WORLD CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century

Vision and Action


VOLUME IV

Thematic Debate:

Higher Education and Society: A Student Vision
Thematic Debate

Higher Education for a New Society:
A Student Vision

in collaboration with

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- International Association of Agricultural Students (IAAS)–Ms Tanya Buzeti
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- International Federation of Medical Students Association (IFMSA)
- International Forestry Students Association (IFSA)
- International Pharmaceutical Students Federation (IPSF)
- International Union of Students (IUS)
- World Student Christian Federation (WSCF)
- World University Service (WUS)

and

THE UNESCO SECRETARIAT
The present volume is part of the Proceedings of the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris 5-9 October 1998) and comprise:

- Volume I: Final Report
- Volume II: Speeches and Lectures
- Volume III: Reports of the Commissions
- Volume IV: Reports of the Thematic Debates
- Volume V: Plenary Speeches
- Volume VI: Listing of Titles of Individual Documents.

Documents are archived in the original language of delivery or in one of the language versions provided by the author. Copies can be obtained on request from the Division of Higher Education, UNESCO. Some documents are available in printed form only.

Note du Secrétariat de l’UNESCO

Le présent volume fait partie des Actes de la Conférence mondiale sur l’enseignement supérieur (Paris, 5-9 octobre 1998) et comprend :

- Volume I : Rapport final
- Volume II : Discours et exposés spéciaux
- Volume III : Rapports des commissions
- Volume IV : Rapports des débats thématiques
- Volume V : Discours en séances plénières
- Volume VI : Liste des titres des documents individuels.

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Nota de la Secretaría de la UNESCO

El presente volumen forma parte de las Actas de la Conferencia Mundial sobre la Educación Superior (París 5-9 de octubre de 1998) e incluye :

- Volumen I : Informe Final
- Volumen II : Discursos y Ponencias Especiales
- Volumen III : Informes de las Comisiones
- Volumen IV : Informes de los Debates Temáticos
- Volumen V : Discursos de la Plenaria
- Volumen VI : Lista de Títulos de los Documentos Individuales

Los documentos han sido archivados en el idioma original de la intervención o de una de las versiones entregadas por el autor. Para optener copias, mande su solicitud a la División de la Enseñanza Superior, UNESCO. Algunos documentos sólo están disponibles en papel impreso.
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Introduction

In organizing the World Conference on Higher Education, UNESCO’s goal was to create favourable conditions for a sweeping debate and to increase awareness of the principal issues in this important field.

The Thematic Debates were organized in parallel with the Commissions and the plenary sessions and so constituted one of the selected frameworks for reflection and for deepening discussions.

Planning the Thematic Debates included the participation of some fifty representatives of NGOs and IGOs, as well a number of resource persons and UNESCO staff members.

Each working document was prepared under the coordination of a leader with the contribution of partners chosen by the secretariat from organizations already cooperating with UNESCO.

Working documents of the thematic debates were taken into account in preparing the Conference’s principal working documents and in elaborating drafts of the Declaration Framework for Priority Action. This synergy marked the entire preparatory phase.

The 12 thematic debates were regrouped into three large themes.

Higher Education and Development

- The Requirements of the World of Work
- Higher Education and Sustainable Human Development
- Contributing to National and Regional Development
- Higher Education Staff Development: A Continuing Mission

New Trends and Innovations in Higher Education

- Higher Education for a New Society: A Student Vision
- From Traditional to Virtual: The New Information Technologies
- Higher Education and Research: Challenges and Opportunities
- The Contribution of Higher Education to the Education System as a Whole

Higher Education, Culture and Society

- Women and Higher Education: Issues and Perspectives
- Promoting a Culture of Peace
- Mobilizing the Power of Culture
- Autonomy, Social Responsibility and Academic Freedom

The introduction to each debate was given by the author of the working document. This was then completed by input from the panel members.

Each debate produced a synthesis report presenting the results of the discussions and the recommendations made.

The general coordination of the preparation and organization of debates was undertaken by the Division of Higher Education, UNESCO.
Volume IV of the Proceedings of the World Conference on Higher Education regroups for each of the 12 debates:

- the working document;
- the synthesis report for each debate;
- the interventions of the panel members.

With regard to the thematic debates on students and women, contributions which were addressed to the Organizing Committee and judged relevant were also taken into account.
Abstract

This debate examined the issues and concerns of students at the higher education level on the eve of the 21st century. This followed a request by the Director-General of UNESCO, as part of the 50th celebrations of the Organization, to solicit the student perspective on the quality and relevance of their instruction.

Traditionally, higher education has provided the wisdom and expertise which equip young people for their future roles as social leaders. This remains valid since higher education must uphold the education and values which mould socially responsible citizens.

However, today, the role and profile of students in higher education has become extremely varied. In response to the reality of the mass demand, the necessity to diversify has become a challenge for every country. Issues such as access, quality, relevance and internationalization are under closer scrutiny and students are insisting on greater dialogue between the partners involved so that they may select courses which permit them to accede to acceptable levels of employment, hence to social development.

Students from all regions and disciplines exchanged views and made proposals to the WCHE for further action in which they are considered a vital partner.
Panels

Chair: 
Baroness Tessa Blackstone
(Panel 1 and 2)
Minister of State for Education and Employment in the House of Lords
United Kingdom

Chair: 
Mr. Yannick Moati, Junior Chamber International (JCI), Monaco
(Panel 3)

Rapporteurs:
Mrs. M. E. Henriques Mueller, Youth Unit, UNESCO
Mr. Benson Obua Ogwal, All African Students Association (AASU), Uganda
Ms. Agnieszka Stobiecka, European Law Students Association (ELSA), Poland
Mr. Julio Casas Calderón, Jeunesse Etudiante Catholique Internationale (JECI), Pérou
Ms. Christel Scholten, Association Internationale des Etudiants en Science Economique et Commerce (AIESEC), Canada
Ms. Alessandra Siniscalco, UNESCO
Mr. Walter Prysthon, Mouvement International des Etudiants Catholiques (MIEC), Brazil
Ms. Rikke Uldall, UNESCO

Panel 1: Social Issues and Higher Education

Ms. Florence Nsumbu, Mouvement International des Etudiants Catholiques (MIEC), République Démocratique du Congo
Mr. Agus Salim, International Forestry Students Association (IFSA), Indonesia
Mr. Peter Søndergaard, National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB), Denmark
Ms. Rajia El-Huseini, Union of Progressive Youth, Egypt

Mr. Thiago Monaco, International Federation of Medical Students Association (IFMSA), Brazil
Professor Mihaly Simai, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary
Dr. William Lindley, Food and Agricultural Organisation, FAO
**Panel 2: Regional Perspectives**

| Mr. Alper Akyuz, Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe (AEGEE), Turkey | Mr. Yosvani Diaz Romero, Organización Continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes (OCLAE), Cuba | Mr. Keshav Raj Pandey, Asian Students Association (ASA), Nepal | Mr. Abdallah Al Najjar, General Union of Arab Students (GUAS), Palestine |
| Mr. Félix Abeeku Yawson, International Association of Agricultural Students (IAAS), Ghana | Dr. Tang, Chief, Technical and Vocational Education, UNESCO | Dr. Alan Wagner, Organisation for Economical Cooperation and Development (OECD) |
| Mr. Yosvani Diaz Romero, Organización Continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes (OCLAE), Cuba | |

**Entrepreneurs' Panel**

| Dr. Roberto D’Allesandro, Legal Counsel, Malta | Ms. J. Claire K. Niala, International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW), Kenya | Mr. Michel Romieu, President Director General, ELF Aquitaine, France | Mr. Eric Zahrai, Bahai Business Forum, France |
| Dr. Wallace R. Baker, Baker & McKenzie, USA | Mr. L. C. Villegas Echéverri, Asociación National de Industriales (ANDI), Colombia | Ms. Cynthia Wolsdorff, Junior Association for Development in Europe (JADE), Germany | Ms. Alison Sutherland, International Pharmaceutical Students Federation (IPSF), South Africa |

The Debate has been generously supported by the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE), United Kingdom

Note 1: To meet UNESCO publishing standards, some editing of papers has been required.

Note 2: Authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in signed articles and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.
List of speakers’ papers

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Ms. Florence Nsumbu
Le MIEC-RDP Congo dans le fonctionnement des universités et instituts supérieurs

Mr. Agus Salim
The Students’ Perspective on Forestry Higher Education: Outlook and Situation in Asian Countries

Mr. Peter Søndergaard
Higher Education through the Eyes of the Student Unions

Ms. Rajia El-Huseini
L’enseignement supérieur en Égypte et la question de la démocratie

Mr. Thiago Monaco
Medical Education and Social Issues

Professor Mihaly Simai
The Class of 2025 and the universities

Dr. William Lindley
Statement for Thematic Debate on Higher Education

Panel II.

Mr. Alper Akyuz
Vision of European Students on Higher Education in the 21st Century

Mr. Yosvani Diaz Romero
Nueva Educación para Nuevo Milenio

Mr. Keshav Raj Pandey
Higher Education for All

Mr. Félix Abeeku Yawson
Higher Education in Africa in the 21st Century: A Student’s Perspective

Dr. Alan Wagner
Learner Demand for Tertiary Education
Panel III.

Dr. Roberto D’Allesandro
A scholar and a gentleman - to be or not to fund ?

MS. J. C. K. Niala
Higher Education and Unemployment : The Challenges !
Skills for the new entrepreneurial graduate...

Mr. Michel Romieu
Le point de vue d’un industriel

Mr. Eric Zahrai
Educating Tomorrow’s Business Leaders

Dr. Wallace R. Baker
Student voices and dreams for the Higher Education in the 21st century

Other Papers

Mr. Walter Prysthon
Student voices and dreams for the Higher Education in the 21st century

Mr. Julio Casas Calderón
Realidad, sueños y desafíos para transformar la Universidad

Ms. Alessandra Siniscalco
The Students’ Role within Higher Education Change and Development : Vision, Action and Regional Perspectives.

Mr. Benson Obua Ogwal,
Opening the Big Door
Student Declaration on Equality, Democracy and Quality in Higher Education
WORKING DOCUMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is three-fold:

• to identify the factors which drive UNESCO’s dialogue with the student community, notably through the NGOs representing this group

• to discuss the challenges of professional development by presenting the results to date of the Student Forum for Sustainable Human Development and Graduate Employment

• to propose future strategies to guide UNESCO’s collaboration with student groups to follow-up the recommendations of the World Conference on Higher Education.

As students constitute the primary clients of higher education, ongoing dialogue with them is justified and necessary in order to define both the priorities facing this sector and an agenda for a new social order in the third millennium.

II. THE UNESCO/STUDENT DIALOGUE

This dialogue is stimulated by several important components:

• the student perspective on higher education in a changing social order;

• the student perspective on higher education in a changing social order;

• higher education and citizenship;

• the current economic climate;

• investment in human capital for social and economic development;

• the need for sound regional solutions in higher education reform and renovation.

The Student Perspective on Higher Education

The Director-General of UNESCO has placed special emphasis on the need to reappraise society’s approach to youth issues, given that young people will assume important roles in the political, social and cultural life of the world community. To this end, in 1996 he commissioned a special report, entitled Higher Education in the 21st Century - A Student Perspective, to define the views of this group to be undertaken as part of UNESCO’s 50th anniversary reflection.

In seeking the student perspective on higher education in a changing world, UNESCO has emphasized its desire to listen to this community which is an important stakeholder in the future development of society as a whole. Since they will be tomorrow’s leaders, it is essential that their opinions be articulated and widely disseminated amongst all partners concerned with development. Without the support of young people who feel positive about the principles and modalities chosen to advance this process, its future could be gravely compromised.

The student debates centred on three simple but basic questions - why young people were entering higher education, what they were learning and how this knowledge was being acquired. Their reflection revealed a number of profound concerns, the most urgent of which was the need to strike a correct balance between education and training. This relates not only to the content of their courses but also to the quality of their professors, to the capacity of systems and institutions to meet the educational needs of special groups, and, above all, to the social and personal values promoted during the learning process.

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1 This paper draws on two texts prepared for the Student Forum: Sharing Knowledge, Resources and Values (1996) and Higher Education, Professional Development and Graduate Employment (1997).
The student community showed itself to be fully aware of the main issues dominating this sector today and of their complexity. While they understood that solutions were not easy to define, they insisted that attention be paid to the discrepancy between their aspirations for their studies and the reality encountered.

Moreover, the students readily acknowledged the reality of our knowledge-intensive society. It was noted that education policy-makers worldwide must rethink their approach to the new social order where the generation and availability of knowledge and know-how have undergone radical change. As well, the students recognized that knowledge has become a vital factor in the globalization process now taking place. Clearly, a top priority for any country is its access to global forces - i.e. those which shape societal change. The generation and availability of knowledge, its applications and the institutions which foster these processes are at the cutting edge of this challenge.

