



Instituto Pedagógico Arubano

Internationalization Strategy

Strategic Approach 2024-2025

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Prepared by: [The International Office \(IntOff\)](#)

Isaac Wagemakerstraat 11

San Nicolas, Aruba



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Summary

Instituto Pedagógico Arubano (IPA) is a teacher education and professional training institute in Aruba offering teacher certification programs at the bachelor level for primary and secondary education. Further IPA offers, on a needs basis, several programs at masters level. Additionally IPA provides a diverse portfolio of professional development programs for in-service teachers on the island.

Internationalization at the IPA implies a cultural, inclusive, and educational enrichment in the development of our faculty and students. We consider internationalization to be of great importance because it offers renewed perspectives on the rich diversity of the Aruban socio-cultural educational reality. It is a source of new information, academic enrichment, and renewed inspiration for educational innovation processes.

As a higher education institution, we aim to become “glocal” by offering education that surpasses the boundaries of our island and developing a community in which citizens can think globally and act locally. Our main objective is to prepare in-service and future teachers with a combination of both local and global knowledge and skills to become social agents of change in their schools and the island community. Going abroad to expand the limitations of living and working on Aruba is a necessary condition to achieve this strategic objective. Furthermore, welcoming international education professionals to participate in our local education processes assists us with the widening of our awareness of our strengths and limitations.

IPA's internationalization strategy proposes to stimulate and guide international mobility, collaboration in teaching and academics, institutional administration, and academic research by continuously partnering with stakeholders and international higher education institutions in different formats and methodologies. Fostering ongoing professional development, especially in implementing innovation projects within the institution by collaborating with local and international stakeholders and higher education partners adds direct value and acceleration to the growth of the knowledge and skills of our institutional community.

Additionally, by working on similar challenges with international stakeholders and higher education partners we can improve the quality of our knowledge circulation and we can surpass our islandness by being part of a glocal community. This will contribute to removing barriers to learning and understanding the futures we face and improving access to quality education through resilience and sustainability, not only for our staff and students but also for generations of learners in our schools in Aruba.

Strategic Approach

Our internationalization strategic approach for the academic year 2024-2025 aims to provide a comprehensive framework for achieving our overarching vision, mission and objectives. By focusing sustainable efforts on key areas such as organizational structure, mobility, student services, diversity and inclusion, research, partnerships & collaboration, and curriculum internationalization, we aim to enhance and expand IPA's global engagement as a higher education institution focused on teacher education and professional training. This approach ensures that the institution not only meets but exceeds the standards of international education, fostering a diverse, inclusive, and globally aware academic community. The strategic approach is organized into seven (7) strategic domains which ensures the effectiveness of its operationalization. The International Office at the IPA assumes the responsibility for the implementation of several of the strategic domains as well as advancing internationalization as a key concept within the institution.

Mission

Our mission is to provide students, faculty, and staff with transformative global learning opportunities and collaborative research activities by building ethical, sustainable, and inclusive international partnerships. We aim to advance critical engagement, innovation, capacity building, and global awareness while aligning with our commitment to evidence informed, socio-culturally contextual high-quality education and continuous development.

Vision

Our vision is to become a leading higher education institution in international collaboration and intercultural exchange, preparing our students and staff for success in a globalized world and contributing positively to the international educational community.

Strategic Domains

1. International Office structure and operations
2. Mobility
 - a. Incoming mobility
 - b. Outgoing mobility
3. Student services and support
4. Diversity and Inclusion
5. Research and Knowledge Development
6. International Partnerships
7. Internationalization of the curriculum

