Forum on Higher Education and International Development

Summary of Thematic Workshops

Workshop 1: ***"How can the current and future demand for tertiary education be best financed in low and lower income countries?"***

Convenor: Moses Oketch, Institute of Education, University of London

The workshop started with the facilitator Moses Oketch highlighting and explaining to the participants the market and non-market benefits of higher education. He also presented diagrams illustrating enrolment in higher education in select low and lower income countries vis-à-vis enrolment in secondary education to illustrate the current and potential future demand. He emphasised that the monetary benefits, notably earnings is well understood by governments, parents and students. This understanding has influenced the models of higher education, from the elite model of the immediate post-independence period of the 1960s and 70s to the involvement of international donors, notably the World Bank in shaping the direction of higher education finance in low income countries in the late 1980s onwards. He noted that the 1980s and 1990s international interpretation of the contribution of higher education to development placed greater emphasis on the individual earnings benefit. Through a series of regressions, rate of return analysis concluded, rightly so then, but perhaps wrongly today, that higher education squarely benefitted individuals more than society- and in poor countries' context, governments had no business providing free or heavily subsidised tertiary education at the expense of the much needed and more societally profitable basic education.

He emphasised that the non-market benefits are less understood and less researched in the context of low income countries. They are also complex to measure. However, he noted that there is clear and growing evidence that higher education contributions to development have in the past been narrowly conceived as largely benefiting individuals, and therefore, large public subsidy to higher education in the face of high rates of illiteracy perpetuates education and life chances inequality in low income countries, and hinders the widespread benefits of higher education to development. The externalities associated with higher education could potentially work better when there is widened participation in higher education. However, many low income countries face low participation in higher education and a growing demand. Many for whom higher education should be accessible are still largely poor. Market dynamics are beginning to show positive signs of economic growth, but employment opportunities are still limited for expanded higher education. Yet higher education is also needed to support the expansion and strengthening economic growth areas and to support quality in basic education. In these circumstances, how should it be financed to meet the growing demand and to also support development aspirations of these low income countries? This was the key question posed for the workshop.

The facilitator offered three possible modalities for discussion:

- Fully publicly financed tertiary education and its limits
- A combination of public and private financing-types, merits, and demerits
- Feasibility of loan schemes and equity implications

Fully publicly financed model:

The discussion around this was vibrant. It began by noting that publicly financed models tend to typically provide elite type of higher education benefiting an exclusive tiny minority who gain access to this education. Some of the key points that were highlighted included the need to focus on specific programmes or institutions. Nothing was seen as being wrong with elite model and provision so long as there were also other provisions of tertiary education that weren't considered elite. Elite alongside non-elite would be viable. Serious consideration under this model has to be directed towards finding ways of supporting bright students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It was also suggested that publicly financed model has to have a very clear way of linking higher education to employability of the graduates.

The conclusion was that it is not a bad model in countries which have very restricted resources and which haven't met provision in lower levels of education. Rather than spread funding thinly to many institutions through rapid expansion, it is better to restrict funding to few institutions based on present needs but which produce productive graduates with multiplier effect in the labour market.

A combination of public and private financing:

This was considered a mixed model of provision. Several themes were explored, notably quality assurance standards that needs to be in place for such a model to optimally function. Some of the examples that were highlighted by the facilitator for discussion included:

-private owner but receiving government funding

-government meets recurrent costs; institutions raise 20% of additional expenditure requirement; and students also pay fees

-partnership between government and private sector whereby the ownership is co-shared.

The discussion then shifted to whether conditions in low income countries can truly support functional public-private partnerships. Two issues were discussed: are the economies capable and is there robust regulatory regime for this model of higher education?

There was less favourable discussion towards the PPP model but it was noted that it is possible to implement. However, the following will need to be instituted: working with international partners to strengthen capacity of regulatory regime; importing 'foreign' regulatory frameworks and adapted them to local contexts.

The discussion then seamlessly moved on to the loan scheme model seen as being linked to public-private partnership.

Feasibility of loan schemes and equity implications:

Several forms of the loan scheme model were discussed. Examples that were highlighted by the facilitator and participants included:

-private sector providing the loans with government as underwriter/guarantor

-loans restricted only towards living expenses but tuition remains ‘free’

-market based loans for all costs but with strong and clear bursary schemes for those students from disadvantaged backgrounds

-needs based loans instead of universal loans

-bonds such that students are compelled to give back to society over a period of time in agreed ways- e.g. working as a teacher, or other public good voluntary work.