Support was strong for the creation of a new educational vision which might orient the renovation of educational policy and, in turn, influence the character of systems and institutions. Also, content and methods will be renewed so as to provide the skilled human resources needed by specific communities. To attain these objectives, due and proper respect for the status of the professoriate is an essential factor. Unless this profession enjoys the full support of a given community or nation, it cannot contribute to the education and training processes in the optimal manner.

In addition, the debates emphasized the potential to be derived from the internationalization of higher education. This phenomenon encourages contacts which help foster the human capacities to deal with cultural diversity which affects numerous aspects of social and economic development. However, for this to be successful, much depends on the willingness of partners to share their expertise and ensure its adaptation to different contexts.

Higher Education and Citizenship

One of the major traditional roles of higher education has been the education of social leaders. In the past, advanced study was the hallmark of the elite. Thus, a university degree equipped one for executive functions by virtue of its exclusiveness. Today, in this regard, the situation is very different, due to the massification of systems which renders a tertiary credential commonplace.

Nevertheless, the need to educate and train citizens for their particular social era and its challenges remains valid. Moreover, at the end of the 20th century, there is a feeling of confusion and even of pessimism regarding the future direction of society and the ability of mankind to resolve grave social issues. According to the report on Education for the Twenty-first Century, the four bases for action are: learning to be, to do, to know and to live together. However, given global problems, these objectives are not easy to attain.

Citizenship means, on one hand, possessing a sense of responsibility for one’s local community and, on the other hand, understanding the wider socio-cultural context of the global village. To achieve this duality, contact, information and education are three crucial means of acquiring the attitudes needed to live and work in a world which is increasingly diverse and multicultural but where sharing and solidarity appear to be less supported. The Human Development Report gives an annual picture of the indicators of progress: income, social inclusion, access to education and health services, living standards and poverty levels. Young people are usually disturbed by the inequalities of development and strive to remedy these through their choice of career and through their involvement in civil society.

Today, citizenship is both national and international in ambit. It requires moral courage and clearly defined values which are lived daily and commitment to an understanding and tolerance of others. Higher education can contribute very significantly to promoting citizenship through an international curriculum and the facilitation of academic mobility. Studies in fields such as the humanities, languages and international relations have much to contribute in this respect. This is also a main objective of many mobility programmes and of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme.
Higher education can never be reduced to mere training as its purposes and perspectives are too broad. Students have great expectations of their post-secondary studies and seek debate and exchange on a number of issues crucial to the development of their societies and of themselves as young adults. Hence, the tradition of this sector to produce educated and curious minds not only remains valid but must be the goal of all institutions, even in systems where provision is diversified.

A new society will depend greatly - if not totally - on different attitudes and deeper understanding of difference. This is a special challenge for higher education in the third millennium and one which has the full support of UNESCO.

The Current Economic Environment

The arena of economic policy-making is central to any discussion pertaining to the development process. It is also crucial to an analysis of higher education and its links to the world of work. Thus, it is inevitable that the various partners concerned with such questions must consider the consequences arising from current economic trends. These include a global shift towards deregulated economies and reduced government responsibility in matters related to social policy, new patterns of wealth which will surely influence at least the early years of the next century, and changing social attitudes to wealth as a public or private good.

The ongoing volatility of the current economic climate has focused attention on the question of graduate employment. Depending on circumstances, this term can also cover the unemployment and under-employment of skilled people. For this reason, the issue must be studied in relation to the problems in the job market on a global scale.

Today, there is an estimated total of 35 million unemployed in OECD countries. Another 15 million are long-term unemployed or work only part-time. In the developing world, the Human Development Report, published by the UNDP, estimates that only 45% of the labour force has work - the vast majority in agriculture. Economists estimate that about 1 billion jobs (which is a virtually impossible target) need to be created as soon as possible to meet the global demand for employment. Young people - and especially those without education or training - are severely affected in such a climate. Moreover, even those with tertiary qualifications frequently experience difficulties in finding available or suitable career openings.

This difficult situation must raise the question as to what sort of education and training are needed to produce entrepreneurial people who are equipped with a dynamic approach to job creation and adaptation?

The availability of work and the security resulting from regular employment are certainly one primordial factor for sustained social and economic growth. Although these may be top priorities for citizens of all countries, they are proving elusive goals for too many governments which fear the long-term consequences of unstable economic conditions.

Against this background, the dialogue between the higher education community and its partners in the world of work has emerged as an urgent and essential tool in helping to tackle present economic questions.

Investing in Skilled Human Capital

Today, the knowledge dividend has increased appreciably. In a changing world, education has become the essential passport to individual and social progress. In terms of sustainable human development, those without the necessary access to knowledge and know-how are at a distinct disadvantage and the gap in social and economic conditions between rich and poor countries is becoming alarmingly wider. Long term, such disparity will lead to more serious imbalances and even to situations of conflict. It is thus desirable to search for ways in which knowledge can be shared more equitably. In particular,
advanced and complex knowledge must be adapted locally for the benefit of specific communities with respect for their own historical and cultural traditions.

Thus, knowledge emerges as a rich and complex commodity embracing information, expertise and - most importantly - wisdom. So, we return to the search for balance between education and training which was strongly advocated during UNESCO’s reflection with the student community. The successful production of good citizens and trained human resources is ample proof of a sound return on a nation's investment - both social and economic - in higher education.

However, in realistic terms, countries have limited resources for education and training - hence the trend at post-secondary level to harmonize the various areas of skill acquisition to better meet development objectives. As a result, we see a closer link being forged between academic and other types of tertiary education. Such a trend is not without conflict because attitudes must change - often quite radically. Moreover, universities are being called to play a greater role in lifelong learning which, for many countries, has become a policy priority for ensuring the ongoing acquisition of skills which match the changing requirements of the job market.

The Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, convened by UNESCO under the chairmanship of Jacques Delors, considered that, if education is to meet the challenges of the future, it must be based on four foundations: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. Furthermore, it urged countries to conceive education in a more encompassing manner and to be much less bound to the acquisition of knowledge solely through formal education systems.

Therefore, as we approach the new millennium, the return on knowledge via education has become a sine qua non for basic social and economic advancement. Not only is this a fundamental human right and essential tool for the development process, but also it has emerged as one of the most effective means of shaping the globalization phenomenon so as to promote a more just social order and the attitudes of mutual understanding and co-operation required for a conflict-free society.

**Higher Education Issues and Regional Responses**

By now, the main issues in higher education are well known:

- increased demand in all countries leading to the massification of systems, thus challenging their quality and relevance;
- the resulting need to provide diversified teaching and training and institutional variety;
- reduced or static public resources for higher education so that costs are increasingly met by the main beneficiaries;
- the internationalization of higher education due to the academic and student mobility and to the generation and exchange of knowledge and know-how as a result of the Communication and Information Technologies (CITs);
- the need to address the impact of the globalized economy on higher education which involves very complex elements such as cost-sharing, co-awarded degrees and more effective strategies to handle the recognition of qualifications as the world's work force becomes more mobile.

As it is now certain that higher education will undergo major transformations in the coming millennium, these current issues must be seen in relation to the aims of the World Conference on Higher Education, namely:

- wider access to tertiary education on the basis of merit
- improved management and efficiency of systems and institutions
- closer links with the productive and economic sectors.
In a globally dependent world, it is often difficult for governments to arrive at local solutions which help resolve their own most pressing and specific problems. It is the responsibility of all sectors of the community to contribute to these solutions - in this respect, higher education, youth and employers have a key role to play in relation to their immediate national and regional environments. The achievement levels of individuals and nations, though varied, depend greatly on the elaboration of social policy which eliminates discrimination and exclusion and offers equal access to priority areas such as health care, education and employment. These are the central concerns of all nations today since they affect the lives of citizens in so many fundamental ways - one of the most important being their ability to realize their personal and professional aspirations.

Because of the overall positive return on investment in tertiary education and training, it is generally held that higher education offers people the opportunity to improve their lives to a significant extent. To do this, it must meet perceived needs in a given society and be seen inside a particular regional context. Overall, the basic problems facing national and institutional policy-makers are similar. Yet, their prioritization and solutions differ to a considerable degree because attendant socio-cultural and economic factors come into play.

Regional solutions to higher education issues must take account of the following specificities:

- in Africa, ongoing development problems including social stability, strong donor focus on basic education, and policies to ensure that higher learning is not marginalized;
- in the Arab States, the dynamic to modernize and expand systems and structures to cater for student demand in a context of cultural diversity, economic disparity and social volatility;
- in Asia and the Pacific, the need to balance the strong market forces driving higher education reform with the reiteration of the social and cultural factors shaping sustainable human development;
- in Europe, the quest for balance between the traditional prestige accorded to academic teaching and research and pressures to further strengthen the links between higher education and the labour market; in Eastern and Central Europe, the urgent renovation of higher education to meet both the political and social demands resulting from the transition to market economies;
- in Latin America and the Caribbean, more effective management of the steadily increasing investment in human capital, in both public and private systems, as the role of the region in the global economy continues to grow.

In such an extremely diverse climate, a common commitment to the sharing of knowledge, resources and values emerges as a constant which can help guide all partners concerned with higher education towards mutually beneficial solutions.

III. CHALLENGES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

In a world where the global economy is now a reality for an ever increasing number of countries, national decision-makers are assessing education, including higher education, in terms of state priorities for public expenditure. Furthermore, there is a significant - and often disturbing - shift towards the "user-pays" philosophy in all areas of social policy. As a result and with regard to higher education, students are now obliged to give much deeper thought to their choice of studies, and notably to the quality and relevance of these for the labour market. This should not, in any way, preclude the intrinsic value of higher education:

- both as the national and international resource which produces knowledgeable and broadly educated citizens whose understanding of a diverse and multicultural world can help foster better dialogue and understanding amongst nations;
• and as the source of advanced knowledge and know-how which are essential in a sophisticated socio-economic context.

The main questions now at hand are different and quite new:

• firstly, are institutions playing their full role in educating and training graduates whose moral values and professional skills will contribute to an enhanced future social order in the 21st century - which was more implicit than explicit in the past?

• secondly, and recognizing the current labour market volatility, are higher education systems and institutions giving direct consideration to the future employment prospects of their graduates - which was never (or rarely) necessary in the past?

**Human Resource Development in a Changing World**

The human resources issue must always be studied in relation to labour market trends where current questions include:

• the need for multi-skilled generalists, or for specifically skilled graduates who will become members of the workforce;

• the rise of contract labour;

• the impact of labour-saving technology;

• portfolio career paths;

• shorter working lives;

• the increased importance of lifelong learning for professional and personal development.

In industrialized nations, these trends result from strong advocacy for the market philosophy; in developing countries, the increased emphasis on structural adjustment is designed to stimulate their economic growth but is often having a grave impact on their ability to ensure steady progress towards endogenous socio-economic and cultural development. While we see evidence of social reaction to this economic approach (notably by the election of governments with a commitment to a stronger state role and social agenda), the reality of the global economy suggests that this policy orientation will continue.

In terms of higher education, these trends have provoked profound changes. One of the key missions of higher education has traditionally been its role in and contribution to the world of work, because a nation’s most highly skilled human capital has been taught and trained in this sector. In the past, manpower planning has regulated access to various areas of education and training so as to meet national requirements. However, today, when a degree or diploma in a particular field can be commonplace (and often over-subscribed), a number of new questions must be pondered:

• what are the consequences of a rapidly evolving labour market?

• what is the quantifiable and qualitative value of a skilled workforce?

• how should higher education systems and institutions diversify?

• what is the value of an advanced degree?

• what will be the typical student profile in the 21st century? - (when, already we know from a review of Tertiary Education in O E C D countries that the average student is likely to be over 25 years old, to be working and to be female)

• how closely should higher education collaborate with the world of work insofar as curriculum and pedagogical innovations are concerned?

• what are the implications for the professoriate and for the academic career?

• how, in a changing world, do professions renew their contribution to the development process?
Changing Graduate Profiles

Already, a number of suggestions have been advanced regarding the typical profile of the graduate in the new society of the 21st century. This person will have acquired:

- advanced knowledge - whether general or specialized in character;
- the ability to apply this to practical situations;
- a range of social or communication skills which will allow him or her to function in an increasing global world. These will include capacities in:
  - relationship-building
  - persuasion
  - self-management skills
  - leadership and co-ordination abilities
  - an adequate degree of business acumen
  - foreign language competence.

In addition, the graduate should demonstrate motivation and commitment to his or her chosen field as well as a high level of resilience and perseverance to meet the challenges involved.

While this may be the desirable check-list, it is far from evident whether these capacities can be guaranteed by the education and training offered in each and every higher education institution for a number of valid reasons. These include not only a lack of financial and human resources to meet the increasing expectations and demands of students, but also - and perhaps, most importantly - the absence of vision which is necessary for that particular institution to operate in and contribute to the new society of the 21st century.