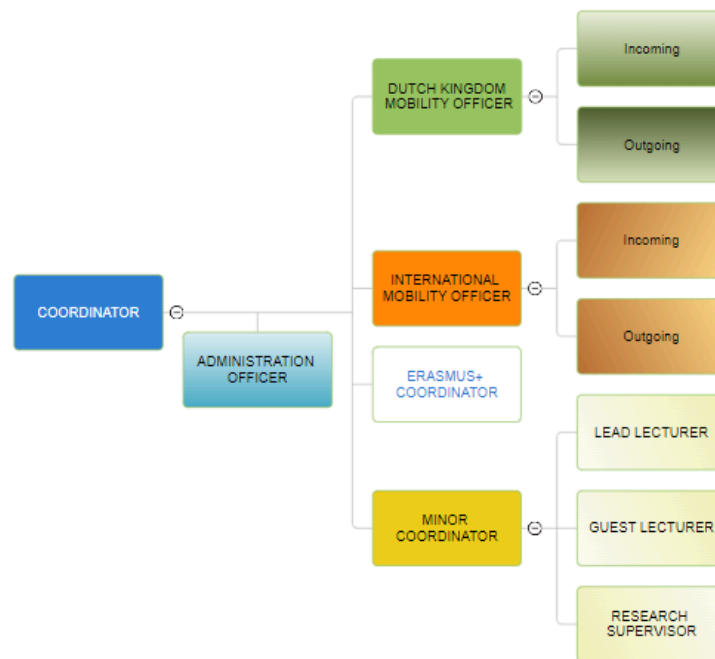


1. International Office organizational structure and operations

The importance of and commitment to internationalization at the IPA is reaffirmed by the presence and operation of an International Office. The International Office (IntOff) at the IPA operates as a service desk and a main liaison within the institution to facilitate all processes related to international mobility as well as assist in coordinating international partnerships, collaboration initiatives and projects. An effective IntOff organizational structure defines each member's roles and responsibilities and how these fit within the overall system. The organizational structure lays out who does what in order for internationalization objectives to be met. The continuous restructuring of the IntOff organizational structure at the IPA facilitates effective management through balanced decision-making, information flows, establishing and monitoring of priorities, and the allocation of resources.

STRATEGY: *Establish a strong International Office organizational structure to effectively manage and support internationalization efforts at the IPA.*

The proposed IntOff organizational structure for the academic year 2024-2025 is as follows:



2. Mobility

International mobility of students and staff builds trust and long-term relationships around the world. It fosters positive influence inclusive of cross-cultural and social constructs, understanding and competence, development of cross-cultural networks, enhanced global perspectives and language proficiency. The IntOff at the IPA manages two main streams of student and staff mobility namely **incoming** and **outgoing**. Both mobility streams include short or long-term internships, participation in minor program(s) as well as training and job-shadowing.

a. Incoming mobility

Aside from further developing and expanding on the incoming student mobility opportunities for our existing international minor program as well as internships, it is the aim of the IPA to further develop capacity for the offering of study/traineeship mobility programs for incoming international faculty and staff through inter-institutional partnerships. This enables teaching and other staff of partner institutions to spend a period of training in Aruba and acquire knowledge or specific know-how from experiences and best practices as well as practical skills relevant for their current job and their professional development. Further, it promotes exchange of expertise and experience on pedagogical methods as well as creating links between IPA through the IntOff and other international higher education institutions.

STRATEGY: *Foster continuous effective opportunities for educational experiences of international mobility participants (student and staff) coming to Aruba.*

b. Outgoing mobility

IPA includes a semester of international mobility in our teacher in primary education curriculum for all students with a duration of 4 weeks in the third year of their study. The funding is currently primarily provided through the stimulus fund of the Department of Education in the Netherlands (MinOCW). All students are required to comply with this international mobility in the curriculum. Through the years, our students have acquired international experience in several countries such as: the USA, Belize, Belgium, Spain, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Netherlands, Argentina, Peru, Panama, Puerto Rico, Curaçao, and Bonaire. We further aim to offer the possibilities for our students to go on international mobility for periods from 2 to 6 months through programs such as the Erasmus+.

Although IPA has thus far limited experience with outgoing staff mobility projects, it is our aim to establish through the IntOff sustainable working relationships with international higher education partners who offer possibilities for staff mobility and job shadowing. The experience of teaching and training abroad is a great investment in the effective professional development of our entire staff that contributes to the overall quality assurance of our systems, processes and products.

The Erasmus+ program offers IPA the possibility to achieve one of its main goals, which is to empower our students and staff to move beyond the post-colonial ties we have with higher education institutions and policy frameworks in the Netherlands and to expand the knowledge of educational challenges and opportunities in other countries, especially in other plurilingual island communities or regions.

Because IPA cannot utilize Erasmus+ funding for mobility within the Dutch Kingdom, the Strategic Education Alliance (SEA) was established. To enable mobility within the Kingdom, we require funding sources outside of Erasmus+. The SEA initiative allows us to create and support mobility opportunities specifically within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Aside from the Stimulus Funds OCW, Erasmus+ and SEA funding mechanisms, IPA continuously seeks for additional programmatic opportunities and funding mechanisms to facilitate the incoming and outgoing mobility of students and staff.