Discussions around these models had to bear in mind the economic situation in low income countries. Bonds were thought to be interesting but can only be applicable in certain programmes, notably medicine.

Bursary schemes were considered important for promoting social mobility and expanding higher education to those unable to afford it through loan scheme.

The idea of a fully functional market for loans was not as appealing.

At the end of the workshop, there was some level of consensus that public financing is needed at the present levels of economic development and educational need in the low income countries. The elite model is not necessarily a problem if the graduates contribute to the expansion of the economy because they have had a high quality education that is publicly financed. There are areas of critical need such as teachers, medical professionals that need not wait for the market and can be costly to be funded privately when a country is still relatively poor. The examples of the East Asian countries (‘tigers’) were highlighted. It was noted that they started and continued with elite models of tertiary education provision and gradually expanded higher education and diversified funding, particularly tapping on to private individual finance through tuition fees and greater private provision as these countries grew wealthier. Similar model can be followed in the present low income countries.

Conclusion:

The workshop ended with agreement over the benefits of higher education. The non-market benefits were considered to be important and employers should be informed about them. It was also highlighted that it would be beneficial if employers were engaged to the extent possible in informing the kinds of curriculum offered. The verdict was positive over publicly funded higher education, but one that is purposeful to the needs of these low income countries. Runaway expansion, to simply meet demand, without well thought-out consideration for the strategic purpose of expansion was considered undesirable. Private provision could be considered, but under clear regulatory framework and regime. As growth occurs and the society becomes wealthy, there would be nothing wrong to consider greater private finance, but this is for the future, but not quite for the present.

Workshop 2: ***"Improving Student Learning in Higher Education"***

Convenor: Rebecca Schendel, Institute of Education, University of London

The aim of this workshop was to engage with contemporary issues of teaching and learning in higher education in middle and lower income contexts. The workshop began with a brief mapping of this emerging field of research, and an unpicking of some of the frequently invoked assumptions that have led to the construction of 'crisis of quality' discourses set against a backdrop of the increasing globalisation of higher education.

The introduction to the workshop pointed to the relationships between 'the crisis' and the current privileging of neoliberal measures, such as class sizes and research output, that are becoming more and more established determinants of quality in both national and international rankings. The reductive conceptualisation of teaching and learning within these quality debates, and the resistance of higher education to turning the research lens back towards its own pedagogical practices, emerged as a significant cause for concern. This provided the agenda for the rest of the workshop. Importantly, this critical introduction also laid the groundwork for workshop participants to engage reflexively with their own positions as teachers and learners in higher education, developers of academic partnerships, researchers, and policy advisers.

Using vignettes from policy and practice-based interventions for improving teaching and learning in higher education in middle and lower income contexts, the workshop participants discussed the possibilities for, and limits to, the various approaches that have been adopted. What emerged were issues that could be broadly grouped by a) design, b) implementation and c) context of the intervention. Common to all of these issues were cross-cutting concerns about power and partnership within these interventions. Thoughts and questions from workshop participants have been summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Synthesis of workshop discussions

Design	Implementation	Context
• Who designs the intervention? • For what purpose? • What assumptions are being made about teaching and learning? • How are outcomes related to quality being defined?	• Finances and resources • Clarity of objectives • Infrastructure • Who has ownership of the intervention? Power. • Competing objectives between partnering institutions • Limitations in the external or the institutional environment • Follow-up and long-term evaluation of outcomes • Corruption • What skill-base is required/assumed prior to the implementation of any intervention? Eg: Level of Language and ICT skills	• Teaching vs research orientations within institutions • Faculty perceptions of teaching/orientations towards teaching • Time and workload of staff • Incentives and motivations • Working within a range of cultural and pedagogical norms.