The Paradigm Shift in Higher Education

Already, there is active debate amongst educationalists as to what, exactly, this new paradigm should be. For example, Dr Unna Huh of Hanyang University, Republic of Korea, suggests that the educational process will move from:

- teacher-centred to resource-oriented learning
- group to individually-paced work
- closed to open systems without formal parameters
- provider-driven to user-centred curricula
- broad to selected provision to optimize relevance
- classroom to work and performance-based learning contexts
- isolated to networked environments
- one-way to interactive teaching
- national to global perspectives
- change-resistant to anticipatory educational management.

What is very clear is that this inevitable process of change should - and indeed must - be driven by the higher education sector itself. If this is not the case, then grave consequences could result as higher education will risk being shaped and manipulated by market forces which focus on short-term returns rather than long-term benefits. The UNESCO Policy Paper presents proposals for the pro-active institution which possesses all the attributes necessary for this challenging task because it:
• offers high quality training
• ensures entry on intellectual merit
• pursues knowledge
• shows commitment to social development
• offers lifelong learning opportunities
• links to the world of work
• engenders social debate and criticism
• provides advice and expertise for national decision-makers
• upholds academic freedom
• serves national, regional and international development needs.

Most importantly, there is a very clear and new emphasis on the role and responsibilities of the student community in this effort. Students are now the prime clients of higher education and, as such, their views merit full appropriate consideration when the relevance and quality of teaching, training and research are under scrutiny. The report, Higher Education: A Student Perspective states that "successful higher education in the next century must open itself to a process of helping young people to better understand the world and be educationally empowered to contribute to society." (UNESCO:34)

Going further, the 1997 5th NGO Collective Consultation on Higher Education, debating the theme of Graduate Employment, identified four major challenges for this sector in the future:

• to ensure the education and training of creative graduates;
• to adapt systems and institutions to serve the labour market more effectively since employment has emerged as the new key concern for the student community;
• to promote radical innovation in the educational process so as to produce the new graduate profiles needed in a changing world;
• to forge new partnerships amongst the main stakeholders in higher education.

To achieve this transformation, a whole range of issues will require close scrutiny: for instance, institutional profiling, anticipatory leadership and management, constant innovation in teaching, training and research capacities, the provision of essential services such as career counselling, graduate placement and tracer studies (i.e. how students enter the workforce after graduation), structures to ensure gender equity, recognition of cultural diversity and the inclusion of marginalized social groups, to name but a few.

IV. ENHANCED STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE RENEWAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Aims and Strategies

Aims

Today it is important for each country to listen to the opinions of its students concerning the future directions of higher education and its potential as a force for positive change. This must be a priority aim which is realized through effective strategies and will result in enhanced student participation in the renewal process.

This objective is particularly important given the present paradoxical social climate where:

• on one hand, the enhanced level of knowledge, know-how and skills amongst graduates should stand them in good stead for the profound social and economic changes ahead;
• on the other hand, they are faced with great uncertainties which prevent them from realizing their aspirations and fulfilling the potential of their qualifications.

With regard to higher education in the next century, this sector must aim to:
• be open to a process of helping young people to better understand the world and be educationally empowered to contribute to society;
• help promote social values which privilege justice, equity and tolerance;
• become both increasingly international and more community based;
• continue to act as a principal forum for thought and discussion;
• recognize the validity of the student voice in the reform debate;
• actively involve student organizations in the reform process of systems and institutions.

These are, in fact, the specific objectives identified by the Student Forum for Sustainable Human Development and Graduate Employment.

Strategies for Change
In terms of strategy, the Professional Development Round Tables held under the aegis of the Student Forum, have already yielded rich data with regard to how, exactly, different professions (inter alia, law, medicine and community health, engineering, agronomy, commerce) articulate their aspirations and concerns in relation to the ongoing search for quality and pertinence in higher education.

Moreover, the book entitled Graduate Prospects in a Changing Society gives clear indications of the principal developments in various professions and the major strategies required to meet these. Some current examples are:

- in engineering, the reality of the labour market is necessitating that practical training should complement theoretical training throughout the period of study;
- in medicine and the health sciences, the shift towards preventive and community health care is demanding major changes in the training of general physicians;
- in law, the plethora of graduates must be balanced with the strong demand for legal experts able to practise in numerous socio-cultural contexts;
- in agronomy, which is so important for the economic development of rich and poor countries alike, students are concerned that measures for the future stability of this profession be put in place;
- in commerce and economics, the promotion of business ethics emerges as a priority for inclusion in the curriculum because of its relevance for development issues.

In terms of strategy, UNESCO believes that these issues must be debated and tackled by the stakeholders involved - by experienced professionals and by students themselves who are the specialists of the future. Through such debate and joint action, the renewal of higher education will certainly be based on quality and relevance.

Strategies which are essential to renovate certain key educational tools include continuously updating of the curriculum, interactive teaching, career counselling, dialogue with employers and opportunities for interface between studies and work experience, contacts with peers from different cultural backgrounds, initial training and adequate provision for lifelong learning.

Furthermore, such strategies clearly acknowledge that students are amongst the main stakeholders in higher education and that they possess the vision, the responsibility, the intelligence, the skills and the conviction to be full partners in the future of this domain.

At the Round Tables organized to date (by the medical, agricultural and pharmacy and law students respectively), the profile of the ideal professional in these various fields was defined with extreme care. In all cases, it was clear that the overarching objective must be the professional's responsibilities towards his or her social context.
Of particular significance was the fact that the expressed desire for greater flexibility in professional life to deal with a constantly changing environment was never stated as an end in itself. Rather, it should be the key requirement for the ethical exercise of one's profession in a spirit of dedication. As such, one might serve one's society to optimal effect.

The commitment to this goal amongst student NGOs has been indeed impressive to witness.

V. CONCLUSION

These outcomes illustrate that the student community is thus advocating the construction of solid partnerships with other members of the higher education community. This will ensure that decision-making takes into account the interests of all stakeholders. Furthermore, in this way, the desire of young people to share knowledge, resources and values may be clearly expressed and effective ways found for its effective implementation.

It is possible to summarize the recommendations of this group as follows:

• greater participation by the student body in the decision-making structures of higher education at all levels: international, regional, national and institutional;
• renovation of the curriculum to include problem-based substance and of the pedagogical process to foster more interactive teaching and learning and consultation with students in this regard;
• promotion of the social and communication skills required;
• enhanced linkages between higher education institutions and the world of work, notably via strategies such as career counselling services, regular dialogue with employers and closer interface between the study and work environments;
• enhanced status for higher education teaching personnel;
• the reaffirmation of social values which ensure that higher education is open to all according to the principle of merit so as to help ensure the empowerment of people via the educational process.

Together, the implementation of these strategies would ensure that higher education is indeed attuned to the socio-cultural and economic challenges of the 21st century.
References


Le MIEC R.D. Congo dans le fonctionnement des universités

Intervention de : Florence Nsumbu
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Au nom de notre pays et de notre Mouvement, le MIEC, nous saluons et remercions très sincèrement l’UNESCO qui a bien voulu considérer la place des étudiants dans cette conférence et nous y a invités pour venir partager avec les autres nos expériences et nos témoignages et également faire connaître nos aspirations.

En effet, le MIEC, Mouvement des étudiants dont l’objectif principal est la transmission des valeurs morales et civiques, l’évangélisation des milieux étudiants par les étudiants, se place sur la même ligne que toutes les autres organisations dont le but est la transmission des valeurs, donc de l’éducation.

En République Démocratique du Congo, le MIEC, par son souci de faire acquérir aux jeunes étudiants des valeurs qui forment à la personnalité, à la responsabilité et à la citoyenneté, car convaincu que les étudiants d’aujourd’hui sont les seuls futurs dirigeants des nations, s’efforce tant bien que mal, à travers ses sections plantées dans les sites universitaires, à contribuer à la formation des jeunes étudiants pour qu’ils soient demain de bons leaders politiques et économiques, soucieux de justice, de paix, et surtout soucieux du développement communautaire.

L’expérience a montré que l’existence du MIEC dans nombre d’universités et d’institutions d’enseignement supérieur dans notre pays en particulier, et en Afrique en général, a déjà apporté une contribution non négligeable dans la formation morale et civique des citoyens de demain. C’est ainsi que le MIEC Congo a toujours lutté et continue sa mission pour que les enseignements donnés aux étudiants soient de bonne qualité et que leurs droits de participer au fonctionnement de leurs instituts soient reconnus. Ainsi donc, dans chaque institut supérieur ou université où se trouve notre Mouvement, les membres veillent à la situation académique d’une façon générale et cherchent à ce que le fonctionnement tout comme la gestion des instituts soient bénéfiques tant aux étudiants qu’à leurs enseignants.

Pour se faire,
- les membres du MIEC vérifient et apprécient les horaires établis dès le début de l’année académique,
- veillent et contribuent également à la régularité des examens et des travaux journaliers pour éviter une évaluation arbitraire et trop imaginaire de la part des enseignants,
- organisent l’accueil et l’encadrement des nouveaux étudiants en leur fournissant des conseils et en leur montrant des voies pouvant les aider à réussir leurs études dès leur première année dans l’enseignement supérieur.

Par ailleurs, les problèmes réels auxquels les étudiants congolais sont confrontés sont très nombreux et il y a lieu d’en souligner ici quelques-uns qui nous paraissent fondamentaux :

- le désengagement persistant du gouvernement de ses responsabilités vis-à-vis du secteur éducatif. Ceci est prouvé par la modicité du budget alloué à l’éducation ;
- la prise en charge des professeurs par les étudiants jusqu’à ce jour reste une source d’aléas dans l’enseignement supérieur. Ainsi la démotivation du personnel enseignant est fortement remarquée et engendre de ce fait la baisse très visible du niveau et de la qualité des enseignements ;

- le délabrement et l’insuffisance des infrastructures d’accueil qui s’aggravent face à une croissance démographique soutenue. Le cas de l’Université de Kinshasa où les étudiants se retrouvent à 2000 ou même plus dans un amphithéâtre dont la capacité d’accueil est de 300 étudiants reste le cas le plus frappant ;

- le contenu des enseignements reste encore très théorique par manque de matériel de travail nécessaire pouvant rapprocher les étudiants de la pratique ;

- le manque de bibliothèques en mesure d’aider les étudiants, tout comme leurs enseignants, à avoir accès aux informations dont ils besoin pour leurs travaux et leurs recherches.

Partant de toutes ces lacunes et même d’autres non présentées ici, les étudiants congolais, par leurs nombreux mémorandums et prises de position présentés aux autorités ayant la charge de l’éducation et de l’enseignement supérieur en particulier, demandent toujours et surtout :

- que l’État reconnaîsse que les étudiants ne sont pas et ne seront jamais employeurs de leurs enseignants. L’État doit avoir ainsi conscience de sa responsabilité en tant que premier acteur de l’éducation nationale et doit abolir totalement ce que les étudiants congolais appellent “contribution des parents” ;

- qu’il y ait une amélioration des conditions de travail des enseignants et qu’une rémunération normale et juste leur soit attribuée afin que ces derniers se consacrent totalement à leur travail et cessent de cumuler les emplois, car cette façon de travailler ne garantit pas la qualité des enseignements qu’ils dispensent ;

- que les universités et instituts d’enseignement supérieur publics soient dépolitisés afin qu’ils ne soient plus victimes des humeurs mauvaises des autorités politiques comme dans les années passées où les étudiants ont connu des fermetures intempestives et des années dites blanches.

Enfin, sachant que le XXIᵉ siècle sera exigeant, nous signalons que le système éducatif congolais en général et la méthodologie au niveau supérieur mérite un changement radical. Nous croyons fermement que l’UNESCO, que nous remercions une fois de plus de nous avoir écouté pendant ce débat étudiant, ne manquera pas de veiller à ce que partout les préoccupations et les aspirations des étudiants soient toujours prises en considération.

Nous vous remercions très sincèrement.
Higher Education through the Eyes of the Student Unions

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Introduction

ESIB - The National Unions of Students in Europe - wants to take this opportunity to give you its view on the situation of higher education in this region (1). The students of Europe take the challenge of UNESCO’s World Conference on Higher Education to seek new ways of organizing higher education. In this paper, we broadly deal with three issues:
1. Access to higher education
2. Quality of higher education
3. Students’ participation in decision-making at all levels.

ESIB - The National Unions of Students in Europe - is an organization existing since 1982 to promote the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at a European level in relevant organizations and institutions. ESIB currently has 35 member associations from 29 countries. Through its national unions of students, ESIB represents the majority of students in Europe.

1. Access to Higher Education

Education gives us the ability to understand the environments we live in and adds new qualities to life. The right to education is stated in the United Nations Charter on Human Rights (Article 26). Education and student’s lives are one important means of establishing and maintaining a democratic society.

Access to higher education is not without barriers. People from a disadvantaged social background, cultural minorities, physically disabled, and refugees are facing various obstacles, leading to their lower representation in higher education. This level of education is very expensive and forms a serious barrier, even when tuition fees are not charged.

