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Higher Education for Development: Challenges, Strategies and Policies

Roger Williamson

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**Higher Education for Development:
Challenges, Strategies and Policies**

Roger Williamson

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1   Constructing Knowledge Societies, Tertiary Education and Development

Increasingly, it is being recognised that knowledge and the production of a skilled workforce provide the key to development. This in turn places demands on the education and training systems. Tertiary education institutions are therefore faced with a wide range of emerging challenges. Economic development is increasingly linked to a nation's ability to acquire and apply knowledge. A comparison of the development of Ghana and the Republic of Korea (which were at a comparable stage of development in the 1960s) over a fifty-year period, suggests that much of the additional development of Korea is due to approaches to education and training. Similarly, the investment in the application of knowledge to poverty-related sectors, such as the modernisation of agriculture, for example, in a comparison between Argentina and India shows a marked increase from the end of the 19th to the end of the 20th century in wheat yields in the former. There are many development challenges that can be addressed through the application of knowledge, for example, natural disasters, addressing climate change and environmental problems such as erosion. Disaster preparedness is heavily dependent on knowledge of seismology, volcanology and climatology. There is a gathering pace of creation of new knowledge, for example, the explosive growth of the internet.

The importance of knowledge for developing countries therefore leads to changing education and training needs. OECD statistics show that there is a significant gap in earnings between those with tertiary education and those with education below secondary completion in a wide range of countries. Higher skill levels can also be correlated to flexibility and readiness to adapt to change. This need to adapt to change increasingly requires lifelong learning. Continuing education implies an ability to learn and unlearn throughout life.

Tertiary education has thus changed to fit with different forms of competition and adaptation within tertiary institutions. Increasingly, 'virtual universities' and long-distance education are more prevalent. 'Franchise universities' are opening up, as indeed are corporate universities. Media companies, libraries, museums and secondary schools are also taking on some aspects of university education. Institutions providing tertiary education have (and will continue to have in the future) a greater variety of clients and will be increasingly inter- and multi-disciplinary. The new pedagogical approaches which they use will focus on learning tailored to the needs of the individuals, rather than teaching classes. It will be much more interactive and collaborative. It will have a greater reliance on advanced educational technology. It will represent knowledge and concepts in multiple ways. The teacher will increasingly be a guide and facilitator. As Peter Knight said in1994: 'In the early twenty-first century, people will be able to study what they want, when they want, where they want and in the language they prefer, electronically.'

For countries in the third world considering the implications of these developments, the following questions are of importance. What does it mean to be a world-class university? How can information and communications technology be integrated into tertiary education? How can flexibility be achieved, and at the same time quality assurance guaranteed?

Countries aspiring to a world-class tertiary education system have to address the following issues, among others: Are only research universities, or are all types of tertiary institutions, capable of being 'world-class'? How can regional imbalances be addressed? In an environment with an increased use of information technology, how can e-learning and individualised learning be guaranteed to be of high quality?

The rapidly developing needs in tertiary education require flexibility. This involves strategic planning to provide the direction for change, and close linkages with the economic environment for adequate feedback. Tertiary education institutions need to be able to react and adapt quickly.

2 Tertiary Education, Democratic Values and Social Inclusion in the Global Information Age

Tertiary education can be defined as post-compulsory education. The definition needs to be broad enough to cover the range of institutions and courses stretching from practical and vocational training to university education. Such compulsory educational systems are culturally embedded and evolve in their respective national environments. For example, in Singapore the society is constructed around success in traditional public examinations. In the United States there is a huge community college network. In Australia, there is a centrally-driven tertiary and further education system. New Zealand has a universal 'tertiary entitlement'. In Germany, students often use intermediate level vocational qualifications to re-enter academic or general higher education – the so-called 'second training route'.

