

New Dynamics of Higher Education; New Dynamics of Distance Education



*Shanghai TV University
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Abstract

UNESCO's 2009 World Conference on Higher Education charted a course for higher education in the second decade of the 21st century. The conference identified important and emerging trends, notably rising demand that has created the phenomenon of mass participation, diversification of providers, the use of new learning methods, and a sharper focus on quality assurance. However, higher education is marked by large differences in participation rates and quality in different parts of the world. It is by resolutely embracing the new dynamics that developing countries will bridge these gaps.

Open and distance learning (ODL) and ICTs offer particularly important opportunities. Indeed, developing countries in Asia have led the way in the large-scale use of these technologies. The second part of the paper focuses on the new dynamics of distance education. Now well-established in higher education; ODL will now expand at secondary level and in non-formal learning. The growing pool of Open Educational Resources will both raise the quality and lower the cost of ODL materials as they are shared and adapted around the world. Mobile technology will become an important tool in non-formal learning and the advent of very low cost computing devices will hasten the end of the digital divide.

Introduction

Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić

Good morning! Sir John Daniel and I are honoured and delighted to give the keynote address at this celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Shanghai TV University.

We congratulate STVU on half a century of remarkable achievement in serving the people of Shanghai and establishing an international reputation for its use of technology in higher education. This reputation earned it the 2008 UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa Prize for the Use of ICTs in Education.

It is also one of the mega-universities as defined in Sir John's book, *Mega-universities and Knowledge Media: Technology Strategies for Higher Education*. Indeed, my last visit to Shanghai was on the occasion of the 1st Summit of Mega-Universities in 2003 when I was present at the launch of the Chinese version of Sir John's book.

History is repeating itself because the launch of the Chinese version of his second book, *Achieving Education for All: Mega-Schools, Technology and Teachers*, is taking place tomorrow at this conference.

Our role is to bring an international dimension to these celebrations. We shall do this by identifying some of the trends that will influence STVU as it embarks on its second half century.

Our address is in two parts and our title is: *New Dynamics of Higher Education; New Dynamics of Distance Education*.

I shall begin by enumerating some of the new dynamics that are determining the evolution of higher education around the world.

My point of reference will be the World Conference on Higher Education that UNESCO convened in Paris last July. Many new trends and issues emerged during those discussions but I shall focus on just eight of them.

Sir John Daniel will then explore these same eight issues through the lens of new dynamics in distance education and technology-mediated learning.

Let me give some background about the World Conference before presenting the new trends that emerged from its debates.

To express its global coverage and give voice to regional and national specificities, the World Conference was preceded by six regional conferences. They were held in Cartagena de Indias for Latin America and the Caribbean; Macau for East Asia and the Pacific; Dakar for Africa; New Delhi for South Asia; Bucharest for Europe and North America; and Cairo for the Arab States.

The world event was organised at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and its recommendations will determine UNESCO's agenda in higher education for the next decade. We shall work through this agenda under the guidance of our new Director-General, Irina Bokova from Bulgaria, who is the first woman ever elected to this post, and Qian Tang, Assistant Director General for Education, the first Chinese citizen to be appointed to head the Education Sector.

The WCHE was a significant event for UNESCO. It brought together leaders from countries big and small. Thus we had the President of Slovenia, the Governor-General of Saint Lucia, and the Minister of Higher Education of Oman speaking alongside Ministers from Brazil, Egypt, France, and India. We were particularly honoured to have the Minister of China as a keynote speaker at the opening plenary.

Philip Altbach, a well-known researcher, led the contribution of the academic community by presenting the most salient elements of his study *Global Trends, Tracking an Academic Revolution*, which set the

scene for the debates in the parallel sessions. These gave an academic buzz to the conference as female and male scholars from around the world spoke in the sessions and mingled in the foyers.

The broad HE community was also well represented by students, who were vocal in all the political and professional debates, both as individual voices and through their associations.

The private sector, notably Hewlett Packard and Microsoft, took advantage of the event to profile partnerships with UNESCO in higher education.

Africa was a major focus and the Rapporteur General for Africa, Nigeria's Peter Okebukola enthused that: "We found most strikingly an infectious dynamism among the over 1,200 participants (...).The matter of higher education is serious business!"