Nowadays, society needs citizens with many skills; employees need to adapt to new conditions, like new technologies. Therefore programmes based on lifelong learning should be stimulated. ESIB is of the opinion that anybody should be able to enter higher education at any stage of their lives; this includes going back for further education. Adult education gives new chances to explore intellectual skills. ESIB sees it as a common task to offer full and free access to (higher) education.

1.1 Financial Barriers

All over Europe, the funding available for education is decreasing, affecting both the accessibility and the quality of higher education. In principle, ESIB thinks that education should be free of any charges, explicit, or implicit. Financial barriers should never be a reason not to enter higher education.

The increasing costs of this sector in the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe give reason for concern as their living standard has severely declined during the same time. This tendency leads towards elitist higher education only available for a small, privileged group of society.

When, in Europe’s current situation, countries have no possibility to avoid tuition fees, we ask for a limitation of fees, surplus study costs, such as books, etcetera. We also ask for a social security system that considers students’ needs for housing, food, medical care, and transportation. This way, financial barriers can be restricted. ESIB urges all governments to act upon the UN ratified resolution stating:
“Higher education shall be made accessible to all, on the basis of merit, by every appropriate means, and in particular by progressive introduction of free education”.

It is not only the cost of education, as such, that forms the first barrier; many students need to earn their own - or their families’ - livings. Therefore attention should be given to student’s social context. All nations should strive to achieve a general financial support system for students.

1.2 Socio-Cultural Thresholds

Socio-cultural factors play a vital role in one's educational career. A person’s social and cultural background has a very strong influence on the level of education and therefore on the direction of both private and public life. Youngsters possessing the necessary skills for a college education may be prevented from entering by their families or their social surroundings. Some might choose the ‘secure path’ of vocational education/training, others a general education below their intellectual capabilities. In any case, these youngsters and their families should get more information on the options available in an educational career.

In a lot of societies, women are still discriminated against in education and particularly in the labour market. The percentage of female students in higher education in Europe has been balanced quite successfully, but in their working careers women are still disadvantaged compared to their male counterparts.

In most of Europe, the situation of cultural minorities in higher education requires immediate action. People belonging to a cultural minority encounter opposition. They also have different needs, demands, and expectations. The development of multi- or intercultural learning is important. It gives us insight into different cultural realities necessary for mutual understanding.

Focusing on these groups should not make us forget the obstacles various other underprivileged groups in modern society face, like single parents and disabled people. All nations and relevant institutions should be encouraged to give financial and legal support to ensure that disabled people or those raising their children alone can have the same possibilities, i.e. to enter higher education.

1.3 Political Thresholds

Students may face difficulties attending higher education due to the political situation they face in their country. Countries at war do not consider education a priority. Besides all catastrophes caused by war, a whole generation of students faces a delay of their studies. A fragile new democracy needs its academics. The international community should take responsibility for the reconstruction of the education systems of post-war countries.

In several countries, cultural minorities are denied the right to education in their native language. In some Central and Eastern European countries, but also in other countries, these rights, formerly guaranteed, are threatened or have been already abolished. ESIB sees a danger in this development and supports actions to re-establish these rights.

1.4 Cultural Development

A student’s college days are of great influence on his or her future life. Notwithstanding that higher education is pertinent to the development of professional skills, it also has the very important function of developing personal capacities of the individual and society. This includes benefiting from cultural activities of various kinds. As most of these activities are enjoyed outside the institutions of higher education, the discount agreements offered by most European countries on museums, theatres and also travel opportunities for students should be extended.

1.5 Mobility

Taking part of our studies abroad gives us the possibility to learn from and to adapt to different cultures, to learn new languages and to handle problems related to new surroundings and systems. The accessibility of studying abroad has increased dramatically in accordance with the EU’s mobility
programmes. Although the number of ‘free movers’ has increased over the past years, they are relatively few in number. With the expansion of the European Union’s mobility programmes such as Erasmus, the position of ‘free movers’ tends to be neglected, even limited. UNESCO is investigating the possibilities to create a world-wide credit transfer system. ESIB welcomes such a system and supports advantages involved.

Every student should be given the opportunity to take some of his or her lectures, or a traineeship, abroad. Providing students with the information about the possibilities to study abroad is a first step towards this development.

Studying abroad is a very expensive matter. As a result, mostly students from the upper classes have these foreign experiences. This situation has been aggravated over the years, as the amount of money a student receives from different grant systems in Europe has constantly been decreased. The standard of living differs greatly within regions. Central - Eastern - and Southern European students face this as a major problem when applying to study abroad. They are limited in their choice, as they can not afford to study in the Northern and Western countries of Europe. It is of utmost importance that these systems of financing are improved. A system that takes into account such differences might partly solve this problem.

1.6 Recognition of Qualifications

We are pleased to find that student mobility is on the increase. However, the world is getting smaller and the job market for graduates is increasingly ignoring national borders; the systems of validating diplomas should be improved.

The lack of recognition of diplomas and certificates as well as the problems concerning credit time for study or internships taken abroad discourages students and causes delays in their studies. Students run the risk of losing credits within their curriculum or they may have to redo equal or similar courses already taken abroad.

The benefit of studies abroad is widened with the evolution of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), as students find it easier to have courses fully recognized in their degree. Still, the lack of bi- and multilateral agreements on the issue of recognition of qualifications appears to be of crucial importance for the validation of Eastern European diplomas in Western Europe. Great effort should be put into solving this urgent problem. UNESCO recently published a document on this issue (Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Lisbon April 11, 1997. UNESCO and the Council of Europe) and ESIB is looking forward to further action. ESIB will organize a seminar on the recognition of qualifications in Vienna, October 1998.

2. Teaching and Learning

In the twenty-first century, the student population will become even more heterogeneous. There will be more emphasis to be put on lifelong learning, on further and adult education. The development, when more students study part-time or enter higher education at a later stage in their lives, constitutes a new challenges and places new demands on the institutions’ flexibility and the funding systems.

This development is due to changes in the labour market and different expectations created by a society where flexibility, adaptability, and innovation are demanded. The academic community has to be willing to change with the students. Indeed, this flux will change the profile of students.

And, as students differ, education methods should differ as well. Distinctions in the educational methods should ascertain that all students - no matter what age, gender, and region - receive the style of teaching and learning best suited to their needs.

2. 1 Lifelong Learning

We welcome the actions taken to promote lifelong learning with enthusiasm. This is an important step towards meeting the demands of society. When stating that everybody should have the possibility to enrol in higher education at several stages of life, ESIB sees a growing need for flexibility and differentiation of courses given in higher education. Everybody should get their chance to learn how to explore new situations and benefit from the possibilities offered, such as computer courses etc. So far, mainly people active in the labour market have been benefiting from such courses.
2.2 Quality Review

In order to assure a high quality of education, continuous evaluation of this education is needed. There are a lot of different ways of quality assessment and review, for instance accreditation, questionnaires, and visits. Students, as the main participants in higher education, are experts in comparing different sorts of education, the use of teaching material, and the didactics. As we are the ones benefiting directly from high quality education, it is in our own interest to expand our activities in the field of quality review. Students need to play an important role in the quality review and should therefore be part of the different official evaluation committees.

3. Student Participation in Decision-making

Education in the twenty-first century will face a lot of old problems, but we need to keep in mind that new and unexpected situations will arise as well. Students shall face these problems and they will find new, creative solutions fitting the spirit of the age. We students ask for recognition of our sense of responsibility for our own education. Students as adults should participate in the organization of their education at different levels. We are participants rather than clients in higher education. Decisions made on national and regional levels influencing higher education or students’ social life cannot be taken without consulting us. Students have a common interest and therefore demand a share of responsibility in decision-making bodies. Close co-operation between students and staff is - therefore - of vital importance and could be developed further through this shared responsibility. Higher education is expected to strengthen the ability to act as resource persons in a democratic society and to be responsible citizens. These institutions should be at the forefront of promoting and setting an example for interactive problem-solving through the inclusion of all parties involved who are responsible for their own participation.

Student organizations and other international organizations dealing with education have a vital role to play in discussions and decisions taken on a regional and international level and their potential should be actively developed.

3.1 Student Status

ESIB acknowledges the need for creating a widely recognized legal student status in which our rights to education, social security, and participation are fixed. A worldwide student charter should be explored.

3.2 Student Unions

To secure a good student input on all levels, student unions’ capacity and knowledge cannot be underestimated. Student unions should play a central role in those institutions’ development. National Unions of Students (NUS) and institution-based unions can provide their members with training courses and background information. They make sure the voice of the student will be heard at all levels and act as an intracommunicative body.

The creation and development of NUS needs active support from both local and regional student unions and national governments. On the regional level, student structures like ESIB or OCLAE also need support, morally and financially, to be able to assure the tasks of spreading information, training student unions on international levels; as well as being the counterparts and interacting partners to institutions and decision-makers, so as to make the students’ opinion heard.

The delegates of ESIB are more than willing to explain more about our aims, ideas, and member unions.

Adopted by the ESIB Board Meeting at Malta, April 1998 (BM34) and presented on the World Conference on Higher Education (October 1998)

(1)The term higher education or institution of higher education includes both university education and college education (polytechnics, Fachhochschule)

The members of ESIB are: AUSTRIA - Österreichische Hochschülerschaft (ÖH); BELARUS - Belarusian Students Association (BSA); BELGIUM - Federation des Etudiant(e)s Francophones (FEF), Vereniging van Vlaamse Studenten (VVS); BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA - Student Union of Bosnia Hercegovina (SUBiH); BULGARIA - Union of Bulgarian Students (UBS); CROATIA - Croatian Student Union (CSU); CYPRUS - Pacyptorean Federation of Students and Young Scientists (POFNE); DENMARK - Danske Studerendes Faellesrad (DSF), Landessammenslutningen af Moderste Studenter (LMS); ESTONIA - Federation of Estonian Student Unions (FESU); FINLAND - Suomen Ylioppiataluntien Liitto (SYL), Suomen Ammattikorkeakouluopiskelijayhdistysten Liitto (SAMOK); FRANCE - Federation des Associations Generales Etudiantes (La FAGE), Union Nationale des Etudiantes de Independante et Democratique (UNEF-ID); GERMANY - freier zusammenschluss von studentinnenschaften (fzs); HUNGARY - Hallgatoi Önkorm. Orszagos Konferenciaja (HÖOK); ICELAND - Studentarad Haskola (SHI); IRELAND - Union of Students in Ireland (USI); ISRAEL - National Union of Israeli Students (NUIS); LATVIA - Latvian Student Union (LSA); LITHUANIA - Lithuanian National Union of Students (LSS); LUXEMBOURG - Union Nationale des Etudiant(e)s du Luxembourg (UNEL); MACEDONIA - National Student Union of Macedonia (NSUM); MALTA - Kunsill Tal-Istudenti Universitarji (KSU); NETHERLANDS - Landelijke Studenten Vakbond (LSVb); NORWAY - Norsk Studentunion (NSU), Studentenes Landsforbund (SL); POLAND - Parlament Studentow (PSP), Zrzeszenie Studentow Polskich (ZSP); SLOVAKIA - Rada Studentov Vysokych Skol (RSVS); SLOVENIA - Students Union of Slovenia (SSU); SWEDEN - Sveriges Förenade Studentkaarer (SFS); SWITZERLAND - Verband der Schweizerischen Studentinnenschaften (VSS/UNES); UNITED KINGDOM - National Union of Students (NUS-UK). (NUS-UK).
The Students' Perspective on Forestry Higher Education: Outlook and Situation in Asian Countries

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Introduction

The International Forestry Students Association (IFSA), which was established in 1990, is a worldwide organization of local and national associations of forestry students. At present, IFSA represents 58 member associations in 38 countries. IFSA also admits consulting, supporting and honorary members. The primary goal of IFSA is to enrich forestry students' education in terms of a wider and more global perspective through extracurricular activities and exchange of information and experience.

Since the multiple-use principle of forestry was launched at the 5th World Forestry Congress 1960 in Seattle, USA, the curriculum in this discipline has undergone major and significant changes. There are now new points of view on forestry - it is not only seen in terms of the timber it produces, but also non-timber products, such as wildlife habitat and erosion protection, as well as other functions both direct and direct, especially those related to the environment. Forestry itself was an outgrowth of agriculture, but then became a complex area to deal with. Forestry has increasingly become a global concern for its various stakeholders. As a science, it is characterized by its orientation towards practice with the purpose of finding solutions to problems.

Population growth rates within Asian region in general and in the nations of Southeast Asia specifically, have been significantly above the world average. This trend is projected to continue into the 21st century. Taken as whole, Southeast Asia sub-region is both most populous and developed part of the tropics and moreover has experienced by far the most rapid economic growth during the 1970s and 1980s. However, most countries in this region, especially those of East Asia, are suffering from the current economic crisis and this will have an impact on higher education.

