more universities with similar goals and strategies and communicates to produce a mutual benefit. Each member in the consortium believes that they need to work and share to achieve their desired goals. Tadaki [15] suggests that international consortiums can act as media for scholars and practitioners to determine the university's area and scope of collaborations. In addition, it contributes to broadening and strengthening the partnership beyond universities in diverse contexts, capacities, and management.

A consortium facilitates a forum for its members to discuss many areas for possible collaboration in education. It builds community relation, access to specific information, and help the individual in the university work together in research, teaching, and shared facilities. As a result, the member can gain a strong network and update the information and trend of the international partnership.

## 4. Conclusion

To have a strong partnership, each university must share similar goals, visions, and missions for internationalization in their university. They can begin collaborating with the programs and activities that support each other. The program can be in the academic matter such as student exchange, joint degree, faculty exchange, joint research and publication, international conference, and visiting scholars. As a part of internationalization, the international education exhibition also acts as a catalyst for getting new and more international partnerships and collaborations. Each participant may meet with potential partners university and seek possible cooperation. The three or more partners can discuss together to consider making a consortium. This consortium can help each university strengthen its collaboration, increase the university ranking, and develop more benefit programs.

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