It is very encouraging that China is now actively sharing its experience in developing education systems with other emerging countries, especially in Africa. Within this framework a Workshop for Africa is being organised during this Conference in Shanghai and I had the pleasure to open it this morning on behalf of UNESCO.

THE NEW DYNAMICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Let me now identify eight new dynamics that came out of the WCHE debates.

Rising demand and massification

The first is rising demand. Higher education's role in constructing the knowledge society is now acknowledged by all. University degrees and diplomas have become passports to a good future and the demand for higher education has been growing rapidly.

As a consequence, we now talk of massification as the dominant trend. Globally, age participation rates in higher education have grown from 19% in 2000 to 26% in 2007. There were 150.6 million students enrolled in tertiary education worldwide in 2007, which represents a 53% increase over 2000. In low income countries these percentages were much lower and rose from 5% in 2000 to a modest 7% in 2007. This means we can expect continuing rapid growth in those countries.

China now has the largest higher education in the world. 2008 statistics indicate that 29.79 million students were enrolled in HEIs in China while the age participation rate was 23.3%. Although the policy is now to slow the growth of student numbers, a recent education reform strategy paper projects that by 2020 enrolments in higher education will reach 35.5 million.

Diversification of providers and methods

It will not be possible to satisfy this rising demand, especially in developing countries, by relying on traditional approaches based solely on public universities. A multitude of new providers of higher education is emerging.

A major recent trend is the creation of so-called ‘World-Class’ Universities. In some countries these are designated by governments; the China 211 and 985 projects and the Brain 21 programme in South Korea being examples.

This trend feeds on the mushrooming phenomenon of university rankings which, while controversial, are undoubtedly influencing governments. The Shanghai University Rankings have certainly increased the visibility of the Shanghai Jiao Tong University throughout the world. However, many question the criteria used in rankings and point to methodological limitations.

At the other end of the spectrum, as an increasing proportion of the population seeks higher education, transition programmes between schools and universities, such as community colleges, are attracting worldwide attention. Ms Jill Biden, the wife of the US Vice-President, who teaches in a community college herself, presented the community college model at the World Conference. Community colleges provide access for non-traditional students, offer flexible curricula – include skills-based training, and allow progression to university.

One of the conclusions of the WCHE was that countries should build world-class higher education systems adapted to local needs rather than focusing on a few world-class institutions. A World Bank publication, launched at the WCHE – “*The Challenge of establishing World-Class Universities*” – explores this issue.

China’s recent draft National Plan Outline for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development states that China will increase its competitive edge through world-class universities. However, bringing these two global trends together, it also points to the need for a more balanced and heterogeneous higher education system to satisfy diverse needs.

Private provision

Corporate structures of higher education are also changing. Private higher education is now the fastest growing sub-sector and some 30% of students are enrolled in private higher education institutions globally. Some countries (Japan, South Korea) enrol 80% of their students in private higher education institutions and in parts of Latin America these percentages reach 50%. For-profit higher education is also growing and developing specific business models that have not yet been explored sufficiently because these institutions tend to operate in an opaque and secretive way. The Conference stressed the importance of including the private sector in all quality assurance arrangements.

Distance education

Modes of teaching and learning are also changing. Indeed, applications of ICTs have impacted higher education significantly. Open universities are multiplying around the world and are increasingly powerful players in national higher education systems. These institutions are an important response to the challenge of scaling up higher education in response to growing demand.

Sir John Daniel will address distance education in more depth, but let me just give two examples of mega-universities that I have had the honour of visiting. One is our host today, the Shanghai TV University that reaches out to a large number of students throughout the city and the countryside. Another is UNISA, the University of South Africa, one of the oldest and largest distance education institutions in the world,

which enrolls a quarter of a million students a year. We are pleased that Professor Barney Pityana, the Principal of UNISA is here with us today.

Cross-border Higher Education

These trends come together in a steady increase in cross-border higher education.

As defined by the 2005 UNESCO-OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education, the term designates higher education that occurs when ‘the teacher, student, programme, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders’.

Cross-border higher education can take different forms, ranging from branch campuses and franchises of universities offering courses abroad to eLearning across borders.