The workshop participants identified significant holes in both knowledge and practice by drawing on the information from the vignettes and their personal experiences of interventions. There was a sobering acknowledgement of the work that is required to address questions of pedagogy and student learning, and the difficulty of conceptualising alternatives that decouple teaching and learning from summative measures of 'quality'. There was also an acknowledgement of the limitations to international partnerships and collaboration, given the power dynamics described above. That said, the following suggestions were put forward by the workshop participants as potentially fruitful areas of collaboration:

a) Collaborative work to expand curricular diversity – at institutions in both low/middle and high income contexts
b) Sustained engagement from higher education institutions across international contexts in critiques of the rankings culture and the effects of such normative concepts of "quality" on teaching and learning
c) The establishment of a forum for sharing processes and structures of teaching & learning interventions across international contexts, as well as for sharing new methods of assessment and other new research methodologies
d) The creation of international partnerships to facilitate research into teaching and learning across institutions
e) The inclusion of more diverse critical approaches to quality in teaching and learning at the HE level.
f) The possibility of increased funding in support of pedagogical interventions – particularly at institutions where funding is limited and/or unpredictable – that would allow institutions to sustain longer-term approaches more likely to affect change. Additional funding for research into this area could also be generated through international collaboration.

Underpinning all of these ideas is the need to be mindful of the following:

i) The complexity of pedagogy – and the requisite time needed to research, plan, implement and evaluate interventions.
ii) The need for interventions to be driven by local identification of need, rather than external assumptions.
iii) The importance of adapting techniques to the local context.
iv) Structural inequalities limiting the potential for universities in lower and middle income countries to engage equally with - and/or to implement – teaching and learning interventions (e.g. access to journals and ICT).

Notes written by Emma Jones

Workshop 3: *"Community Engagement"*

Convenor: Yann LeBeau, University of East Anglia

The workshop gathered 25 participants from a wide range of backgrounds (home and international postgraduate students, academics, NGOs and membership organisations).

Yann LeBeau started with an introduction on the various meanings associated with notions of 'community engagement', 'public engagement', 'public benefits' and 'third mission', in contrasting higher education contexts. He then presented some examples of research into the interconnectedness of universities and local communities in developing countries, revealing how any research agenda in this area should take into account the rapid transformation and differentiation of the HE field, as well as the changing expectations of societies towards HE.

Using a common analytical framework, participants were then invited to draw on their experience or readings, and discuss in small groups case(s) of university activity (in a developing country) that could be said to have contributed to the social, economic, cultural, political, or environmental development of external constituencies with whom [the university] had established relationships.

The cases identified revealed the complexity and polysemy of the notion of community engagement and the difficulties of researching it in contexts where it is often not formalised in institutional strategies. Reflecting on their lived or researched experiences (in Europe, Latin America, Africa) participants questioned a dominant conceptualisation of engagement implicitly referring to institutional strategies: cases of public engagement reported were on the contrary often student and academic-led alternatives to official institutional or public policies. Cases of students' movements and initiatives with non-university constituencies in particular were reported.

Examples of institutional strategies of community support were also reported, notably from Brazil, but these were again presented as alternative to a dominant HE model perceived as largely elitist where mainstream institutions are non-responsive to the needs and interests of their immediate environments.

Overall, the discussion revolved around the meanings and relevance of the notion of engagement outside the "western" context. The idea of engagement as mainstream activity of universities alongside teaching and research did not characterise the realities reported from developing countries. On the contrary illustrations of "engagement" often reported "alternative" initiatives led by unconventional HEIs or developed by specific university constituencies with external stakeholders (local groups and NGOs, international foundations) outside official institutional strategies and discourses.

Workshop 4: *"Higher Education and Refugees"*

Convenor: Barbara Zeus

The world is seeing an unprecedented number of large-scale humanitarian crises that have resulted in the highest number of people being forcibly displaced since the end of World War II. More than 51 million people have had to leave their homes and are dependent on humanitarian assistance including food and water, shelter and healthcare.

While there have been increased efforts to include basic education in emergency response, the provision of higher education has traditionally been seen rather as a long-term development activity and has only recently received more attention in such contexts. Nonetheless, refugee youth remain around 7,000 times less likely to access university than their non-refugee peers.

Following a presentation of the contextual background and some theoretical considerations, workshop participants had the chance to discuss and reflect critically on particular challenges and opportunities related to access to and quality of higher education for refugees in a post-2015 world.

A quote from the forum's key note presentation "Higher Education in isolation cannot contribute to well-being" opened up the floor for group discussions reflecting on the role of higher education in some of the most isolated contexts such as refugee camps. Workshop participants agreed that higher education could be key in equipping young forcibly displaced people with the necessary intellectual capacities and transferable skills to help rebuild their war-torn countries for instance. It proved more challenging for workshop participants to identify the immediate benefits that could result from higher education in an isolated camp setting where livelihood opportunities are limited, but it was highlighted how university graduates could feed into the often poorly resourced pools of teachers for primary and secondary schools for instance.