STRATEGY: *Promote the continuous effective educational experiences of IPA students and staff participating in study abroad programs or projects at international institutions.*

3. Student Services and Support

The IPA Student Services in collaboration with the IntOff is committed to providing effective and comprehensive academic support, administrative support and social-emotional support to all mobility students. The Student Services in conjunction with the IntOff regularly conducts monitoring and evaluation to determine the level of quality and satisfaction of these different support mechanisms and to promote measures that ensure the welfare and safety of all mobility participants.

STRATEGY: *Provide adequate support to mobility students throughout their mobility journey by providing effective and sustainable information on all support and services offered at the institution.*

4. Diversity and Inclusion

IPA focuses on developing an inclusive and supportive environment and culture by recognizing, valuing and protecting the rich diversity of our institutional community. Consequently, the institution fosters an open, transparent, inclusive, and non-discrimination praxis and is committed to offering everyone through sustainable policies equal and equitable opportunities regardless of their sex, race, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation, physical ability, marital status, age, or any other status protected by international or local laws and treaties. Furthermore, an appointed IPA diversity and inclusion officer in collaboration with the IntOff is tasked to observe and encourage the transparent and inclusive intent of the institution as well as developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the institution-wide policies that foster non-discrimination, transparency, and inclusion.

STRATEGY: *Ensure equal and equitable access and opportunities to current and prospective mobility participants from all backgrounds, paying particular attention to the inclusion of those with fewer opportunities.*

5. Research and Knowledge Development

The IPA boasts of a research department named the “Centro di Investigacion y Desaroyo di Enseñansa” (CIDE). All initiatives and products of the CIDE are aligned with the SDG-4 as well as the National Education Plan (PEN 2030). The undertaking of CIDE is to create knowledge for the optimal development of the learner in Aruba. Hence, CIDE aims to be the leader in guiding, inspiring and strengthening the local knowledge together with the community with the focus to innovate and improve learning. The 2030 targets posit that CIDE researchers and the CIDE research networks and communities of practice will become major players in:

- generating and expanding local knowledge that drives innovative educational practices in Aruban education and that contributes substantially to reaching the local and international strategic educational goals;
- contributing to regional and international knowledge about educational practices for sustainable island futures.

CIDE’s strategy is focused on promoting practice-oriented and community-based research and through multidisciplinary modalities whilst always remaining attentive to target audiences, multilingualism and inclusiveness.

Through the work of CIDE, IPA aims to promote excellence in teaching and research and foster dialogue between the academic world and society - with a special focus on Aruba being a European (Dutch) Overseas Territory (EOT). This will foster in cultural context and evidence-informed discussions with local as well as European policymakers, civil servants, civil society, representatives of different levels of education and the media as to the implications and applications of EU values in education praxis.

For 2024-2025, the CIDE has implemented a “Research Policy & Strategic Approach” that focuses on developing a robust body of knowledge in the different established priorities of research, establishing as well as formalizing national and international networks and partnerships and further allocating local/regional/international funding mechanisms for sustainable research development.

CIDE’s strategic plan and its implementation, inclusive of the concept of internationalization in research and knowledge development, is further detailed in a document and related processes managed by the department.

6. International Partnerships

With the designation of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) since 2023 until 2027, IPA has the possibility to participate in a network with other European higher education institutions, especially in plurilingual realities which will contribute to a stronger institutional identity, a network of international partners who face similar challenges and a continuing innovative approach to create sustainable solutions for the challenges we face.

Our international alliance is focused but not limited to stimulating collaborative mobility, academic research and innovative learning and teaching practices among stakeholders and higher education institutions. The established and future partnerships will be all cemented in collaboration agreements (MOU’s) to drive commitment, accountability and sustainability of our alliances. This assists the IPA gain meaningful experience in international cooperation and strengthen our capacities, whilst helping the institution in producing high-quality innovative deliverables.

The IPA, as a higher education institution and part of a Small Island Development State (SIDS) aims to progressively connect with other overseas countries and territories that share our interests in teaching and learning in plurilingual island communities and that promote the tenets of education for sustainable futures. By collaborating with international partners the knowledge and skills gained will be used to continuously update our curricula as well as strengthen and improve the professional development portfolio we offer to schools and education organizations on the island.