Cross-border Higher Education, if regulated properly, as it is in China, offers great opportunities for capacity building at institutional level both in teaching and learning. This example from China is the University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China, a cross-border provider representing a partnership between the University of Nottingham in the UK and the Zhejiang Wanli Education Group – University, the first Sino-Foreign University in China approved by the Ministry of Education of China.

However, in the absence of regulation as in China CBHE easily lends itself to fraud and low quality provision, the most striking example being degree mills that sell diplomas for money. The internet is an attractive tool for these bogus providers. One used Blenheim Palace, Winston Churchill’s birthplace, on their website claiming it as their campus. Others misuse UNESCO’s name to appear legitimate.

Fortunately, quality assurance provides some protection against spurious providers.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance – and especially the internationalisation of quality assurance – is one of the most striking new developments since UNESCO held its previous World Conference on Higher Education in 1998. This new emphasis on QA was reflected not only in the conference Communiqué but also in both political and academic debates during the Conference.

The Indian Minister of Human Resource Development, to quote his speech at the WCHE, expressed his approach to internationalising quality assurance rather well:

“The globalisation of higher education has added newer challenges in terms of quality assurance system, issues of mutual recognition and equivalence of degrees and transparency in the regulatory structures of national systems of higher education. (...) Quality Assurance Systems should encourage effective learning processes which are adapted to the needs of various categories of learners. The systems should encompass not merely conventional programmes in higher education but also the borderless, private and continuing education.”

The internationalisation of quality assurance is a response to the growing policy challenges facing higher education systems and institutions as a consequence of the trends we have identified, such as private higher education, cross-border higher education, eLearning and ODL, and the growing role of the Internet.

UNESCO has prepared the ground for this process of internationalisation through the standard-setting tools that were highlighted at the WCHE. These are the Conventions for the Recognition of Degrees; and the 2005 Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education.

UNESCO's capacity-building initiatives in quality assurance were also reported, notably the organisation since 2002 of Global Forums on Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications. In many countries, these have facilitated the revision of quality standards within universities and accreditation processes.

A more recent initiative is the UNESCO-World Bank Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC). GIQAC supports regional networks of quality assurance agencies. In this region it supports the Asia and Pacific Quality Assurance Network (APQN). The APQN Secretariat is located in the Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute (SEEI), China.

An important contribution to global quality assurance is the Web Portal on Recognised Higher Education Institutions. This provides students and all stakeholders with a white list of accredited institutions provided by governments so that they can check the bona fides of institutions in other countries. We are pleased that China, with the world's largest HE system, is actively contributing to the Portal.

Finally I should mention the joint publication with the US Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) of a document entitled - *Toward Effective Practice Discouraging Degree Mills in Higher Education*.

All of this work, which began after the previous WCHE in 1998, has fostered the worldwide elaboration and sharing of good practices. It has stimulated much activity in the form of regional discussions, preparation of tool kits, online courses, workshops, and quality assurance documents.

Teacher Education

The growing challenges of teacher education within higher education were highlighted as one of the global trends, underlined in Conference Communiqué in these words:

“Our ability to realise the goals of EFA is dependent upon our ability to address the worldwide shortage of teachers. Higher education must scale up teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, with curricula that equip teachers to provide individuals with the knowledge and skills they need in the twenty-first century. This will require new approaches, including open and distance learning (ODL) and information and communications technologies (ICTs). (Article 11)”

The teacher shortage is the core challenge. According to UNESCO's Institute of Statistics, a global total of 10.3 million teachers should be recruited between 2007 and 2015. However, this is a global figure. Actual needs vary greatly from country to country. The 96 countries that have not achieved Universal Primary Education will need to recruit 1.9 million teachers for this purpose alone.

Academic profession

The teaching force in higher education was naturally a particular focus of the WCHE. The stresses on HE systems and their academic staff caused by rapid expansion are manifest in various ways.

First, pressure of student numbers has required the hiring of less qualified faculty. For example, in China only 9 % of academic profession has doctorates, while in India it is 35%.

Second, the use of part-time professors is becoming more widespread. For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, up to 80% of the faculty have part-time status.

Third, part-time faculty seek adequate salaries by working in several institutions. In particular, private higher education institutions tend to rely heavily on part-timers, some of whom are moonlighting from public institutions, which can cause tensions between the two sub-sectors.