In a time of rapidly evolving educational needs and technological challenges, flexible approaches are needed. The vocational and technical courses have also been disparaged as 'a great idea for other people's children' (in the phrase of Alison Wolf, author of '*Does Education Matter*?'). Partly because the tertiary education sector is very competitive, it is hard to get an unbiased and well-informed judgement on the range of tertiary education 'offers' best suited for a modern society. In many modern industrial societies, there is a strong tendency towards education continuing above the age of sixteen. Those who do not continue their education beyond sixteen are usually disadvantaged in terms of their career prospects and earning possibilities.

If the tendency is towards more universal higher education, does this serve democratic values? Michael Daxner, the former European Union Commissioner for Higher Education in post-war Kosovo, has stated 'east of Vienna, the role of universities has to be in society-making, not state-making'. There can be a danger of universities being sucked into the state priorities which would violate open learning and democratic values. With an increasing range of institutions interested in higher education, many of these present themselves as stakeholders and seek to influence the purpose and achievements of higher education.

If social inclusion is considered to be a desirable goal, then tertiary education can be an instrument which helps to achieve this. However, it seems to be the case that if you want higher education to be fairer, it must be allowed to expand. As tertiary education expands, there seems to be a greater gap between those who achieve it and those who do not. There is also concern about completion rates, but not enough discussion about restarting or re-engagement for those who are unable to complete

tertiary education the first time around.

There are also difficulties concerning 'under-represented groups', in tertiary education. Measures taken to balance up representation, e.g. through positive discrimination, have attendant problems and lead to challenges. For example, in the United States where elite universities compete for excellent students from minorities and disadvantaged communities, there has been a move away from 'need' towards 'merit' (whether scholarly or athletic). In the UK, conventionally qualified students from poorer backgrounds are not there in sufficient numbers to satisfy political critics.

In considering tertiary education in the global information age, it is necessary to move beyond seeing global higher education as a simple market and to consider wider perspectives. Tertiary education is not only about the 'bottom line' for financially successful educational institutions. Third world countries have faced many challenges in moving beyond the colonial and post-colonial legacy in tertiary education and faced difficulties in funding and equipping a system adequate to the needs of the modern global economy. There are also dangers and problems with European and North American models of intellectual property, which can be seen as severely disadvantaging the third world.

As an arresting way of highlighting the dangers of inappropriate models of tertiary education, David Watson has suggested that the saturation of the third world with under-priced and sometimes inadequate courses offered through e-learning could be a 'first world revenge for cheap trainers'. Obviously, the international regulation of tertiary education needs to do something more than just opening up the market possibly through the General Agreement of Trade in Services (GATS) which is now being discussed in the World Trade Organisation. David Watson has suggested that the roles for universities is to produce graduates who go to work; play their part in civil society (where they are likely to have more wisdom and tolerance as a result of further study); have families and bring them up well through reading to them; pay their taxes and return a proportion of their higher than average incomes through progressive taxation and support their universities through gifts and legacies.

Universities, too, have a responsibility of guarding treasures, i.e. preserving the cultural legacy of their own society and humanity as a whole. They provide a safe place for exploring difficult issues and challenging ideas and also, in a lighter vein, provide material for a branch of popular culture (the campus novel film and TV series).

There is a need for tertiary education institutions to behave well, to provide accurate information about what they seek to achieve and actually can offer. Obviously, academic institutions are also businesses which compete with one another, but this needs to be done on the basis of fairness.

Higher education thus has broader civic and community obligations. What is needed in each country is an effective system of higher education, not only some excellent universities and colleges. It needs to be recognised that the benefits of higher education are social as well as providing a contribution to narrowly-defined individual human capital (to make people better workers). Universities and colleges may well be supportive of state priorities but they must remain distinct from the state and

political frameworks in order to contribute effectively and independently to society as a whole. Many of the key reference points and priorities for higher education are international, as universities have been since at least the Middle Ages. Universities and colleges must thus have a critical role towards society, but must also be criticised when they fall short of the high standards required of tertiary education.