Considering the ever increasing numbers of refugees and looking in particular at the case of young Syrians, about a quarter of whom had been enrolled in universities prior to outbreak of conflict in their home country and many of whom are now unable to continue their studies, the discussion focused on creating enhanced opportunities to access tertiary studies for displaced population groups.

In this context, the discussion further focused on some of the different modes of delivery from traditional scholarships in host or third countries to more innovative models including MOOCs and blended learning. Workshop participants discussed how some of the particular challenges faced by refugee students can be mitigated through the use of information communication technologies and whether MOOCs for instance would offer a viable solution for refugee populations trying to access university education. It was concluded that the power of MOOCs to bring education to the marginalised should not be neglected, however, they need to go hand-in-hand with on-site tutoring and mentoring support to ensure positive learning outcomes and provide the necessary guidance especially if materials are not culturally adapted as well as considering language barriers.

The discussion moved on to reflect on the role of various stakeholders from refugee communities, host communities, UN organisations, NGOs, host government, donors and universities. Workshop participants showed great interest in forging partnerships and personally getting involved by contributing to the development of online and blended learning materials for refugee populations and to virtual lecturing to refugee student classrooms. It was also suggested to create a forum for refugee university professors.

The final point of discussion revolved around levels of preparedness, resilience and flexibility of higher education systems to avoid that displacement in future forcibly also leads to disruption of academic studies. It was agreed that more thinking needed to go into reducing access barriers for the marginalised, into how best to ensure recognition of credits across borders, more flexible ways of learning and earning credits such as blended forms that combine face-to-face with online learning all the while paying attention to massive open online learning does not enforce cultural imperialism but opens new opportunities for the recognition and dissemination of local knowledge.

In conclusion, when a country is affected by conflict or disaster and people are forced to leave their homes, education is disrupted and this often affects an entire generation. The risks for higher education to be discontinued in contexts of forced displacement are even higher than for lower levels of learning. In such contexts, higher education can become even more critical in generating highly skilled individuals who can make meaningful contributions to both the refugee community and the host community and contribute positively to protection and finding durable solutions.

Workshop 5: *"Internationalisation of Higher Education and Development in East Asia"*

Convenor: Terri Kim, University of East London

Proposed discussion topics:

- Construction and consolidation of hegemony
- Inbound/outbound internationalisation
- Going beyond surface indicators of internationalisation
- Issues around ethnic minorities and gender
- Postcolonial Asian remake of Orientalism

Emerging threads of discussion

Internationalisation vs. Globalisation

- There appears to be continued debate about the exact definitions of these terms regarding their scope, emphasis and applicability in different situations.

- Some of the points raised in the discussion offered some ways to elucidate the differences between internationalisation and globalisation

Internationalisation	Globalisation
More strongly associated with the movement of people between nation states	More strongly associated with bringing a global agenda to a local level (e.g. into the classroom)
A reaction to globalising trends	The move to a particular ("global") standard
Internationalisation is strategic	Globalisation just happens, it is not always deliberate or planned
	More economically driven than internationalisation
The term used most often in Higher Education	

Return rate (referring to students from abroad returning to their home countries)

- This is a very key issue, because there cannot be said to be a cycle of internationalisation if graduates do not return to share their experiences in their home country

- Many note that the return rate has shifted. It is much higher than 10 years ago. Sometimes this is due to deliberate policies to boost the return rate but other causes could include the rise of higher education in countries where the best option previously had been to study abroad. These can both been seen in the example of China. In India, ITT's are offering a more lucrative route to pursue higher education and subsequent employment without leaving India.

- When considering the return rate, it is important to note that some graduates pursue post-graduate studies or go for a short work experience but still intend to go back to their home country. For example, 90% of participants in one study expressed a wish to return if it is economically viable for them to do so.