Fourth, the academic labour market is now global. Academics migrate from poorer to richer countries. Singapore, the Gulf States, Western Europe and North America tend to import faculty whereas regions like the South Asia, the Caribbean and Africa are exporters.

Fifth, one side effect of the rapid spread of technology is that young people who are used to using digital devices in everyday life expect to use them as students – whereas many faculty continue to teach in traditional ways.

Sixth, however, ICTs provide new opportunities to expand access to quality learning and facilitate the tasks of teachers. In particular, the growing trend to develop Open Educational Resources means that academics and students will be able to draw on a worldwide pool of excellent teaching and learning material that can be fully adapted to local needs.

UNESCO is working with COL to empower HE institutions, ministries of education and quality assurance agencies to take full advantage of these resources. A major goal of this work is to ensure multidirectional flows of Open Educational Resources so that developed countries use resources from developing countries as well as vice-versa. This was the topic of a vigorous debate between two South Africans, Barney Pitso and Brenda Gourley, at the World Conference.

Since then two workshops, held respectively in Cape Town, South Africa and Windhoek, Namibia, have provided examples of the use in the of OERs from institutions in Ghana and Malawi in US universities. This helps to dispel the fear of neo-colonialism expressed in the WCHE debate.

Let me give an example from China, CORE. The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China has recently published a list of 2009 Chinese Quality Open Courseware (CQOCW). So far, the total number of CQOCW items is over 3,000.

That is my summary of the new dynamics of higher education that emerged at the World Conference. I now hand over to Sir John Daniel who will examine them again through the lens of the new dynamics of distance education.

Sir John Daniel

It is a pleasure to be with you and to join my UNESCO colleague Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić in giving this address to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Shanghai TV University. In 1998, when I was Vice-Chancellor of the UK Open University, you did me the honour of making me an Honorary Consultant Professor so I feel part of your community.

As Stamenka noted, because she was there too, it was at STVU at the 2003 Mega-Universities Summit conference that we launched the Chinese version of my book *Mega-universities and Knowledge Media: Technology Strategies for Higher Education*. I was then Assistant Director-General for Education at UNESCO, the post now held by your compatriot – and my good friend – Dr Qian Tang.

I am delighted that tomorrow we shall have a little ceremony to launch the Chinese version of my latest book: *Achieving Education for All: Mega-Schools, Technology and Teachers*.

For these reasons I feel very much at home at STVU as I congratulate you on your tremendous achievements over the last half century. My message today is that your next half century will be even better. The steady evolution of technology will give technology-mediated education – for which I will use the traditional term distance education – a pre-eminent place in higher education. All universities will begin to emulate the methods of STVU.

The framework for my presentation will be the eight new dynamics in higher education that Stamenka has reported from last year's world conference: rising demand; diversification of providers and methods; private provision; distance education; cross-border education; quality assurance; teacher education; and the academic profession.

I shall touch on each of these topics in order to show how the new dynamics of distance education complement these new dynamics of higher education. However, we must remember that not all of the important dynamics of ODL are new. Sometimes the frontiers of learning are behind us! In implementing new technologies we must hold fast to the lessons that we have already learned about how to use technology successfully.

I have been privileged to see a draft of your National Plan Outline for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development, which has much to say about the trends that I shall explore.

THE NEW DYNAMICS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Rising demand and massification

The first new dynamic of higher education that Stamenka talked about was rising demand. The figures that she quoted showed that access to higher education in China is growing faster than anywhere else in the world. You are still a long way from having a mass higher education system but you are on the way there – with STVU playing an exemplary role.

Here I simply want to insist on the revolutionary role that technology can play in ensuring that the massification of higher education occurs with higher quality and lower costs.

Governments want three outcomes from their higher education systems:

- Access: to be as wide as possible
- Quality: to be as high as possible
- Cost: to be as low as possible

The nature of the challenge is clear when you create a triangle of vectors. With traditional methods of face-to-face teaching this is an iron triangle. You want to stretch the triangle like this to give greater access, higher quality and lower costs. But you can't!

Try extending access by packing more students into each classroom and you will be accused of damaging quality. Try improving quality with better learning resources and the cost will go up. Try cutting costs and you will endanger both access and quality.

This iron triangle has hindered the expansion of education throughout history. It has created in the public mind – and probably in your own thinking – an insidious link between quality and exclusivity. This link still drives the admission policies of many universities, which define their quality by the people they exclude.