3 The University Response to Globalisation

Universities have a complex relationship to globalisation. In order to understand this precisely, some distinctions need to be drawn. The first is between different types of globalisation. The term is usually understood to refer to free market, high technology forms of economic development. However, there are other forms of globalisation including world-wide social and environmental movements resisting the first kind of 'free market, high tech' globalisation. Universities can be seen as being 'inside' globalisation because they are leading agencies in the worldwide 'knowledge industry'. However, universities can also be commentators on, and critics or even resisters of globalisation. This is the university 'outside' globalisation. Historically, universities have often been national institutions; founded by the nation state to fulfil perceived needs for the nation state – albeit with extensive international contacts. The distinction can be drawn between globalisation (one world) and internationalisation (relationships between many nations). Within this typology, globalisation does not recognise the national principle. It gives voice to other principles, whether free markets, or religious and ethnic identities which transcend national loyalties.

As a response to a globalising world, however, nation states are reacting in different ways such as founding regional blocs, i.e. the European Union or African Union; they are redefining their relationships with their own citizens with the state increasingly as market regulators rather than service providers. The concept of the 'public' e.g. public interest, public values, etc. is being eroded and the relationships between states are being defined less by traditional diplomacy and more by the trade liberalisation agenda. This is now being extended beyond trade in goods to trade in services.

Globalisation itself needs to be understood as a multi-layered concept. It is not only a question of international capitalism and free markets. The 'one world' of globalisation is not only 'round the clock, round the world' financial markets and global division of labour with manufacturing increasinly relocated to low wage economies. Nor is globalisation just a matter of dominance of global brands, or 'coca-colonisation'. Nor should globalisation be seen only as a technological phenomenon such as, primarily, the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) revolution. Globalisation has a wide range of fundamental social and cultural consequences. There is also an alternative globalisation, the interpretation of 'one world' through ecological and environmental issues and also issues of equity and justice. This is the 'one world' of Greenpeace and the Kyoto Agreement and also the world of individuals responding to disasters such as the Tsunami or famine in Sudan. A further manifestation of globalisation is that of resistance to market-led globalisation, which is a real political force.

Universities have a role 'inside' globalisation as leading institutions within the knowledge society, both through traditional science and technology and also communications technology. However, universities have a role to critique knowledge, to analyse and also to assess what is happening politically. Historically, while they have claimed to be international institutions, universities are, in many respects, national institutions. States are redefining their roles within post-welfare state societies. In several European countries, universities are being given more administrative freedom, but are expected to operate in a more business-like way. Universities play a key role in mediating between global knowledge and its application or reception in local contexts. Universities are also at the forefront of awareness about global concerns about the environment and issues of global inequality.

However, those who have a traditional view of supranational community may regard the university with suspicion. This is particularly the case with traditionalist faith-based worldviews, which fear secular rationality and the enlightenment spirit, and who may view the university as a transmitter of modern and post-modern values. Thus, the impact of globalisation on the university is not straightforward.

Three particular aspects require further reflection; competition for a share of the international students market; rivals to the traditional university (such as virtual universities, corporate universities or 'for-profit' universities) and the potential impact of GATS.[1]

Competition for market share of academic talent was previously limited to western countries such as the US, France and Britain. Increasingly, other countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Korea and now China are looking to import, rather than export, academic and scientific talent. Insofar as overseas students are seen as a means of raising fees to help universities stay viable there is a competitive market for talent.

The challenge of 'borderless' institutions is probably overrated – at least on the basis of available information. What is more likely to happen is that traditional universities will become more market-orientated and take on aspects of the e-university.

As far as GATS is concerned, four different modes of higher education have been distinguished: cross-border supply (which would cover distance education); consumption abroad (i.e. international students studying abroad); commercial presence (i.e. branch campuses in foreign countries or franchise deals), and 'presence of natural persons' i.e. teachers or researchers working abroad.

GATS has created a real dilemma for governments. Some are tempted to treat trade in academic services just like any other service and therefore ripe for liberalisation. However, many governments that have set up national universities, will be reluctant to provide the same financial subsidies to what are, in effect, foreign institutions as they do for their own universities.

