"Going Global: In What Direction?"

Going Global2 - the UK's international education conference

International education: the new global enterprise?

7-8 December 2006, Edinburgh, UK

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Introduction

(Sir John Daniel speaking)

is an honour to address this second Going Global conference with my colleague Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić who will inform you about a new UNESCO resource for international education. Our title is Going Global: In What Direction?

We begin by recalling two icons of international education. Erasmus of Rotterdam has given his name to the student exchanges that are re-uniting academic Europe. Huen Tsang was one of many Chinese scholars who studied in India in the first millennium. Nalanda University, where Huen Tsang studied, can claim to be the world's first international university. Erasmus studied in Paris, the great international university of the second millennium, where my co-author and I were more recent students. Since developments in China and India will soon define the profile of global tertiary education, we do well to note their 1500-year history of academic exchange.

This conference is mostly devoted to international education where students flow from poorer to richer countries and funds from poorer countries subsidise tertiary education for students in the richer countries. It's an odd situation. However, we shall look at international education from the perspectives of developing countries which are defining new trends.

China now has more tertiary students than the USA and India is coming up fast in the rear view mirror. India's Age Participation Rate is now 10%. According to Malaysia a country crosses the threshold to developed status at an APR of around 40%. India will need to accommodate some 30-40 million more students to reach that status. Quite a number!
Extending that by assuming a 35% participation rate amongst the four billion people at the bottom of the global economic pyramid gives you 150 million new students - more than total global enrolments today. This may not be fantasy. In recent decades most forecasts of tertiary enrolment growth have underestimated the subsequent reality. But how will the developing world achieve such expansion?

We shall ask three questions. Who will be the learners? Who will be the providers? How will learners choose providers with confidence?

UNESCO serves the whole diverse world. The Commonwealth includes Tuvalu, with 12,000 people, and India with a billion. We shall focus on the two extremes. At one end are the small states; some 50 countries with populations from a few thousand to a few million. Their challenge is to expand tertiary education whilst conserving scarce foreign exchange. Of the 53 Commonwealth members the 32 small states are a special preoccupation for the Commonwealth of Learning.

At the other extreme are the very large developing countries. The nine biggest, the E9, are a special focus for UNESCO. The Commonwealth's E9 countries: Bangladesh, India, Nigeria and Pakistan, account for 1.5 billion people and have Age Participation Rates of between 6% and 12%.

These contrasting situations encapsulate the challenges facing tertiary education in the developing world.

Who will be the learners?

First, who will be the learners? Their numbers are exploding as the expansion of tertiary education becomes a major route to developed status. A forecast of 120 million students by 2020 may be reached by 2010. The largest numbers will be people for whom tertiary education was previously an unattainable aspiration. Like other students they will look for the three 'A's. Tertiary education must be accessible, affordable, and appropriate. It must improve their livelihoods by being relevant and recognised.

The second major group, the lifelong learners, have similar needs which will challenge tertiary systems designed for young school leavers. I think of Ms. Najwa Qaisy, an Iraqi woman who won a Commonwealth of Learning award for succeeding in her course during some of the worst days in Baghdad in June 2005. She had to study without electricity, risked cross fire in the street to reach the internet café to send assignments to her tutor, and hid her English workbook from raiding combatants.

For many learners local tertiary education satisfies the 'three-As' criteria. But, as for Ms Qaisy, this can include elements of cross-border provision: travel abroad, distance learning from abroad, or study in a local branch of a foreign institution. These are vital ingredients for the small states because local provision is limited. But as demand increases the growing foreign-exchange cost of cross-border education is a major problem.

For example, amongst the small states Tonga and Belize have more tertiary students abroad than at home (the group under arrow A), while for Cyprus, The Gambia, Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia students abroad number more than half those at home (arrow B).
Students studying abroad are of special interest and we make three points about them. First, they are numerous - some 2.4 million in 2004. Student mobility has nearly tripled since 1980 and has increased by 50% even since 1998. Second, the most mobile are sub-Saharan Africans. One of out every 16 African tertiary students studies abroad. More generally, the majority (61%) of foreign students in OECD countries come from outside the OECD. Third, many seek more than a useful education. They want to join the international talent elite or become global citizens.