Access to Higher Education

Everyone should have equal rights of access to all levels of education on the basis of merit. There is now a change in attitude in society in this region, especially in big cities in terms of how higher education is seen. Higher education is an essential component if members of the society are to enjoy improved living standards. It is also well known that higher education brings advancement in science and technology along with human resource development.

On the other hand, there is still the traditional attitude of rural society restricting girls' access to higher education. Most people in rural areas in this region think that girls' main job is to handle the cooking and other domestic jobs. The total population of rural areas is usually higher than those of big cities. For example, in Pakistan, based on the census announced on July 8, 1998, 67.5% of the population lives in rural areas. It is both urgent and necessary that government policy should support the participation of all its citizens in all levels of education regardless of their sex. Moreover, change in the attitudes of parents is needed. They should give equal priority to the education of both sons and daughters.
The entrance tests to state universities are still taken very seriously and are sometimes frightening to high school graduates. This is a very serious hurdle for students as long as there are always more applicants than places available. For those who fail the test, they can then enrol in private universities or even study abroad - that is, if they can afford the tuition fees and other expenses which are much higher.

Students are also subject to assessment during their courses at universities. For students who are not from wealthy families, it is very difficult to seek support from home for their higher education. Furthermore, there is no tradition of part-time jobs. For these reasons, it is important that the government plays a leading role in funding for higher education.

The Quality and Relevance of Higher Education

The quality of higher education also obviously depends on student-teacher interaction and the ability of teachers to transfer knowledge. Most of the teachers still follow the old pattern of teaching and do not use problem-oriented methods. In some cases, they are not even aware of the recent developments in their respective fields. The introduction of more practical classes, internships, exchange programmes and the use of audio-visual presentations is considered to be very important to help improve the quality of the teaching process and its outcomes.

Advancements in communication and technology play an important role in the teaching and learning process. However, communication and information facilities, such as Internet, are not widely available. Access to advanced information technology is extremely limited for both students and teachers. Students themselves cannot afford the cost of Internet and other sophisticated technology to interact with scientists and other students in other parts of the world.

University consortia and network serving as venues for institutions of higher education will help improve the quality of the sector, accelerate the speed of information exchange and help share resources, facilities and academic strength. These consortia and their associate members should provide student exchanges, thesis grants, faculty staff exchanges, research fellowships and professorial chairs. The primary task is to develop high-level manpower in forestry in the region to promote, undertake and coordinate research in forestry and related fields and disseminate the findings of research and experiments.

Perspectives on Graduate Employment

The diverse situation in Asia from its sub-regions and from countries of the same region does not give a general picture on employment. Japan is a typical developed country, meanwhile, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea were known as “four Asian tigers’ due to their advanced economic situation. But now, these countries are also being affected by the current economic crisis.

Like in other parts of the world, developing countries in this region also face problems in providing job opportunities, food, shelter, health, education and other basic services necessary to their populations. Without a change in the current economic situation and government policy, there will be no significant changes concerning graduate employment. A well-educated person is not exempted from unemployment.

There is a mismatch between the number of graduates and the demands of the market. In this region, forestry is an important sector and contributes to the national economy significantly. Forestry in this region is less known compared to other fields like engineering, medical sciences, accountancy and business management, law, and information technology. Promotion of forestry and forestry education must continue. The main objective of this promotion is to raise the awareness of students and of society regarding the natural resource management and conservation.
Agent of Social Change and Economic Growth

Graduates of higher education should be agents of positive social changes. It is believed that the role of higher education institutions is to better ensure the placement of graduates, to provide expertise, skill development, networking, and to improve their lives and the quality of society in general. As a result, students will be responsible and critical persons who can bring about changes in society and its various sectors.

However, it is unfortunate to say that most universities in this region do not involve students in university policy and decision-making processes, not to mention support to those who are active in student organizations. In many countries in this region, students are forbidden to strike or demonstrate, otherwise they will be banned from the institution and so lose their right to study.
L’enseignement supérieur en Égypte et la question de la démocratie

Intervention de : Ms Ragia El-Husseiny
Union Progressive de la Jeunesse
Égypte

Je voudrais aborder aujourd’hui trois questions principales :

1- La liberté d’expression des étudiants

- Depuis l’annulation de la charte de l’Union des étudiants promulguée par la République Arabe d’Égypte en 1979 par décision administrative de l’Etat, cette union n’a plus aucune existence, l’activité politique étudiante à l’université ayant été abolie.

- En conséquence, les étudiants ne peuvent exprimer leur avis que par le biais des administrations des facultés, et la constitution de l’Union des étudiants se fait à l’intérieur de chaque faculté avec la seule contribution des membres du corps enseignant sans tenir compte des étudiants sélectionnés. Chaque administration préfère que la candidature à l’Union soit faite par voie de "purification" après l’éloignement du plus grand nombre des candidats.

- Par conséquent, les chances d’expression des étudiants deviennent inexistantes notamment du fait des contraintes de l’activité culturelle, de l’éloignement qui existe entre les membres du corps enseignant et les étudiants et, qui plus est, de la haute densité d’examens pendant l’année universitaire. Ceci permet aux idées et tendances extrémistes de s’accroître. Le résultat en est la baisse du niveau culturel des étudiants d’une façon considérable et leur passivité à l’égard de la société.

2/ La relation entre le corps enseignant et les étudiants

- Du fait, entre autres raisons, du nombre croissant d’étudiants qui intègrent les universités chaque année alors que les professeurs sont en infériorité numérique, du fait des contraintes administratives à l’université et de la tendance des professeurs à vouloir accroître par tous les moyens leurs salaires de base, les relations entre le corps enseignant et les étudiants sont devenues des relations précaires sans aucune possibilité de dialogue et de reconnaissance entre les deux parties.

- Par ailleurs, les programmes universitaires se basent sur le système de dictée et de mémorisation au lieu de développer l’innovation et l’esprit de recherche scientifique. De plus, les relations humaines sont devenues agressives du fait de la complexité des examens et de la domination des informations dictées par les livres alors que le point de vue de l’étudiant est négligé. Les relations humaines se détériorent et la vie universitaire prend un aspect passif qui influence négativement la formation démocratique des étudiants.

3/ L’égalité et la liberté de choix

L’égalité entre les individus et les collectivités basée sur les systèmes appliqués, les lois, les valeurs et les traditions dominantes, représente une chance de liberté de choix dans tous les domaines de la vie.

- Dans le domaine de l’enseignement supérieur, il devrait exister des chances égales à toute la société sans distinction de religion ou de sexe ;

- Voici deux exemples d’inégalité concernant les établissements de l’enseignement supérieur en Égypte :
- le premier concerne le système appliqué à l’université de l’Azhar. Cette université n’accepte que les étudiants musulmans malgré le fait qu’elle comprenne des facultés dans toutes les branches de la connaissance scientifique et humaine. Ce système représente donc une discrimination religieuse que nous devrions combattre. D’autre part, nous assistons à une expansion des universités privées qui chargent les étudiants de frais écrasants sans tenir compte de leur niveau scientifique ou de leurs capacités mentales. Ce système montre qu’il y a un dualisme dans l’enseignement qui favorise celui qui paye plus que les autres, et cela dans une société qui comprend une majorité de pauvres aux revenus limités.

- le deuxième correspond à la privation des filles des chances de l’enseignement et à leur contribution aux activités universitaires, à cause de la diminution du revenu de la famille qui favorise la formation des garçons à celle des filles, de telle sorte que les filles ne représentent dans l’enseignement supérieur en Égypte que 35% alors qu’elles sont plus nombreuses dans la population. Ceci est dû au fait que la famille dirige la fille vers la maison après l’enseignement préparatoire ou secondaire dans l’attente du mariage. Une autre forme d’inégalité transparaît dans l’émergence d’idées extrémistes qui interdisent aux filles de participer aux activités universitaires. Ceci est favorisé par les membres du corps enseignant qui approuvent ces idées ; l’absence d’idées démocratiques et la domination d’idées réactionnaires étant manifeste. Pourtant, l’université égyptienne a déjà connu une époque où l’esprit de camaraderie et de fraternité entre les deux sexes existait.

Les revendications

Je voudrais enfin vous présenter un certain nombre de revendications indispensables pour nous libérer de ce phénomène de passivité et développer notre enseignement supérieur vers une voie démocratique.

- **Premièrement** : donner la chance aux étudiants de choisir le type d’études universitaires à partir d’un autre système tenant compte des aptitudes depuis le cycle primaire et ne se basant pas seulement sur le pourcentage et le total des notes. Ainsi, l’enseignement ne devrait pas être un concours où gagne celui qui collecte le plus grand nombre d’informations sans conscience ou sans compréhension.

- **Deuxièmement** : l’amendement du système actuellement appliqué concernant l’élection des représentants de l’Union des étudiants par l’addition des garanties démocratiques afin de créer un nouveau climat sans l’intervention administrative de l’université, sauf en ce qui concerne les mœurs et les traditions établies dans notre pays.

- **Troisièmement** : il faut que l’État continue à subventionner les universités officielles en augmentant les dépenses, ce qui consiste à accroître les moyens et les perspectives éducatives, à améliorer les activités sportives, culturelles et politiques en collaboration avec les membres du corps enseignant. Dans un tel contexte, il est possible de préparer des programmes formatifs favorisant les rencontres entre professeurs et étudiants afin de renouveler les liens entre eux.

- **Quatrièmement** : il faudrait réajuster le système qui régit l’université de l’Azhar de telle sorte qu’elle soit ouverte à toutes les religions et aux deux sexes sans distinction ni discrimination.

- **Cinquièmement** : développer les programmes culturels et de conscientisation visant à combattre les idées extrémistes qui n’encouragent pas les filles à contribuer aux différentes activités à l’université et qui aggravent de ce fait l’inégalité entre les deux sexes.

Finalement, nous souhaitons que notre contribution à l’évolution du cadre démocratique des universités égyptiennes soit une partie de l’évolution nécessaire à toutes les universités dans le monde entier au début du XXIème siècle.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.
Medical Education and Social Issues

Address by: Mr. Thiago Monaco
Director, Standing Committee on Medical Education
IFMSA
Brazil

Students of medicine traditionally seek different things from this very old profession. Some students choose this for the status and income factors while others are motivated by the search for knowledge, wisdom and the opportunity to help people through curing disease. This field allows students to become better citizens, to solve complex and serious problems of science and, so, of development, and to improve local communities.

Today, it is generally thought that medical education is not meeting the expectations of students. The profession is influenced by the constant questioning of the role of the modern doctor in society. Students are not well oriented when they start their studies and, as a result, they are often not clear as to what they want from the profession, which is now more specialized than ever. At the same time, the need for general practitioners has increased sharply to meet social and community needs. Despite this dilemma, a good number of students remain idealistic about their medical studies which is fortunate.

However, these unmet expectations are important, given the diverse reasons which motivate people to study medicine and the costs involved. It is true that the medical labour market is not as empty as it was 40 years ago and many young doctors have problems finding a stable and well-paid job. Once into their studies, idealism can be blunted by the practical aspects of the profession, including the need to understand the reasoning of national health care systems - and we should not forget that, in time, responsibility for public health systems will be assumed by today's students.

Medical education must also prepare doctors for Health Care delivery, to train future professors of medicine and to assure lifelong learning opportunities for health professionals. The search for the best methods of education to meet social needs will ensure that medical education is relevant.

Undergraduate medical education should prepare doctors through the traditional acquisition of academic knowledge, through the application of this to everyday practice and through training in medical ethics. Social values and responsibilities must underpin all medical studies but even the best faculties and schools could do more in this area. Often, medical ethics are not taught at all and there is strong emphasis on the biological sciences but little attention paid to Social Medicine. Moreover, today, students have to acquire a huge amount of specialized knowledge which is changing all the time. Thus, the curriculum and teaching methods must be constantly assessed and updated to keep pace with these developments.

Medical education has its responsibilities to society and institutions could open their doors much wider to contact their local communities in this regard. Medicine, as a field, has much to share with the non-medical population. For example, medical students could help with information campaigns in schools so that preventive medicine gains optimal results. This would be one way for medical schools, which are very costly institutions, to recognize all the support received from society at large.

Many of these remarks also apply to the broader field of higher education in general. Concepts such as citizenship and the culture of peace should be built into the curriculum in many areas. International - and inter-cultural - contacts amongst students can construct a solid understanding
amongst peoples and benefits the student and the host community alike. The IFMSA International Exchange of Medical Students is a good example of this interaction. Enhanced co-operation amongst higher education institutions is one way of helping to attain sustainable human development.

For this and other reasons, students should participate actively in the governance and policy-making structures of their institutions. Students are usually aware of the issues affecting their education and of the trends happening in their chosen field. They also bring the youth perspective on social questions which should be recognized as an important input by institutional leaders. Of course, students will never replace or outnumber the other stakeholders such as professors and administrators. However, their voice must be heard and their right to take part in institutional governance must be upheld.