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[1]

http://www.unesco.org/education/studyingabroad/highlights/global_forum/gats_he/basics_he_trade_main.shtml

Many universities have opposed the extension of GATS to higher education. Universities are rather ambivalent towards globalisation. On the one hand they want to recruit worldwide (but not be subjected to worldwide competition) and also want to retain the base from which to critique globalisation. This in turn suggests that globalisation is indeed a complex phenomenon. Universities as traditionally national institutions, living in an increasingly globalising world, face their own internal contradictions in responding.

4 Intercultural Studies, Sustainable Development and Higher Education

A rigorous approach to multicultural education has to understand the dominance exercised by European and North American societies and their impact on what is considered to be 'knowledge'. Authors such as Samir Amin and Martin Bernal have shown how European history was reconstructed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries at the time of colonial expansion and consolidation.

The proposal for non-centric curricular (Jagdish Gundara) seeks to address this issue without proposing a counter-balancing through e.g. sino-centrism, indo-centrism, islamo-centrism or afro-centrism. For example, in history and the social sciences, it is necessary to understand the history of a region, e.g. the Mediterranean, from a number of perspectives, not only those of the former colonial powers.

An intercultural approach to higher education must also look at the cultures of those studying, as well as the access to higher education and its distribution across cultures. For example, in the UK there has been an increase in mainly middle-class, African and Asian minority students. Representation of Afro-Caribbean men and of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in higher education remains low. The class dimension remains important as the aspirations of middle-class Asian and Afro-Caribbean families may well be similar to those of middle-class English families.

There are many advantages in terms of a rich educational environment to having a diverse student body, which is representative not only of the wider society, but one that also includes a wide range of overseas students. This, however, also provides many challenges.

It is also helpful if the teaching staff is racially mixed and reflects a wide number of cultures. Orientation courses for overseas students are valuable. The supportive structure should persist throughout the period of education and with attention to the effects of cultural assumptions, e.g. South Asian students may be inclined to be less critical of what tutors state in seminars and lectures.

The sheer fact of isolation, particularly where students are working on their own for long periods on dissertations, must also be considered and support networks developed.

Women students, especially from minority ethnic backgrounds, face particular challenges. Faculties taking on women students from diverse backgrounds should create a supportive and welcoming structure in order to help them develop intellectually.

Language issues should also be taken very seriously. Even highly gifted students may have difficulty working, particularly at post-graduate level, in a second or third language. This difficulty may well be particularly marked in theoretical and conceptual studies. Intercultural bilingual education has an important role in accessing knowledge from diverse cultures worldwide.

Particular attention must also be paid to the wider social setting in terms of racism and the psychological dynamics between groups. It is not enough to suggest that students should be more assertive. The institutions and host community bear the main responsibility for ensuring that intercultural studies can successfully be carried out.

There are also questions relating to the professional status of different studies. Intercultural studies, social sciences and development-related courses often suffer in comparison with high status professions such as law, medicine and architecture and other professions. Particular attention should also be paid to science and technology for minority ethnic and overseas students.

The critique of intercultural education that it 'waters down' the educational process must be addressed seriously. This requires attention to academic rigour, particularly in inter-disciplinary subjects. Policies for intercultural academic and professional education have to create the right policies within institutions for a) student admissions, b) staff recruitment development and promotion and c) initiation of research and curriculum development.

Within appropriately formed institutions the staff also have their important roles. Staff from diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds enrich an academic setting, particularly where issues such as sustainable development and environmental protection are under consideration. Very few academics in the UK, for example, are completely bilingual and many of those who are speak other European, rather than non-European, languages.

The educational framework of a country is an important contribution to tolerant societies within which diverse views are represented and respected. In this regard, the Indian concept of 'secularism', not as a public space opposed to religion and related philosophical worldviews, but one which protects their articulation, is an important impulse.