But today there is good news. Thanks to globalisation successive waves of technology are sweeping the world – and technology can transform the iron triangle into a flexible triangle. By using technology you can achieve wider access, higher quality and lower cost all at the same time. This is a revolution – it has never happened before.

How does it work? The fundamental principles of technology, articulated in the 18th century by the economist Adam Smith, are division of labour, specialisation, economies of scale, and the use of machines and communications media. Adam Smith wrote more than two hundred years ago, so the revolution of technology is not a new dynamic. Sometimes, however, the frontiers of learning are behind us and we must not forget the wisdom of the past.

My basic point here is that each new generation of technology can, if we use it properly, do even more to make massification possible at low cost and high quality. The economies of scale inherent in the technology are becoming greater and greater. However, we must remember that specialisation and division of labour in the organisation of our institutions are the keys that unlock those economies of scale.

Diversification of providers and methods

The second trend that Stamenka highlighted was the diversification of providers and methods. I make two comments here: one about providers; the other about methods.

Distance education has proved itself at university level through splendid examples like the 50 years of success of STVU and the 40 years of success of the UK Open University. It is spreading to other levels, notably secondary education. Providing quality secondary schooling to all of the world's young people is now our biggest educational challenge. Much of my new book is about how distance education can help us respond to it. There are already many mega-schools that are the secondary equivalent of mega-universities.

Second, of course, a major trend is that conventional universities are diversifying their methods as they adopt the approaches and technologies of distance education. They usually call them something different, like blended learning and flexible learning, but distance education is what it is.

This too is not new. Last week I was in New Zealand where Massey University was celebrating fifty years of its distance education programme, which it calls extramural studies.

We call universities that teach both on campus and at a distance ‘dual-mode’ institutions. The main challenge facing them is to remember that the frontiers of learning about how to organise distance education are behind them. Massey University has just gone through a cycle, familiar to many dual-mode institutions, of decentralising the organisation of distance learning to the academic units and faculty members and then, when they find that the wheels fall off, re-establishing central coordination. We shall return to this issue when we talk about the academic profession.

Private provision

One aspect of the diversification of providers is private provision of higher education. We are thinking particularly of private, for-profit provision. Private provision is a complex reality.

Take the example of Open University Malaysia, a private institution that pays dividends to its shareholders, which are Malaysia’s public universities. That must make it a for-profit institution, although it feels quite different from others such as the University of Phoenix in the US.

We make three comments about distance education and private providers.

First although private, for-profit correspondence education has a long history, large private providers of distance education such as Phoenix Online, with over 100,000 students, are the exception rather than the rule. Is this because profit margins are higher in face-to-face education? Or is it because most of the providers who created fully online learning programmes during the dotcom frenzy ten years ago failed to attract students? Whatever the reasons, we may expect this sector to expand, because commercial companies are good at the basics of technology: division of labour, specialisation, economies of scale and the use of machines.

Second, these providers respond to clear rules and incentives. The good private providers prefer to work in a clear legal framework. If they are given incentives to get their students to complete courses, rather than drop out, they are good at that too. For example, private providers are more robust about reminding their students to submit assignments than most public providers.

Third, as Stamenka noted, in the absence of regulations degree mills will spring up, and these are a menace to legitimate providers.

Distance education

The fourth new dynamic that she identified was distance education. Here again I make three comments.

First, universities are expanding into distance education to expand their reach but also because they expect it to cost less. In fact, unless they remember Adam Smith’s principles of technology, it will cost more, and the programme will not last.

Second, if you do follow Adam Smith’s principles, each new generation of technology does allow you to reduce costs, except in one vital area, which is the development of courses. This is inherently expensive because it requires a team of academics and skilled people. But as Stamenka pointed out, we now have a major advance in this area with the development of open educational resources. Your national plan is enthusiastic about these and states:

“It is essential to intensify the development of eTeaching resources, introduce quality eTeaching resources from abroad, develop and eLearning curriculum, construct eLibraries and virtual laboratories, build open and flexible public service platform on education resources, and renovate the mode of eEducation to push high-quality, high-level diploma granting distance education.”

It is good to see that China is already well-advanced down this route.