STRATEGY: Foster institutional partnerships for continuous innovation.

Internationalization of the curriculum

Aruba's economy is primarily driven by the Hospitality & Tourism industry which continuously exposes the island community and society to rich international diversity in beliefs, customs and realities. Hence, teaching and learning in a more international, more globalized, more multicultural and multilingual reality becomes complex. The IPA progressively engages its teacher students with the internationalization agenda in order to develop intercultural knowledge, skills and values and create a greater impact on their future lives, with the potential to have a broader sustainable impact in their teaching profession and consequently on society.

Global Perspectives

Internationalization of our teacher in primary education curriculum involves integrating global themes, such as multiculturalism, global citizenship, sustainability, and diversity, into the development process of future teachers in Aruba. The incorporation of international resources and teaching aids, such as digital tools, and collaborative projects with international partners, enriches the curriculum and provides the students with a broader worldview.

The middle phase of our teacher in primary education curriculum ends with the "Perspectiva Mundial" (Global Perspectives) module. The main themes offered in this module are: sustainable development (focused on SDG's), diversity, world citizenship and educational innovation. During this period, the student participates in a mandatory internship for a minimum of 4 weeks abroad. This gives teacher students the opportunity to broaden their horizons and gain knowledge of pedagogical-didactical views somewhere else in the world, for example in countries of the Caribbean, South America, United States or Europe.

The teacher students chooses a number of themes to explore further, with the central question - *How do I become a good Caribbean teacher of the 21st century who contributes to global educational innovation in the areas of sustainability, inclusion, relevance and lifelong learning?*

The aim of the institution for the academic year 2025-2026 is to expand on the period required for the mandatory internship to align with the norms and expectations of the Erasmus+ program and also to incorporate higher education international competencies as outlined by international agencies such as NUFFIC.

Additionally, the institution aims to continuously stimulate the use of tools, processes and projects for the embedding of internationalization in the curriculum through praxis, such as e-twinning, online learning and the platform Kibrahacha.

Professional Development Program

Centro pa Desaroyo Profesional Continuo (CDPC) is the national institute where 'lifelong learning' comes to life for in-service teachers and the education field. This department at the UPA offers continuing education for education professionals who want to stay 'up to date' with the latest developments in education. In addition, through CDPC and in collaboration with an international higher education partner, the Master of Science in Education is offered on a needs basis for those who wish to further excel in pedagogy and strategic educational leadership. The Pedagogical Didactic Certificate course for professionals with a college or university degree who wish to obtain their teaching certification is also offered every academic year.

The CDPC promotes professional development in education on Aruba that aligns with IPA's goal of fostering globally resilient and competent educators. The integration of international perspectives into the curriculum is achieved through programs which equip teachers with the necessary skills to integrate international and intercultural perspectives into their teaching. These programs emphasize 21st-century skills, global citizenship, and inclusive education, which are crucial for internationalization of the curriculum.

By incorporating international frameworks into its portfolio and programs, the CDPC aims to empower educators in Aruba to continuously update their teaching methods whilst schools their curriculum content with the latest educational trends and research. This ensures that the content, teaching and learning remains relevant and reflective of global realities and diverse needs of the 21st century learner.

The strategic plan and its implementation for the CDPC, inclusive of the concept of internationalization in professional development, is further detailed in a document and related processes managed by the department.

International Minors Program

IPA offers an international minor program during the spring and fall semester of each academic year. The program is called "Globalization, Diversity, Multilingualism, and Education" for a total of 30 ECTS. Currently, IPA receives on average 12 -15 students per semester from the Netherlands and Belgium. It is the aim to raise the number to 20 students per semester, and to expand the offer of our existing international minor in the English language to students from universities in countries other than the Netherlands and Belgium. Further, we will continue to develop and further expand our minor portfolio for international students and offer two additional minor programs in the English language. This will allow for choices as well as promote diversity and inclusion with an international mix of students registered in our minor programs. Additionally, we aim to offer at least 3

course subjects (modules) within our existing curriculum in the English language and facilitate the participation of international students in one of these modules.

STRATEGY: *Provide a robust minor portfolio that combines the knowledge, insights, and skills from different (and international) backgrounds to create a dynamic and explorative learning environment and experience.*