Affirmative action is often challenged by way of a backlash. Policies for affirmative action and their support within the majority community require careful preparation and preservation. Preparatory and access courses can be valuable in this regard. Such approaches should not be a preparation for 'soft option' careers – a critique often presented by minority ethnic students. Disadvantage should not only be addressed through educational establishments, it must also be an issue of public policy for the wider society. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development presents an excellent opportunity to develop an educational approach to sustain citizenship which tackles issues of justice and environmental challenges.

5 Higher Education for Sustainable Development

The period from 2005 to 2014 has been designated the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD). The UNDESD is being developed in relation to the Education For All initiative, the UN Literacy Decade and the Millennium Development Goals. Education for Sustainable Development needs to be locally relevant and culturally appropriate.[2] It should be based on local needs, build civil capacity, be interdisciplinary and use a variety of pedagogical techniques.

The German National Committee for UNESCO is pursuing the issue, both through its National Committee and the UN Decade Round Table which embraces over one hundred initiatives. The UNESCO chair for 'Higher Education for Sustainable Development' at Lüneburg University in Germany is also establishing an international network of UNESCO chairs in Northern and Southern countries and conducting a survey on innovative approaches around the world.

The initiative on the 'sustainable university' covers such aspects as sustainability audit and control; energy and resource management; interdisciplinary teaching; the university as a space for sustainability; culture and sustainable development and communication and knowledge transfer.

6 UNESCO'S Role in Higher Education

One of the key initiatives taken by UNESCO is the University Education Twinning and Networking Scheme (UNITWIN) programme which has over 600 chairs and networks in 126 countries, involving over 700 higher education institutions.[3] To give some examples of this initiative, UNITWIN has contributed to: transfer of high level know-how renewable energy in the University of Lomé in partnership with French institution; the introduction of new disciplines created by the global agenda, e.g. human rights in international co-operation in the University of Benin; innovation e.g. geo-hydrology in the University of Western Cape, which set up the Table Mountain Group Research Unit Aquifer; responding to development needs, e.g. study on the concept and practice of zero emission in Africa through the University of Namibia and providing a forum for dialogue in higher education through the chairs and their networks.

In 2005 UNESCO also launched its Academics Across Borders Initiative (AABI).[4] This is focusing on capacity building and has launched the Africa-Asia dialogue. Three important aspects of the dialogue are the involvement of Ministries of Education and the response of the dialogue to the call of NEPAD for self-reliance,

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[2] http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=42195&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[3] http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=22129&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[4] http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=8633&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

through establishing a network of African and Asian universities.

7 Asian Perspectives: India

The Indian government has consistently understood education policy to be part of its broader development policy. The approach taken could be called a 'both/and' approach. In educational strategy, this has meant simultaneous, not sequential, development of primary, secondary and higher education. In economic development, this has meant small scale and basic (or heavy) industries being developed together.

Because of India's huge size and its complex government structure, the educational system relies on both central government and 25 state governments. There is a wide range of higher education institutions, central, state universities, 'deemed universities', colleges, national institutions of importance and institutions of higher education. A wide range of higher education co-ordination bodies seek to ensure that the system is efficiently run. Numbers of students have increased from 200,000 in 578 colleges and 28 universities in 1950/51 to 9 million students in 302 universities and 16,885 colleges in 2003/4. The basic philosophy has remained unchanged. Manpower needs and the huge demand have increasingly been met. Equality of opportunity and state subsidy are hallmarks of the system.

During the period, an elitist system has been transformed into a highly democratised system with much wider possibilities for students from ordinary backgrounds. However, there are still inequalities in terms of access for students from lower socio-economic strata and gender equity. India is one of the largest higher education systems in the world with the third largest reservoir of science and technology manpower. There are some pockets of excellence for technology and management and some world class universities and institutions.

Higher education has made a significant contribution to India's development, through self-reliance in manpower, the export of skilled manpower to the world economy, to socio-economic development, to democracy and political stability and the formation of social capital.

The growth in higher education, striking though it is, is not adequate to the challenges faced by India. These include the need for rapid economic development; the need to respond to global challenges; international competition; sustainable high levels of human development and the challenge of building a knowledge society.