Third, technologies are changing. In many of the countries where the Commonwealth of Learning works, mobile phones rather than laptop computers are the expression of information and communications technology. We are already using them very successfully for helping farmers improve their livelihoods in India.

Cross-border higher education

We come now to cross-border higher education. Here I simply want to make a plea that we think of cross-border higher education in terms of bi- and multi-directional partnerships. Simply pushing programmes in one direction at another country is not sustainable.

A nice example of a multi-directional cross-border partnership is a project called the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth that the Commonwealth of Learning is facilitating. It is not a new institution but a collaborative mechanism that permits small states all over the world to work together on producing open educational resources.

Here a dozen countries got together in Mauritius to develop courses on eco-tourism. This group of experts from 18 small countries worked together in the Maldives in March of this year to develop a diploma course in sustainable agriculture for small states.

Quality assurance

Earlier Stamenka emphasised the importance of quality assurance and noted how it is becoming a worldwide concern with global mechanisms to match. I shall make just two comments from the perspective of distance education.

First, quality distance education is a subset of quality education. Distance education should be subject to the same quality assurance mechanisms as education generally. This also has the advantage that comparisons can be made between the quality of distance and face-to-face provision.

This table indicates that the UK Open University outperforms Oxford in the quality of its teaching. I can show such a table because all UK universities were assessed in the same way.

Second, distance education should not fear quality assurance. It is easier to demonstrate quality in distance education than in face-to-face teaching. That is because everything in distance education: the courses, the student support and the administrative processes, are explicit, public and available for scrutiny.

Teacher Education

I come now to teacher education about which Stamenka made two points. First, training teachers is the major contribution that universities can make to achieving education for all. Second, there is a massive shortage of teachers worldwide.

Half of my new book is devoted to the challenge of teacher education and I make four key points.

First, many countries will not be able to train the new teachers they need without using distance education. The conventional facilities for training the millions of teachers required are simply not there. Moreover, distance education has been used to train teachers very successfully for many decades.

Second, distance education allows the emphasis of teacher education to be shifted from pre-service training to in-service training. This allows the focus of training to be on the classroom, which makes training much more effective.

Third, by using open educational resources we can conduct teacher in-service education at scale while also customising it for every country and every school. An example is the TESSA programme in Africa, which is a consortium of 13 African universities, the UK Open University and five international organisations. It works across nine African countries – with more participating informally – by creating teacher education materials in Arabic, English, French and Kiswahili.

Fourth, this kind of training has a direct and beneficial effect on the children. Last year nearly half a million African teachers worked with materials and resources produced through the TESSA community. Since these are classroom-based in-service materials they have a direct impact on millions of children through their use in the classroom.

We note that your National Plan includes provision for in-service training and we hope that this will be done through distance education so that it can occur more frequently than every five years.

Academic profession

We come finally to the implications of the growth of distance education for the academic profession. Stamenka stressed the multiple stresses on teachers in higher education. She pointed out that, while some of those stresses are caused by the spread of information and communications technology, ICTs and notably open educational resources also have the potential to make teachers' work more productive and satisfying.

I shall make one final point here, which is that to take advantage of ICTs and open educational resources teachers will need to work more in teams and less as isolated individuals.

If you want to do distance education and eLearning well you must use the principles of division of labour and specialisation that I have continually emphasised. Some people in higher education find this difficult. They want to continue with the cottage-industry approach, where each academic does their own thing and takes care of every step in the instructional process.

My fellow Vancouverite, Professor Tony Bates, calls this the 'Lone-Ranger' approach to eLearning. For teachers to operate with low productivity like this may not matter in rich countries; but it matters a lot in the places I work where resources are scarce and access to education woefully limited. We think it matters in China too.

The insidious links between quality, cost and exclusivity are balls and chains holding nations back. Distance and eLearning should be liberating forces – not a throwback to the past. Our aim must be to use the technology of distance education to stretch the iron triangle so that quality education is accessible to all at reasonable cost.

Conclusion

Let us now conclude. Stamenka has outlined the new dynamics in higher education that were identified at UNESCO's World Conference last year. I have taken those trends and commented on the many ways in which the new dynamics of distance education can help to advance higher education generally.

Our conclusion is that universities like the Shanghai Television University, which focus on distance education and do it well, have a great future ahead of them. Your next half century will be even better than the fifty years that we are celebrating today.