 Tradition constitutes one of the main challenges in the renovation of teaching and learning within medical education. Medicine remains a very classical discipline where the professor is a hierarchical and superior figure and very removed from the average student. Course work is generally very theoretical which makes it difficult for students to relate concepts to practice, despite the fact that the daily reality of the profession is very concrete. Teaching is also very traditional and not sufficiently interactive. This will have to change in the future to benefit from technology such as the databases which can assist medical research - MEDLINE being a case in point.

Medical education should be much more attuned to the actual medical needs of society - that is to say, problem-based with early and regular contact with real patients. This implies a new role for the medical teacher who would become more of a tutor or counsellor in the future. Curriculum renovation and assessment techniques will also change a lot. Students will work in small groups in simulated real settings to develop self-learning, self-evaluation and teamwork skills.

With regard to communication and information technology and the media, medicine is a totally dependent field. Medical knowledge is developed everywhere in the world but contributes to a common core to be available to everyone. This knowledge changes very fast so that procedures, techniques and behaviors have to change as well. Communication and information are fundamental for a medical student or doctor to maintain his or her professional knowledge. Without such access, medical expertise can quickly become outdated. Therefore, medical education must equip students to search for knowledge through technology. This is not just for those planning careers in medical research but is necessary to any practising doctor. Hence, students must be taught to make full use of the technological resources available. A flexible and core curriculum is important to assure always to the students access to the fundamental basis of medicine.

Some remarks should be made on the financing of higher education which is a delicate subject worldwide. The increased student numbers and the reduced public resources mean that alternative ways of funding are needed. While tuition fees are often discussed and even charged by public institutions today, IFMSA believes that the full burden of costs cannot be met by the students themselves. Higher education exists to serve society at large as well as to educate individual citizens and professionals. For instance, university extension services meet a real social need. In the developing world, the best public hospitals are frequently the university ones. In these countries, access to higher education is seen as the only way for poor people to change the old social structure.

Against this background, it is clear that having to assume all tuition costs would exclude many gifted students from advanced education. The country in question would lose many good minds. Although other private sources of financing may exist as well, governments must bear the major responsibility for funding higher education, assuring its access for poor and needy students on the basis of merit.
Higher Education for a New Society: A Student Vision

The class of 2005 and the universities of 1998

Address by: Professor Mihaly Simai
Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary

Universities, more than any other institutions need a vision about the future. They have to prepare their students for the future, and they have to educate people, who are going to play an important role in shaping the future path of the societies in which they are going to work. In my contribution to the discourse about the social changes and the universities I decided to look ahead and introduce a scenario of the world which a graduate in the class of 2025 will have to face. This scenario is based on the continuity of present trends and does not anticipate radical changes.

1. Our graduate in the class of 2025 will be one of the more than 100 million students comprising the participants in third level education. He will be the citizen of a more crowded world. Over 9 billion people will share the resources of a shrinking earth. 4.4 billion of them will live in urban areas, including about 30 mega-cities with a population over 10 million. While the average age of the population will be higher, since the number of those over 65 will grow almost twice as fast as the global population, in the less developed part of the world there will be still many young people looking for education and jobs. It will be a better educated world, with a much larger number of people with higher and secondary education. International migration pressures and counter-measures will be important political issues. Demand for social services will be rather high due to aging, urbanization and the greater participation of women in the labour force. The inter-generational distribution of social expenditures will be an important issue, a source of social conflicts in all countries.

2. The political system will be a more complex, more fragmented and more difficult to manage. The number of states will be somewhat larger. The emerging regional centres of power will challenge the hierarchies of the early post-cold war era. In the absence of strong and effective global multilateral security structures, bilateralism, unilaterism and different regional arrangements will dominate international politics. Religious, ethnic and racial conflicts will be in the background. The civil wars will be intermingled with the political games of regional and smaller powers. International terrorism and crime will still be a sources of dangers and risks, in spite of the different national and international efforts for their curtailment and elimination. The majority of the countries will have formally democratic regimes, but with major differences in their functioning. Democracy at the same time will give greater possibilities for different groups in the society to articulate their values and fight for their interests. The micro level of politics will be more important in national life.

3. It will be a more interdependent world. The transnational centers of economic decision-making will play a very important role in all areas of economic life. The gap between the rich and poor countries and people will be a serious social and political problem. The population of the world will be divided into three groups: those, in the globalized sectors, those, excluded from the opportunities offered by the globalization process, and those in-between the two. The incidence of poverty will be still quite large in spite of the success of certain countries to reduce its worst forms. Urban poverty will be a crucially important issue which the authorities will have to deal with. There will be more competition but also more cooperation between countries and firms. The importance of regional cooperation will be greater in all continents In some areas, like in the financial sector, in environmental issues, global emergency management and health there will be a much higher level of global cooperation than it was in 1998.
4. The consequence of the breakthroughs in science and technology, particularly in biotechnology, electronics and information technology, transport, between 1998 and 2025 will be felt in many areas of human life. The greatest the influence of the technological breakthroughs on the changes in human life will be in the health sector. The world will experience also important technological progress, promoting environmental sustainability. The scientific and technological development will be increasing the smartness of the weapon systems. The favourable consequences of scientific and technological progress in the quality of life will still be confined to the countries with knowledge based economies of the developed world and to the wealthier segments of the population in the rest of the world. The role of brain-power will be more important in relation to other sources of economic and social changes in all countries. The meaning of empowerment will include a greater variety of tasks in the more competitive society.

5. Differences in the content and character of work will be greater, than in 1998 within the countries and between them. The less developed part of the world will have still a large group of subsistence work and rather slowly growing high quality jobs in the modern sectors. In the advanced countries about half of the jobs will be high-tech, high quality and highly computerized with many new occupations in manufacturing and services. In many cases work will also be more individualized and adjusted to the talents and capabilities of the individuals. There will be more self-employed and more part time work. A great number of people will still be at the same time low paying, low-skill jobs. The efforts for better gender balance, the speed of job changes and the emerging new occupations will sustain a high demand for education, training and retraining. Most of the retraining will take place outside the educational system. Demand for higher education will be stimulated by social and individual needs and competitive pressures. Learning organization and human resource management will be a much more integral part of business strategy. The labour market will be more segmented. While it will be easier to find jobs with higher education, there will be still problems with the matching supply and demand in the labour markets even in the highly qualified professional categories. International migration of graduates from the South to the North will be difficult and constrained.

6. The transition to the global scenario for the class of 2025 will be basically gradual. But what will be the characteristics of a well educated highly qualified person in the 2025 and how should the universities satisfy the evolving demand?

In an increasingly knowledge based society in which the class of 2025 will have to work, high quality university education will have to be a system oriented activity. This means simultaneously two things: education of persons with high core competence needed by the changing society and education of persons who can not only be more competitive and mobile in the society, but understand much better the environment in which they live and work.

An educated highly qualified person must be first of all a good professional, with a core competence, corresponding to the needs of the given profession. Beyond the core competence however, the graduate of the class 2025 will have to be equipped with social, science, communication and ecological literacy.

Social literacy means the understanding the causes and consequences of the main external and internal processes of the society. This should not be considered however only as an intellectual exercise, but should help them to get read of their prejudices, illusions, aggressiveness and individualism and other sources of alienation. It most be a source of social consciousness. The awareness of past experiences, a broad comprehension of the new problems, new forms of motivations, based on social ethics, commitments for social actions, understanding the multicultural character of the world, the better knowledge about the decision structure of the planet should also be considered as components of social literacy.

Science literacy means a profound knowledge about both the basic facts and the process of science and technology in order to understand the functioning of the knowledge based system.
The basic facts means the knowledge about the body of knowledge, the process is the “process of discovery” the validation and the use of what we know.

Communication literacy is an indispensable component in the knowledge structure of a highly qualified professional in the age of information and knowledge revolution. This is more than computer literacy. It means the capability of managing and using the rapidly growing mass of information. It also includes the knowledge of at least two languages beyond their own, including a widely used international language.

Ecological literacy means the understanding the essence of the complex interrelations between human beings and the nature, particularly the conditions of preserving the life sustaining capacity of earth in any given era and socio-economic environment.

The all these would not imply the return to the educational model of the renaissance man or the predominance of a modified liberal arts orientation. This is not what the 21 century would require. It demands well trained, intellectually better balanced, open minded professionals, who are flexible enough to be able to change and committed enough to be agents of the changes. Changes in the curricula, new approaches to multi- and interdisciplinarity, more independent, problem oriented work by the students are and will be indispensable to secure the functioning of the “multiliteracy” model.

7. Universities as social organizations will be extremely diverse in the world of 2025 as the result of the adjustment strategies undertaken by them. The university based technology and research centers, university-industry-government research and development alliances will gain even greater importance, but increase in public funds will not match the rhetoric about the importance of brain-power. The university system of 2025 will be more multiple. There will be more over-crowded "diploma factories" particularly in developing countries, based on public sources, cheap regional institutions, specialized schools and wealthy high prestige private universities. The prestigious universities will try to increase their research income, the less distinguished will be focusing on funding for teaching. Fees will be more general. There will be many part time courses, allowing students to work and study simultaneously. The class of 2025 will also be more conscious of costs and efficiency. The global differences between universities in the supply of information and knowledge will be somewhat moderated by the global information networks, but they will be still quite large. The way, the universities will internationalized, will also be a factor of differentiation. In many countries, universities will be basically poor and isolated from the mainstream of global science by the lack of financial and human resources. They will be more internationalized institutions in the developed parts of the world, particularly in Europe than they are today. There will be more international centers for specialized studies and research. There will be also a greater variety of international institutions including maybe multilingual regional universities, transnational university enterprises, international distant learning networks. The first 25 years of the 21st century will be a particularly important era in the transformation of the university system under different pressures. As the result of the growing differentiation and marketing of the universities there will be more international competition between them for funds, for high quality professors and researchers and in some parts of the world also for students. Relevance excellence, efficient international cooperation and good management will play crucial role in this competition.
Statement for Thematic Debate on Higher Education

Address by: Dr. William Lindley
Food and Agriculture Organization

Madam President, Mr. Director-General, Distinguished Guests, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen --

I am indeed honoured to be a part of this distinguished panel. The debate thus far is a reflection of our mutual concern about the quality of education. Students in the audience are telling us quite clearly that not only should there be open access to higher education, but that it should be free for all who are qualified.

As a point for discussion, I should like to challenge those who contend that higher education should be free. Students have said that they want to be partners in higher education. A partnership implies a contribution from both parties. I would suggest that the gift of a free education might not be appreciated as much as an education that is, at least in part, paid for by the students. By this I mean that loans could be made available to deserving students and that students should pay for at least a fractional part of their education. Access to higher education would be maintained, but the burden of the expense would not be entirely on the State. It is a position that may not be popular, but it’s one that is certainly worthy of debate.

Because I am coming from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), I will focus my remaining remarks on some concerns that are related directly to agricultural education and rural development in the developing countries.

The challenge for tertiary level education in agriculture is to provide leadership in the agricultural sector and rural development. In the context of the next 20 years, there will be a shift away from the teaching and learning of food and fibre production to a much broader mandate of food security and rural development. That does not mean that the production of food and fibre will be less important, it means that the faculties of agriculture will have to broaden their mandate if they are to remain relevant.

There is a current complaint that the job market is not able to absorb the graduates from many faculties of agriculture. I would ask the question - “Does the problem lie in the job market or is there a problem with the kind of preparation that students are getting?” If agricultural graduates are not finding employment, perhaps the curriculum should be reviewed and revised to meet the demands of the labour market.

Traditionally

- the focus has been on increasing production
- almost full employment of graduates and diploma holders was guaranteed in the public sector
- curriculum change was very gradual
Today
- Focus is still mostly on production
- There is a growing concern about environmental issues
- The curricula is not entirely relevant
- Many graduates are unemployed
- Gender issues and rapid population growth are important
- Teaching quality is not high
- Public funding levels are low

Tomorrow
- Production agriculture will not be the primary concern
- There will be a shift in emphasis from production agriculture to rural development
- Environmental concerns will be higher on the agenda
- Participatory curriculum development will be based on partnerships among faculty members, students and potential employers in the public and private sector
- Shift from public funding to more support from the private sector
- Inter-institutional and inter-departmental cooperation will improve

I hope that this debate will focus, to some degree, on issues related to:

- the relevance of the curriculum
- the quality of teaching, and
- the management of educational institutions.

They are issues that deserve further discussion and certainly they are items that concern us all.
Since the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the former Soviet Union, a process of economic and political liberation that had already started with the end of Second World War and the movement of 1968 has been accelerated. Though bringing political side effects (both positive and negative), this process is something that should be analyzed thoroughly rather than simply celebrated or glorified in order to define the actions and measures needed to improve social standards and to avoid further social damage.