There are still weaknesses in Indian higher education relating to its limited base, the inequalities between rural and urban populations and differences between provision between states and between groups. Furthermore, there are questions about the unsatisfactory quality of the education. By 2000, India's students had a gross enrolment rate of roughly 10%, which is well under half that of many developed countries. A very high percentage (almost 90%) of courses take a student to graduate level whereas only about 10% work at higher or post-graduate levels. A critique of Indian higher education policy usually focuses on the limited resources devoted to it; reliance on neo-liberal market forces; criticises government apathy towards higher education and the neglect of higher education in policy debate. Furthermore, the role of the state in higher education has declined, as has public

expenditure on higher education.

In the Indian context, various questionable assumptions have emerged in the debate. There is the contention that higher education has over-expanded. A variant of this argument is that higher education has expanded at the cost of primary education and that Education For All is possible only at the cost of higher education.[5] It is also asserted that higher education is heavily subsidised by the state. The argument has also been deployed that higher education is not important for economic growth, poverty reduction and development. Defenders of the importance of higher education also dispute the argument that the private sector can be relied upon for development of higher education. Furthermore, distance and open learning systems are not to be understood as a substitute for formal education. They do, however, have an important complementary role.

The role of central government in the debate has been weak. There is no policy statement on higher education and higher education has not been discussed extensively in national plans, state policy documents or their equivalent. Expenditure on higher education has declined in recent years in real terms. It has also declined as a percentage of the education budget. The fall is particularly acute with regard to scholarships. Indian higher education institutions face the same pressures to increase their income which equivalent bodies have elsewhere in the world. There is a concerted effort to raise the recovery rate of student fees to 20%. This has occasioned steep and erratic increases in fees in public institutions and unregulated fee increases in private institutions. The impact of such policies can weaken demand for higher education, particularly within the weakest sections of the community. It also has an adverse impact on post-graduate and research programmes. With student loans, previous government-operated schemes had a high default rate. The new approach is for banks to operate such schemes as a commercial venture. Student loan schemes, however, tend to privilege the middle class. They are not related to equity or equal access. They are not orientated towards excellence and they can lead to further commercialisation of education and a tendency for institutions to increase the fees. A further potential adverse impact is to shift the responsibility for repayment from the parents to the students, adding an additional burden to the students.

In this context, there has been a decline in the traditional philanthropy within the Indian education and the rapid rise of self-financing private institutions, leading the pressure on the public sector. There is also rapid growth of self-financing courses in public universities. With the increasing privatisation and commercialisation of higher education, there are fears for equity, the quality of education and the proper overall development of the higher education sector. In the private higher education sector, the government's role is limited to the regulation or monitoring of the sector. This has generated many court cases. Within the Indian context, advocates of high quality tertiary education stressed that higher education is important and is one of the key factors contributing to the difference between developed countries and less developed countries. It is becoming increasingly important with the generation of the knowledge economy in the twenty-first century. Globalisation makes it more, not

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[5] http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=43009&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

less, important. The threshold level of enrolment in students in higher education in order for a society effectively to compete in the 'global knowledge economy' is often reckoned to be 20%. Below that level, the breakthrough to development is almost impossible to achieve.

Recommendations for strengthening tertiary education in India include the following: according higher priority to tertiary education; achieving a balanced development of primary, secondary and tertiary education; a balanced development of all disciplines of study; government commitment to higher funding for tertiary education; not pushing up the cost recovery rate excessively; recognising that the private education sector can have adverse effects on equity and development and emphasising scholarships, not loans.

In summary, a coherent long-term policy and plan are necessary for the development of higher education.

8 Asian Perspectives: China

The tertiary education sector in China is characterised by a wide variety of different national models. There is, arguably, an 'over-supply' of higher education in Taiwan, Korea and possibly Japan. There has been a very rapid expansion of major cities and also the demand for higher education as a result, e.g. in Singapore, Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai. In Japan, Korea and Hong Kong, there is a clear drive towards internationalisation. There is a large and growing 'cross-border consumption' of education and commercial presence in other countries e.g. of offshore campuses.