Typical is the Malaysian student in Australia who said: 'I am not here merely to get an education. I want to develop a global imagination" (Rizvi, 2000). For such people cross-border study is the start of a more cosmopolitan life. Many people today are defined less by their geographical and family roots than by the routes that they and their families have taken. An explicit purpose of the ERASMUS programme is to foster a sense of identity that is both national and European.

Let's extend the question 'who are learners' to the related question 'who are the migrants'. Many who have studied at home become migrants, but those with experience of cross-border study are even more likely to migrate.

By 2000 there were 20 million migrants with tertiary education living in OECD countries, up from 12 million in 1990. Those with tertiary education accounted for half the increase in adult migrants in OECD countries in the 1990s. Significantly, nearly six out of ten highly-educated migrants living in OECD countries in 2000 came from developing countries.

Between a third and a half of the highly educated people of Angola, Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Tanzania now live in OECD countries. For Guyana, Haiti, Fiji, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago the proportions are even higher - about 60% - and in Guyana's case this does not take into account the steady haemorrhaging of talent to other Caribbean countries.

So much for students who travel. What about students who stay at home and study at a distance with a foreign institution - the 'virtually wandering scholars' as Hilary Perraton calls them? (Perraton, 2006) We make two observations.

First, there have been false dawns. We have not achieved the goal set by Lord Briggs in 1987: 'that any learner, anywhere in the Commonwealth, should be able to study any distance-teaching programme available from any bona fide college or university in the Commonwealth'. Some attempts to pursue this goal have failed spectacularly, such as the UK e-Universities project.

Second, however, the underlying trends are clear. Between 1996 and 2004 the proportion of foreigners studying with Australian universities by staying at home instead of going to Australia rose from 24% to 33% (Krause, 2006). By 2000 more Singapore students accessed a foreign programme from Singapore than went overseas. The number of foreign programmes in China increased nine fold between 1995 and 2003.

But note, as we turn to ask about the providers, that the numbers of students in the poorer developing countries who study programmes coming in from abroad are trivial compared to local provision.
Who will be the providers?

So who will be the providers? Who will provide tertiary education for 50 million extra students in the next 15 years?

To predict patterns of provision we ask three more simple questions. Who owns the provider? Where do the funds come from? How does the provider teach students or, in the jargon, what is the delivery mode?

Ownership is simple. Because private provision is tertiary education's fastest growing segment worldwide, we can predict that it will account for most tertiary education in developing countries in a decade or two. (Daniel, Kanwar and Uvalić-Trumbić, 2006). It already accounts for 70% of technical education in India.

Since private tertiary education has little traction in the UK we must explode two myths (Altbach and Levy, 2005). The first is that private providers avoid disadvantaged students.

This is often the reverse of the truth. In the USA 62% of Hispanic students and 47% of African-American students who earn two-year certificates earn them at private career colleges. Furthermore, those who start their tertiary education in private career colleges have higher completion rates than those who start in public institutions (Levy, 2006).

The second myth, held tenaciously in the UK, is that zero or low tuition fees promote a broader socio-economic student profile. Research over many years shows this to be nonsense. Access to tertiary education is most equitable when a fees regime is combined with bursary and loan funds for poorer students. This, of course, begs the question of how you build up the necessary funds.

Ron Perkinson will address this question. The key point is that having fees regimes in both the public and private sectors creates a level playing field that allows the combined efforts of governments and investors to satisfy the need for tertiary education more fully.

We have, of course, glossed over a touchy issue. When we say private do we mean private, not-for-profit or private, for-profit? The situation of an educational enterprise that is quoted on the stock market, like the Apollo Group, is reasonably clear, but what of family-run colleges and the many church institutions (Varghese, 2006)? What, indeed, of the foreign operations of public UK universities, which must make a surplus unless their governing councils are unusually altruistic?

India is asking itself what level of profit is acceptable in tertiary education. This might sound like asking how long is a piece of string, but grappling with this question and clarifying legal and charitable frameworks for private education will facilitate progress. Private tertiary institutions of all kinds will do much of the heavy lifting in raising participation rates. Funding will come from students and from investors.

Our third question is about teaching methods. Again we can extrapolate current trends. 24% of India's tertiary students are now distance learners and government policy aims for 40%. The Indira Gandhi National Open University already enrolls 1.5 million students and numbers in the state open universities are increasing fast. For example, the West Bengal Open University, which had only a few thousand
students in the year 2000, will likely reach mega-university status, that is to say 100,000 students, sometime this year.