It is a fact that this process, called "globalization" created a certain crisis for the world communities as is usual in all periods of transition. However, this time, consequences vary region to region, and the ultimate ones can be fatal for various sectors and institutions of society. In any case, profound conceptual changes for these sectors and institutions are on the way.

Europe, for centuries, has been the centre and originator of another ongoing process called "Enlightenment" which is characterized by a critical approach to each and every current problem. Europe has been formed by continuous self-questioning when confronted with turning points in its history - such as the Industrial Revolution, the Second World War and Nazi genocide, the collapse of the Iron Curtain, etc. Europe is the process of Enlightenment which is also called Europeanization.

Now, the achievements and values of Enlightenment are once again under threat by the rise of the consumer society, the consequences of which are considered to be the loss of values and sense of social solidarity. This leads to an increase of intolerance, violence, insensitivity to other cultures, thus, spreading racism and xenophobia.

The present ongoing crisis should be continuously analyzed using a critical approach of the understanding of Enlightenment.

European universities were once the sole source of new ideas leading society. They could be real actors in social change and they were totally different from the other sectors due to their autonomy and academic freedom. Universities had the unique feature of being neither public nor private. The two basic functions of universities were producing new knowledge (by means of research) and ensuring the continuation of this process by transferring the knowledge to the next generation (by means of education). The second function also ensured that those receiving a university education would have the mission and responsibility of leading society.

**New Trends and Changes**

The changes which diversified higher education institutions have faced during the global process can be summarized as:
- increased demand leading to mass education
- extended periods of education and the concept of lifelong learning
- quality assurance
- multiplication of services, specializations and diversification of institutions
- trend towards greater autonomy (also financial)
- development of new communication technologies
- and internationalization.
In the global context, these changes have led to (or are driven by) certain key factors and they have particular consequences. The commercialization and diversification of higher education now means that knowledge and information, as well as other values acquired through higher education, are seen as a product or service to be sold or bought. Market-orientation and change in the role of the state (i.e. the "user-pays" principle) have led to the reduction of public funding for higher education activities. This development can be seen as financial autonomy from the state, but is dangerous if the short-term concerns of the private sector limits the curricula and research to meeting the immediate needs of industry, business and labour market. In the changing market, the needs of graduates have also altered; higher education now has to be more skill-oriented and interdisciplinary. In the more internationalized market, the graduate has to be able to speak at least one foreign language. Ideally, his/her education should be in the mother tongue in order to have the best access to knowledge and in order for the less spoken languages to be preserved as a cultural feature against the globally dominant ones. In a period of rising intolerance, racism, discrimination, xenophobia and conflicts all over the world, higher education has another responsibility - namely, to promote a culture of peace and tolerance by a value-oriented education.

All these factors and their consequences and factors suggest that the curriculum should be restructured, discipline by discipline. Major attention should be given to the concern the teaching methodology used: every course should give an understanding of problem solving and should be promoting multidimensional and interdisciplinary. All these concerns should be reflected both in the contents and the presentation of the course. Certain universal human values like democracy and human rights, concern for the promotion of a culture of peace and basic philosophy and ethics education should not be limited to certain courses, but reflected in all disciplines as well.

Each system of higher education from the Humboldtian institution to Oxford or the Chicago-type university has its own priorities and methodology for educating students. In fact, this diversity is a richness in itself, and as long as the institution is not closed to change, this diversity (or, agreeing to disagree, as stated in the declaration of regional preparatory meeting for World Conference on Higher Education) should be respected.

For a quality education, students should be provided with appropriate medium and high quality accommodation by the universities, with an emphasis on privacy and self-responsibility as a preparation for life.

It is a basic right of students to receive quality education which teaches them how to handle problems and how to use the necessary tools to reach the right information. Freedom of organization and association for students is a must for their participation in decision-making processes. Their evaluation of lecturers is a control mechanism for the quality of teaching and learning. Also students can learn to think and act in a multidimensional manner, as well as to train themselves to develop basic democratic attitude. In this way, their education as citizens continues. Being part of an international network additionally brings communication skills in foreign languages, thus contributing to a culture of peace and mutual understanding.

Regional Aspects

Our continent, Europe, can be considered as having four main regions: the European economic area (European Union, Norway, Switzerland), Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Republics and Southeastern Europe. Common to all is the quest for autonomy and freedom (one can say, for democracy), a healthy social and political economy, freedom of organization, and adaptation to global change and mobility. In all parts of Europe, the European dimension should take its place within higher education systems and curricula. We, as European students and higher education partners, should also be sensitive to the developments concerning student rights and the quality of education in the other regions of the world.

Apparently, the European Union offers the best opportunities in terms of an established democratic context and traditionally institutionalized higher education. In fact, the modern university started in this region with the era of Enlightenment and the concept of secularization. The European type of university is acknowledged as a system, though it still has great variety in itself. Universities in Europe were always considered to be conservative institutions with their own traditions, but also with their
own autonomy and freedom vis-a-vis outside forces. So, they are less affected by change and sometimes seem little inclined to adapt to this process. Still, the European Union has the best level of mobility and international cooperation and the best legal infrastructure compared to the other parts of the world.

However, programmes such as SOCRATES have not fully reached their original aims due to insufficient funding and excessive bureaucratic structures; thus, it has turned into a somewhat elitist programme. The mobility of teachers still has to be improved and here, even simple legal obstacles have not been removed by the governments. The established system of academic recognition and credit transfer systems and networks need to be more widespread. Through the effective operation of these, mobility in Europe can be expected to reach the highest level in the world, also serving as a significant long-term measure for the integration of European peoples. It is pleasing to see that these programmes are opened to Central and Eastern European countries, Cyprus and Malta, and the process for Turkey's participation is on its way. However, for other types of exchanges, visas are a big obstacle for mobility. The final target of these programmes should be access for the former and present Yugoslavian countries, Albania and the European part of the former Soviet Republics. In this way, mobility will be truly Europe-wide. In addition, new mobility programmes for developing countries outside of the continent should be set up in order to foster intercultural education and facilitate access to democracy through education. Another and linked problem is the rise of racism and xenophobia especially against immigrants - an issue that has already been mentioned above.

Central and Eastern European Countries are still struggling to harmonize their systems with the European Union standards and legislation, since they are in the phase of transition towards the free-market. However, a more difficult problem is changing the professors' mentality, and an understanding of the concept of civil society and its organization within a country. Our main concern is the financial implications of the transition for students - a fact that is pertinent for the economies in transition. European Union programmes are already open to these countries and, through their effective operation together with sufficient funds, are able to offer solid assistance to establish a civil society. Other concerns are access, education in the mother tongue and employment opportunities for minorities and gypsies who are excluded sections of the society.

The former Soviet Republics are in a somewhat worse position. Their transition progresses more slowly in terms of democratization, academic freedom, and improving the living conditions of students and the quality of education. Except for the Baltic States, these countries are not considered as part of European integration, and suffer from political instability. Discrimination towards minorities regarding access and education in the mother language also exists at the university level. Transition caused a wider gap between rich and poor, thus leading to social exclusion and reducing access for disadvantaged sectors of these societies.

Finally, in Southeastern Europe, which is politically the most unstable part of Europe, marginalization and polarization between different ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups appear as the biggest problems threatening both internal and international peace.

University autonomy and academic freedom are also severely threatened along with education in the mother language. International reaction against authoritarian applications and solidarity with democratic organizations in the region should be the priority of intergovernmental institutions and civil organizations. The latest example was the adoption by the Serbian government of new Universities' Law which sweeps away all their remaining autonomous character.

Continuing conflicts and unrest show the urgency of establishing a culture of peace in the region. These problems do not have a short-term solution, but international exclusion from educational and cultural interaction has proved not to be a suitable measure. Indeed, educational and cultural contacts should be considered as a means for the establishment of democracy and for the awareness of human rights. Membership of organizations is the best way for students to acquire a do-it-yourself democracy training. One effective action could be the promotion of regional cooperation in the Balkan region. In particular, cooperation in basic natural sciences, where academics and students can learn a lot from each other could be effective. This cooperation can indirectly lead to a more extensive programme for regional understanding and peace.
Conclusions and Proposals

Our proposals for the Action Plan for higher education in the 21st Century, formulated according to the above analysis, can be summarized as follows:

- market orientation and competition certainly have a positive effect on quality, but short-term concerns might harm the basic function of producing new knowledge for society, especially in the basic sciences. So, the curricula should consider the needs of the labour market, but not be shaped solely by these concerns. Research in the basic sciences as well as in the humanities should be supported by the state and private funding for certain fields should be encouraged by tax exemptions - for example, in the arts;

- a new understanding of teaching should be promoted: this understanding should focus on how to handle problems rather than on the teaching of pure knowledge. Teaching methodology should foster a multidimensional and interdisciplinary approach towards problems. This approach should be adopted for every type of course;

- well-organized traineeship programmes are best likely to prepare a graduate for the world of work. These traineeships should be conducted carefully by the host company and controlled effectively by the student's institution. The number of international traineeships should be increased in order to prepare graduates for a more international market and also for an multicultural society;

- the practice of physical and intellectual mobility should be strengthened world-wide. The mobility of students, teachers and educational experts between developed and the developing world should be better funded. Mobility cannot operate amongst developed countries alone. Also, the legal basis of this mobility should be well prepared. Measures to ensure academic recognition and credit transfer systems should operate effectively and be extended. It should be noted that use of communication technologies and the concepts of open and distance learning should be supported for education which is more equitable and of good quality, however, these can never replace physical mobility;

- short-term courses and educational programmes aimed at sharing experience, expertise and know-how about the functioning of higher education systems, have proved to be effective for the enhanced effectiveness of higher education institutions. These cover topics such as evaluation, diversification and quality assessment. Such programmes should be systematically supported. Financial support for short-term visits and courses for personnel may serve as effective tools to promote democracy as well as technical expertise. The use of communication technologies can be a very positive tool in teaching such programmes;

- a value-oriented philosophy and the teaching of ethics in higher education are proposed for peace and mutual understanding at all levels from the individual to the global. This is part of the social responsibility of the graduate. This approach should not be limited to certain courses but inserted in all programmes. The university should educate students to be open-minded towards difference, not only through the content of curricula, but also through its own attitudes and international relations;

- democratic organizations of students and academics are part of the education process and their participation in decision-making should be encouraged. International reaction and solidarity when these organizations are threatened or repressed are necessary to preserve democracy world-wide. In this respect, the university makes an important contribution to social development. These organizations also permit their members to experience the multidimensional aspects of society itself. Their international aspects contribute to the promotion of a culture of peace and mutual understanding.

In the current period of global crisis, higher education institutions should regain their role as social leaders through their ability to take a critical attitude with regard to the ongoing debate.

This critical approach and resulting proposals to tackle global problems should be the main factors of the human and nature-oriented neo-Enlightenment era that is strongly needed today.
Nueva Educación para Nuevo Milenio.

Presentado por: Sr. Yosvani Díaz Romero
Secretaría Ejecutiva de la OCLAE
Cuba

De la Organización Continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes a la Conferencia Mundial sobre la Educación Superior

« Hemos resuelto llamar a todas las cosas por el nombre que tienen. Córdoba se redime. Desde hoy contamos para el país con una vergüenza menos y una libertad más. Los dolores que quedan son las libertades que faltan. Creemos no equivocarnos, las resonancias del corazón nos lo advierten. Estamos pisando una revolución, estamos viviendo una hora americana »

Manifiesto liminar... Córdoba (Argentina) – 1918

A ochenta años de aquel gran acontecimiento que desde Córdoba marcó el futuro del movimiento estudiantil americano, nada mejor que tomar una parte de su manifiesto, para que anteceda nuestro saludo a la Conferencia Mundial sobre la Educación Superior convocada por la UNESCO.

Muchos han sido los eventos preparatorios a esta importante cita a los que hemos asistido en representación de los estudiantes de América Latina y el Caribe. Varios también, los que por nuestra propia cuenta hemos realizado para intentar, con la colaboración de numerosos especialistas en el campo de la Educación Superior, transmitir la visión estudiantil de esta parte del planeta.

A pesar de sus especificidades y problemas, nosotros entendemos que el análisis de la Educación Superior no puede separarse del análisis de la situación social en el que el sistema educacional está inserto.

Convencidos de la trascendencia de la Educación en general y de la Educación Superior en particular, esperamos poder rescatar sus mejores valores y proyectarlos con las reformas necesarias a un futuro cambiante, vertiginoso e incierto.

La resolución de los aspectos globales de la enseñanza, debe enfocarse a la luz de una transformación global de nuestras naciones más populares y democráticas.

La Pertinencia de la Educación Superior se considera según función de su cometido y puesto que ocupa en la sociedad, así como su desempeño en la enseñanza, investigación y extensión social.

No podemos hablar de Pertinencia, Calidad e Internalización de la Educación Superior en términos globales, sino adaptados a cada uno de los contextos sociales en que estos conceptos están insertos.

Discutir estos problemas en nuestro continente es estudiar su lugar en la lucha contra el subdesarrollo.