China has a population of 1.83 billion, the largest in the world. Since 1978, the economy has grown at an average of 9.4%. The GDP of China is now 13% of the world total with industrial output third in the world at 22%. There is a growing service sector reckoned to be 32% in 2004 rising to 47% in 2006. Urbanisation is continuing apace. The student population is 21 million with 13 million in formal education. There are 2,336 higher education institutions, of which 1,980 are formal. Significant education reforms began shortly after the end of the cultural revolution in the late 1970's. In 1986, this was followed by decentralisation in education. In 1993 a master plan for education was developed. In 1997 fee charging was introduced and this was followed by a law on higher education in 1998 and a major programme of expansion from 1999 onwards. The dramatic expansion led to a 50% increase in intake in 1999, followed by increases of between 15% and 25% in following years. Project 211 has been developed with the aspiration of making 100 top class universities for the 21st century. A key element of this has been selective preferential sponsorship. Peking University and Tsinghua University have been chosen as the most favoured elite institutions with a second tier of Fudan, Tonggi, Jiaotong, Xian Jiaoda, Zhejiang, Renmin and Nanjing. The provision for private institutions (Minban) since the late 1990's means that now 1.4 million students (6.7%) in 2004 in 475 institutions are operational.

This huge expansion has led to disparities in provision between different regions. It also leads to pressure on resources as there has been a huge increase in total expenditure but a declining unit expenditure. This has led to increased teacher-

student ratios, resources being spread very thinly at learning facilities and a deterioration in the learning experience of students. It has also had an impact on quality, with the courses being increasingly examination-oriented, credential driven and teaching based, with an emphasis on book reading and a resulting conformity.

There is a mismatch between the students emerging and the needs of the labour market. Understandably, students wish to stay in the richer urban centres. Furthermore, it has to be asked whether the production of a larger number of conformist students fits the needs of an increasingly dynamic global economy. This raises questions about the purpose of higher education in the Chinese context. The emphasis is on 'Education for National Development'. A further theme is the slogan from 'a nation of large population to a nation of rich human resources' but one has to ask in what sense tertiary education is preparing human resources for the nation and what the other purposes of education are beyond development beyond human capital.

One has to understand the legacies on which the current education system is being built: the cultural legacy is the traditional currency of education as a matter of social mobility. The tradition of collectivism of the 'smaller self' serving the 'larger self' is important. Further more, the background of socialism with the emphasis on national needs with the individual needs subsumed under the social good and the policy agenda often conflicting with personal agendas. The ideology of planning is also strong with the belief in policies overriding the market. There is a tacit assumption in favour of manpower planning and of the need for specialisation.

China is also recognising that the world is changing. The new, post-industrial workplace will have many smaller units with many freelancers. There is a multiplicity of tasks, jobs and careers. Self-motivation with an emphasis on ethics, values and principles, attitudes and emotions is prevalent. The front line workers are no longer cheap labourers in the knowledge economy. In this changing world, there is a demand for more people with higher education and more who are prepared to engage in continuous, life-long learning. China is being confronted with the key question of the role of higher education. Is it training human beings as resources into specialised tasks, or is it liberating human beings in order to face a fast changing world? China is currently the world's largest manufacturer, but historical precedent raises the warning, for how long, at what cost and what will be next? If there is a loss of the marketing niche and loss of the dynamism in the Chinese economy, there is a danger of a slow growth in the service economy and according to some estimates, the possibility of 400 million uneducated Chinese by 2020.