These are mostly public institutions. Will the private sector enter this field too? A few years ago in *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid*, C.K.Prahalad urged companies to re-jig their business models in order to bring the very poor into the consumer society. Could a private provider re-jig the business model of distance learning and achieve this in tertiary education? Best Associates, a US merchant bank with significant tertiary education holdings, says it is investing $500 million to apply new approaches for that purpose (Best, 2006). What sorts of approaches?

The success of the Open University, of which I am an unconditional admirer, is based on producing high quality learning materials for student consumers and supporting them with an excellent local after-sales service that blends people and technology. Do today's technologies allow a less centralised approach that can still reap the economies of scale that make the OU revolutionary and are vital for the developing world? In other words, can distance education be made competitive for smaller numbers? This is a vital question for the small states.

As international educators you can all vouch for the galloping increase in connectivity around the globe. The Internet has tremendous potential for improving the student experience, both as a channel for distributing learning materials and as a vehicle for useful interaction.

Nor should we be fixated on the Internet. In the developing world connectivity means mobile phones, not laptops. Mobiles are now used, notably in South Africa, for administrative communications with distance learners: reminders of assignment dates, changes of venue for tutorials, exam results, and so on. These communications make the student feel more connected with the institution and increase completion rates.

We consider that the main advantage of using the Internet for eLearning, at least so far, has also been for such administrative communications. This is because tertiary education has mostly stuck to old teaching methods in adopting eLearning. The cottage industry or 'lone ranger' approach predominates, as academics work solo to put their courses on the web.

This is a slow way of creating an appropriate pedagogy for eLearning. It yields multiple versions of mediocre courses and probably makes institutions less cost effective because they add the new costs of eLearning without reducing their investment in buildings and older methods.

We believe that the real revolution in tertiary education is not the Internet per se, but its potential to create a global intellectual commons of excellent learning materials with appropriate pedagogy for the electronic age. These are called Open Educational Resources, or OERs. They represent the transposition to teaching of the spirit of building on each others' work that we take for granted in academic research.

OERs are in their infancy, but the infant is growing at a blistering pace, helped by encouragement from the Hewlett Foundation. Three phases of development have occurred in little more than three years.

First, in 2002, academics at MIT shared curriculum information by making their lecture notes freely available on the web. These notes provide benchmarks for academics worldwide and a useful reference for students, even though they are not self-learning materials.
Those came in the second phase when the Open University launched its OpenLearn project last month. It will make freely available first-rate self-learning materials backed by social software to facilitate study and collaboration. This should attract auto-didacts across the world and also be of interest to institutions.

The third phase will take off with the launch next week of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth at the Conference Commonwealth Education Ministers in Cape Town. Through this network for the collaborative development of OERs, 27 small states hope to master the eWorld collectively in ways that would be impossible for each individually.

In a short space of time OERs have evolved from sharing information to sharing learning to sharing teaching. By making excellent materials freely available for sharing and onward adaptation we believe that OERS will slash the major cost of distance learning, which is the development of learning materials. This could be the key breakthrough for taking tertiary education to the bottom of the pyramid in the large states and reducing both foreign exchange costs and dependency for the small states.

**How will Learners choose Providers?**

We now turn to our third question: how will learners choose providers? Tertiary education will become a vast, burgeoning and chaotic marketplace. How will students find their way around and how can governments and institutions help them? Consumer protection is more important in tertiary education, which is a major life choice, than in the market for refrigerators.

Many families in the developing world will give their last penny for the education of their children, their 'little emperors' as they are familiarly called in China. Too often they wrongly assume that anything that comes from abroad with a glitzy website and a glossy brochure is better than local provision.

The tertiary education market already has plenty of dubious providers and bodies claiming to give accreditation. Here are some noted by UNESCO where the institution claims a phoney affiliation with UNESCO. One has the gall to suggest that people call UNESCO to check - assuming, of course, that no one will. Clipping the wings of such operations is in the public interest, but how do we do it? Empowering students, parents and employers to make informed decisions is the best bulwark against deception and fraud. There are no easy solutions but some tools are already at hand and others are emerging. Here are five.