- In addition to economic considerations, there are a number of push and pull factors influencing return rate. Some push and pull factors are more universal than others. Certain differences on the national or sub-national level impact the return rate. These include:

    - Cultural reasons (e.g. marriage, family duties)
    - Possibility of obtaining a visa to continue working or studying in the host country
    - the relative advantages and disadvantages of staying abroad depending on the country context (e.g. In Japan, returnees from abroad are said to lose cultural capital. Had they remained in Japanese academia, they could have been already involved in "hierarchical queuing" to assume more senior positions)

Frameworks and strategies which combat brain drain

- Many countries have developed policies or schemes which prompt students to return via a scholarship, funding or other mechanism (e.g. Mexico)

- However, the viability of some schemes depends on the source of funding for studies (individual, government or institution)

- Have there been any deliberate policies to link the (often educated and affluent) diaspora of a country with citizens still residing in the borders? Perhaps in a more networked world, this idea could be explored to combat brain drain even if graduates do not return.

Government Policy toward Development after citizens complete Higher Education abroad

- Many governments profess support for their citizens to study abroad, thereby gaining knowledge which can aid in developing the country upon their return.

- However, if graduates have studied subjects for which there is little infrastructure or jobs available in that field, they may not be successful in sharing their knowledge (e.g. studying social science and going back to a country with a STEM focused policy)

- Scholarship schemes do exist with the aim of bringing graduates back in country, but most do not provide any sort of post-degree guidance for graduates to make the most of their transition. Especially for schemes which obligate graduates to return, some sort of guidance could be beneficial.

Issues which complicate the analysis of the Internationalisation of Higher Education (HE)

- The return rate is only one way to look at internationalisation. Some cite the "trans-national person", who is not grounded in institutional or country contexts but "float" above these differences connected by networks to which his/her background and education has granted access.

- It is important to consider who has access to higher education outside of their home country. Questions of "who moves?" especially in terms of the involvement of members of different genders, social-economic statuses, ethnic groups etc. should be posed. The question of “who doesn’t return?” should drive analysis of the return rate, rather than stopping at aggregate data.

- There has been a shift towards shorter terms of study abroad (e.g. what was three years abroad for a degree in the past may be a degree online in country and a term abroad). How might this impact internationalisation?

- Internationalisation at home
    - “Shadow internationals” (people who come from immigrant backgrounds who study in the context where their parents immigrated) makes for complex internationalisation

- branch campuses
    - These are a “branch” of a university operating in another country but granting degrees from the university which opened the branch.
    - How international are branch campuses in actuality? For example, in China the vast majority of students in branch campuses are Chinese although staff are globally recruited

- Viewing and discussing Internationalisation as Westernisation under a different name is a dangerous discourse

East Asian models of internationalisation

- Increasingly, many higher education institutions are using Chinese as a lingua franca challenging the dominant position of English as the language of international education (e.g. in Thailand)

- It is important to take a long view of history, considering that countries in Asia were for centuries dominated knowledge production and were intellectual centres before Western Europe

- Confucianism is a term which is being deployed to describe the East Asian models of Internationalisation which are seen as alternatives to Western models

- Homo economicus as a replacement for Confucianism in East Asia HE/Devt as a reaction to the global economy and liberalisation

Confucianism in East Asian Higher Education in the 21st century

- Contemporary takes on Confucianism offer an alternative to Western models of education. A more Confucian concept of modernity would describe the nature of human beings and society as organic not based on contracts as is seen in Western Capitalism. There is a focus on relationships of the self with the family. In today’s society the state could be described as a family.

- Confucianism can act as a dangerous heuristic, a “lazy explanation” which exaggerates cultural differences and glosses over shared humanity between East Asians and others.

- It is possible that a constellation of factors have amplified other factors which have some root or connection to Confucianism (e.g. pressures from large population could facilitate values such as stratification or respect for elders) which facilitates the use of the term “Confucian”

- Confuciansim can also act a narrative which projects positive soft power during a period of rapid economic growth.

- It is essential not to over-generalise the appeal of Confucianism as it has been used in Chinese Higher Education in recent years. For example, some Chinese people have negative views about Confucius Institutes. As there are still areas within China where the participation rate in HE is low, they argue the funding could be redirected to boost internal HE capacity.

Language is a key consideration is the discussion of HE Internationalisation

- Some elite schools in Britain are teaching Mandarin while many students in China are studying in English. What does this portend for the future of HE?

- A dominant "international" language has been a feature of HE in some contexts (e.g. in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, where in particular French, English, and/or Portuguese are used as languages of instruction to avoid showing preference to the language of a group within the country). However, this has led to linguistic imperialism.

Notes by Bethany Schowengerdt