9 African Perspectives

The Commission for Africa report has set out a coherent and integrated analysis and recommendations for development in Africa. With respect to tertiary education, the capacity building needs of Africa are clear. As the Commission report says 'Skilled professionals are key to building improvements in the administration and technical ability which Africa so gravely lacks. The international community should commit in 2005 to provide US$500 million a year, over ten years, to re-vitalise Africa's institutions of higher education and up to US$3 billion over ten years to develop Centres of Excellence in science and technology, including African Institutes of

Technology.' [6] African universities, a number of which were of world class in the 1960s and 1970s, have suffered from a number of adverse developments such as poor governance within the countries, civil war, reprisals against universities for student unrest, lack of investment and, perversely, lack of emphasis on the tertiary sector because of a profound commitment to primary education. Tertiary education should also not be reduced only to teacher training, i.e. the sector of tertiary education needed for meeting the ambitious primary education goals.   Higher education is obviously strongly linked to governance. Governments often have an ambivalent relationship to higher education institutions – they welcome the skilled manpower emerging from these institutions but often do not welcome the critical function of universities and their students in analysing the social reality, shortcomings in governance, mismanagement and corruption that intellectuals often expose. University education is essential, not just to serve the state uncritically, but to contribute to the development of the entire society, including exercising a 'watchdog' function.   In Africa, there is also a strong need for development of expertise in science and technology, not least because of the brain drain of skilled scientists and professionals from 'high-tech' industries.   A number of analyses, including the Commission for Africa report 'Our Common Interest' have stressed that Africa will need a growth rate of 7% per annum for the next decade in order to stand a chance of meeting the Millennium Development Goals.   This will require significant development in Africa's science and technology capacity.

The recommendations of the Commission for Africa have been broadly supported and endorsed within Africa (by the African Union) and by the International community at the G8 and UN Millennium +5 Summit. The G8 communiqué broadly endorsed the need for a doubling of development assistance to Africa from 2005-2010 (from US$25 billion to US$50 billion). There are at least three key roles for tertiary and further education in Africa: building capacity for primary and secondary education through teacher training and other supporting roles; building capacity more generally through provision of skilled staff for the civil service, banks, the legal profession and business and building specific capacity in the key areas of training and research, especially in science and technology.

Behind these aspirations, there are a number of questions that need to be addressed. Clearly, Africa is lagging behind in ICT and it is also weak on capacity on 'life-long learning'. Is it possible, however, to skip a generation in technology, e.g. mobile phones rendering the social capital investment in landlines irrelevant? Are new physical structures always necessary or can different approaches assist, e.g. through open and distance learning? Can regional Centres of Excellence be developed as against country-focused institutions so that each country does not have to build its own entire tertiary education sector? Finally, what role is there for private and public universities? What mix is ideal and how can both the quantity and quality be preserved if rapid increase is achieved.

Models of future development which are being looked at are e.g. the Indian Institute of Technology, the African Virtual University, The Open University, supported distance learning, the outreach of universities, such as Nottingham University building a campus in China or Manchester University developing split PhDs.

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[6] CFA Report, p67

Both training and retention of qualified graduates are important. Conditions need to be such that graduates can be retained and thus to work against the brain drain. This includes issues of salary and remuneration packages in academia and also appropriate opportunities within the private sector. There is also a mismatch between the type of graduates emerging and the needs of the economy for more graduates in maths, science and technology.

No discussion of the situation for development in Africa is complete without mention of the devastating impact of HIV/Aids. Much of Africa can benefit from the role of the English language, but excellence in English clearly an important aspect of contributing well-trained graduates for the international market.

10 Conclusions

India, China and Africa illustrate the importance of a detailed understanding of the national context for tertiary education. One perverse effect of the emphasis on primary education has been a swing away from support for the tertiary education sector. There are signs that this is now changing and that an awareness of the need to develop the knowledge economy and the skills economy require an educated core of well-qualified students. No country has developed without investing significantly in tertiary education. There are different models as to how this can be done and competing models for financing. It is certain, however, that countries of the South, in order to compete in a rapidly globalising world, will have to develop the skills base to achieve this. Concepts of tertiary education are also shifting. Increasingly even university level education is seen in the light of the need for lifelong learning, acquiring the skills which enable students to adapt to rapidly changing career patterns and skills requirements. A university course is increasingly recognised as teaching the ability to learn develop, rather than being considered the *rite de passage,* producing the graduate, fully fledged equipped for a profession for life.