First, UNESCO has published *Study Abroad*, its international guide to tertiary education institutions and scholarships, for nearly 60 years (UNESCO, 2006). It covers over 150 countries. Recent editions include more on open/distance learning and have a section 'Tools for Students'. This is based in part on the excellent work of South Africa's Council on Higher Education, through the late Prem Naidoo, on promoting quality literacy about tertiary education among secondary students (Naidoo, 2005). We revere Prem's memory.

Second, UNESCO and the OECD, in an alliance covering both exporting and importing countries, have developed Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education. They address all six
stakeholder groups: governments, institutions and their staff, quality assurance agencies, student associations, professional groups, and qualification-recognition bodies (UNESCO/OECD, 2006).

Third, since the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services, the GATS, is still making waves in international education, the Commonwealth of Learning and UNESCO have published a simple guide to what GATS is and is not (COL/UNESCO, 2006).

Fourth, last month UNESCO launched the pilot of a portal on recognised tertiary institutions in order to explore the feasibility of a worldwide portal. Stamenka will expand briefly on this in a moment.

Fifth and finally, all these initiatives were requested by various stakeholders who care about the quality of international education. They can now meet under the aegis of the Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications. Its next meeting will be in South Africa in July 2007 and its theme, "Empowering Learners for Informed Decisions", is what we have just been talking about.

Conclusion

It is time to conclude. We have predicted that massive expansion in the developing world will change the worldwide profile of tertiary education. New features will be the multiplication of private providers and the growth of distance education. The creation of a global intellectual commons of open educational resources may help bring tertiary education to millions who are presently unreached.

This effervescent market will attract all sorts of providers, good, bad, indifferent and fraudulent. All but the crooks should work together to make the developing world an integral part - indeed the largest part - of a credible international tertiary education system. The impact of such a system will help to consign the term 'developing world' to the dustbin of history.

I now invite Stamenka to say a few more words about UNESCO's resources that support international education, especially the pilot project for a portal of recognised higher education institutions.

(Ms Uvalić-Trumbić speaking)

Sir John mentioned some UNESCO resources relevant to the theme of this Conference, in particular the Guidelines for Quality in Cross-border Higher Education and the accompanying Guide to GATS Brochure. These are educational responses to trade liberalization in educational services and provide a basis for capacity-building at national level. He also announced UNESCO's 3rd Global Forum on International Quality Assurance to be held in Pretoria on 5 and 6 July 2007 focusing on "Empowering Learners for Informed Decisions". Another resource that has the same objective to empower learners and protect them from fraudulent providers is a new initiative for a UNESCO Portal of recognized higher education institutions.

I would like to spend a few minutes and elaborate on the concept, principles and timeline for this Portal.
The project is a follow-up to the Guidelines on Quality for CBHE and shares their objective of protecting students from low-quality provision and empowering them to make informed decisions based on transparent information on the quality of higher education provision.

The pilot project was launched three weeks ago in Paris, with 16 countries from all continents making up its Steering Committee.

Three different models for the portal were explored:

- A data-base model based on the IAU (International Association of Universities) list of accredited higher education institutions that has been in existence for many years and is also available in text form. I am sure many of you are familiar with this resource;
- A simple portal model based on the ENIC-NARIC (European network of information centres on the recognition of qualifications) website that includes 53 countries and a UNESCO mock portal with URLs of existing lists of institutions;
- An integrated searchable portal.

The Group opted for the second solution, a simple portal, and work has started in putting it together. In the meantime, IAU will continue with its data-base and the searchable portal may develop in future.

However, what UNESCO and the Group plan to achieve is to demonstrate the feasibility of such a portal. The basic concept is that UNESCO hosts the portal but the competent national authorities of participating countries provide the reliable information on the recognized, registered and/or accredited institutions in their country and keep this information updated. This in turn will help some countries rethink the issue of what an institution of quality is and how to develop capacity to assess it.

We hope to complete the pilot in September 2007 and, if the feasibility of the pilot is confirmed, we plan to go global in 2008-2009, building it step by step.

The theme of our paper being Going Global: in What Direction?, brings me to the next slide: Giacometti's Striding Man, one of the sculptures that we are proud to have on UNESCO's premises. We chose it as a symbolic opening to the UNESCO Higher Education Home Page to illustrate in which direction UNESCO's Higher Education programme is heading in a more globalized interconnected society.

If you wish to know more you can visit the home page at the address unesco.org/education/hed. I will also be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Sir John and I thank you for your attention.

References


www.col.org/resources/publications/Pages/detail.aspx?PID=42