Avanzar hacia cambios cualitativos y cuantitativos en la Educación, es avanzar en la búsqueda de una sociedad más justa, más solidaria.
Somos conscientes como estudiantes, que mucho podemos aportar a este debate, que no nos corresponde solamente a los integrantes de los sistemas educativos, sino que debe difundirse entre todas las capas sociales, sobre todo las menos favorecidas, para poder captar también la visión. Así como Córdoba marcó el fin de un modelo de la Universidad en 1918, estamos convencidos de que este fin de siglo debe tener una nueva reforma en todo el sistema de Educación Superior donde la misma sea vista como una inversión social, económica y cultural.

Una Educación Superior masiva y de calidad, donde sin dudas parte del desafío es amalgamar correctamente estos dos conceptos.

Se trata, por ende, de la búsqueda de un modelo genuino, que se oponga a la colonización cultural que desde el surgimiento de las Universidades en nuestro continente, venimos siendo objeto.

Nuestros esfuerzos en los destinos de la Educación Superior están puestos en romper las barreras del atraso, emprender transformaciones reales para crear sociedades verdaderamente autónomas y autodeterminadas.

Nuestro principal objetivo es una "Universidad como agente transformador de la sociedad que integra". Pero esta búsqueda choca frontalmente contra quienes quieren conservar el statu-quo de nuestras sociedades. ¿Cómo lograr un acceso basado en el mérito individual y no en la condición socio-económica de la persona?... Cuando en vez de conseguir subsidios estudiantiles, fomentar becas, etc... los organismos de crédito internacionales como el Banco Mundial recomiendan la formación de élites y la desaparición de subsidios estudiantiles, así como la total privatización de la Enseñanza Superior. Recomendaciones que se han seguido al pie de la letra por nuestros respectivos gobiernos.

Es en América Latina y el Caribe que debemos analizar hoy el papel de la Educación Superior en este contexto de enfrentamiento, donde como estudiantes defendemos el papel del Estado como garante de una justicia social en el ingreso de nuestras instituciones.

Nos encontramos en este momento ante la gran disyuntiva:

1- Instituciones basadas en programas de asistencia internacional, donde la enseñanza e investigación sean dirigidas por organismos multinacionales, en definitiva, seguir con el papel del desarrollo dentro de las sociedades dependientes.

2- Concebir la Educación Superior puesta al servicio del desarrollo nacional autónomo, a favorecer el conocimiento científico para superar la etapa de consumidor de tecnología extranjera.

Al optar por la segunda opción sabemos que una transformación de los sistemas de educación son una palanca evolutiva de aceleración que nos permitirá vencer el subdesarrollo, lograr estos factores que nos conduzcan a actualizarnos históricamente. ¿Cuál es el impedimento? La falta de autodeterminación de nuestras naciones, donde la educación es vista como parte del mercado y regida hoy por organismos de Créditos Internacionales que aplican sus leyes a nuestros sistemas educativos. Por esto hablamos de Pertinencia, de Calidad y de Democratización como algo condicionado.

No podemos hablar de democratización de la Educación Superior cuando estamos incorporados a un sistema internacional de investigación y docencia con una función subalterna bien definida. Los programas rectores de financiamiento educativos con sus políticas neoliberales, son en definitiva quienes rigen los destinos de la educación en nuestro continente.

Las últimas reformas aplicadas en nuestros países en materia de educación así lo señalan. Más allá de alguna pequeña diferencia consolidan la privatización de la Enseñanza Superior, donde nuestros mejores cerebros (mano de obra altamente cualificada) son exportados a países desarrollados para seguir consolidando el progreso de las naciones avanzadas.

Por esto nos oponemos a la ingerencia del Banco Mundial en la Educación de nuestra región, por entenderla irreconciliable con las más caras tradiciones de la Universidad Latinoamericana.
Somos conscientes de nuestras limitaciones y problemas. Pedimos simplemente la oportunidad del desafío, en una Educación Superior para el siglo XXI, basada en un modelo propio y sin ingerencia extranjera. Confiamos en que este debate propiciado por la UNESCO, reafirme la universalidad de la Educación, en un marco de respeto por las culturas de nuestros pueblos.

Sobre la base de la autonomía, cogobierno, la gratuidad de la enseñanza y la responsabilidad social de la Educación Superior, buscamos la formación de hombres capaces de transcender el crudo realismo de nuestros días, solidarios y dispuestos a brindar lo mejor de sus esfuerzos para controlar las grandes desigualdades de este fin de siglo.

Esperamos por otra parte, más allá, de nuestra realidad concreta, la cual, sin dudas es la base de nuestro análisis, tener una visión lo suficientemente amplia para comprender los problemas de la Educación Superior en su más amplio espectro... y confiamos en que esta Conferencia más allá del análisis y la visión, logre efectivizar un plan de acción concreto para poder encaminarnos hacia "Una nueva Educación para un nuevo Milenio".

Declaración de la Organización Continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes – OCLAE – para la Conferencia Mundial sobre la Educación Superior, París, octubre 1998

Introducción

La región de América Latina y el Caribe suma casi 20 millones de km² con una población en el orden de los 519 millones de habitantes.

La población promedio para fines de siglo se sitúa en torno a los 26 habitantes/km² y la población menor de 30 años representa casi el 62% del total regional. Está constituida por 33 países, presentando diversidad de culturas y lenguas, siendo el castellano el idioma mayoritario.

En lo referente a la educación en los últimos 20 años, la primaria se multiplicó un 4,4%, la media un 11,8% y la superior 19,8%.

Si bien han habido avances importantes en la tasa bruta de escolaridad en la región, léase cociente entre estudiantes que acceden a la Educación Superior y la población total entre dieciocho y veinticuatro años, que es en América Latina y el Caribe de apenas 17,7%. Es decir, que solamente 18 jóvenes acceden a la Universidad, mientras que en los países desarrollados esta tasa es del 40% y en los países como Estados Unidos supera el 60%.

En lo concerniente al gasto promedio anual por estudiante en Educación Superior en nuestro continente es de 650 US, mientras que el promedio mundial se sitúa en 3000 US.

Si bien la matrícula de enseñanza superior se acrecentó, nos encontramos en menos de la mitad del promedio de los países desarrollados en cuanto a la tasa bruta de escolarización de tercer nivel y con una inversión extremadamente por debajo del promedio mundial.

Tomando como referencia esta situación, abordaremos brevemente los principales problemas que, como estudiantes de esta parte del planeta, observamos en el plano de la Educación Superior.

1- Acceso a la Educación Superior.
   1.1- Equidad
   1.2- Financiamiento
   1.3- Permanencia
   1.4- Movilidad
   1.5- Propuestas

2- Calidad de la Educación
   2.1- Autonomía y libertad de cátedra
   2.2- Excelencia
2.3- Pertinencia
2.4- Propuestas
3- Gestión y participación estudiantil
3.1- Vigencia del cogobierno
3.2- Status estudiantil
3.3- Papel de las Uniones Estudiantiles

1- **Acceso a la Educación Superior**

1- Toda persona tiene derecho a la Educación. La Educación debe ser gratuita, al menos en lo concerniente a la instrucción elemental y fundamental.
La instrucción elemental será obligatoria. La instrucción técnica y profesional habrá de ser generalizada; el acceso a los estudios superiores será igual para todos, en función de los méritos respectivos.

2- La educación tendrá por objeto el pleno desarrollo de la personalidad humana y el fortalecimiento del respeto a los derechos humanos y a las libertades fundamentales; favorecerá la comprensión, la tolerancia y la amistad entre todas las naciones y todos los grupos étnicos o religiosos y promoverá el desarrollo de las actividades de las Naciones Unidas para el mantenimiento de la paz. (Artículo 26 de la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos). Este artículo resume a groso modo el derecho a la Educación.

Debemos encontrar la forma de que los distintos gobiernos lo incluyan dentro de sus prioridades y comprendan que la Educación Superior es la única alternativa que garantiza un desarrollo humano sustentable.

1.1 **Equidad**
Con el papel que juega el conocimiento en las sociedades, el sistema de Educación Superior debe abrir sus puertas de acceso al conocimiento a todos aquellos que cumplieron satisfactoriamente las etapas previas del sistema de enseñanza.

Entendemos la equidad en su más amplio término, no solamente como la presencia de estudiantes en los centros educativos, sino como el conocimiento puesto a disposición de todos los sectores.

Buscar la equidad significa conjugarla correctamente con la excelencia y la pertinencia, principal desafío de nuestras instituciones.

1.2 **Financiamiento**
Los gobiernos deben garantizar el cumplimiento del derecho a la Educación, asumiendo la responsabilidad de su financiamiento en todos sus niveles.

- La política de financiamiento público debe ir acompañada de acciones gubernamentales complementarias como la creación de fondos que garanticen la equidad, como becas de ayuda económica, alojamiento, transporte, alimentación y seguro social.
- No debe descargarse en el estudiante el costo de formación. La concepción de la Educación Superior como un bien público significa que su valoración no debe limitarse a indicadores cuantitativos de carácter económico; debe remitirse en prioridad a su valoración social en la perspectiva del desarrollo humano.
- Se deben estudiar estrategias de reasignación del gasto público para garantizar la gratuidad de la enseñanza en todos sus niveles y el cumplimiento efectivo por parte del estado como garante de este financiamiento.

1.3 **Permanencia en la Educación Superior**
Muchos son los factores que llevan al estudiante a abandonar sus estudios en la fase superior. Deben estudiarse en profundidad las causas y brindarles respuestas.
La adaptación de los currículos a un estudiante de múltiples ocupaciones, como por ejemplo, el empleo, debe ser de las primeras medidas.
Pensamos se debe tratar en este sentido el acceso y la permanencia como un problema conjunto.

1.4 Movilidad
La expansión de los programas de movilidad estudiantil son una necesidad.
Proponemos la creación, donde no las hay, de redes regionales, que permitan fundamentalmente la formación de postgrados, en un área cercana al país del estudiante.
En la medida del desarrollo de varias redes regionales, la interacción entre ellas facilitará el traspaso estudiantil inter-redes.

Resumiendo:
1- Universalizar la enseñanza avanzada y de alta calidad, sujeta a los cambios necesarios.
2- Integración de las Instituciones de Educación Superior con los demás niveles de la enseñanza.
3- Garantizar el principio de acceso irrestricto y la gratuidad de la enseñanza superior, única forma de mejorar la equidad, asegurando a su vez una adecuada calidad.

2- Calidad de la educación
La calidad en la Educación Superior debe contemplar las principales funciones de la misma: investigación, docencia y extensión.

Muchas son las definiciones de calidad. En nuestro concepto la misma debe ser vista como la búsqueda de la excelencia y la conjugación dialéctica que favorece el tránsito natural de lo cognositivo a lo creador.

2.1 A autonomía y libertad de cátedra
Las instituciones de Educación Superior deben ser autónomas en su funcionamiento, no permitiendo la ingerencia de agentes externos en la toma de decisiones.

La libertad de cátedra es esencial para favorecer los fines de la Educación Superior en el más amplio debate de ideas.

2.2 Excelencia
La excelencia es la base de la creación científica.
La creación científica debe buscar siempre la excelencia, para aportar eficazmente al desempeño de otras funciones como la enseñanza.

2.3 Pertinencia
La pertinencia social de la Educación Superior, o sea, el relacionamiento de ésta con la sociedad y como es vista por ella, es el punto más importante, a nuestro entender, de la Educación Superior.
La reestructura de la enseñanza debe contar con la opinión de todos los sectores sociales, comprender sus necesidades y determinar su papel a cumplir.

Entendemos una institución pertinente cuando responde eficazmente a las demandas externas, pero además cuando se plantea como investigación todo su entorno, e incluso su incidencia en éste.

2.4 Propuestas
- Capacitación pedagógica de los docentes para que de manera concreta puedan transmitir nuevos conocimientos.
- Desarrollo de programas de educación permanente como fórmula de actualizar constantemente sus conocimientos.
- Estímulo del desarrollo de cursos de posgrados regionales.
- Concebir la extensión universitaria como parte del proceso enseñanza-aprendizaje.
- Creación de nuevos conocimientos para aportar en la búsqueda de soluciones a la problemática social.
3- Gestión y participación estudiantil en la toma de decisiones

La gestión en la Educación Superior debe coadyuvar a que los sistemas y las instituciones identifiquen plenamente los cambios de entorno y las condiciones históricas prevalecientes y ganen capacidad para articularse a las velocidades que ocurren, en los diferentes terrenos.

La gestión no es un fin en sí misma, sino un conjunto de elementos para colaborar con los fines de la institución.

Entendiendo a los estudiantes como parte fundamental de la Educación Superior, exigimos se nos reconozca nuestra capacidad para participar en la toma de decisiones.

Las políticas marcadas por nuestras instituciones a nivel nacional, regional o mundial, que influyen en toda la Educación o en la vida social de los estudiantes no pueden ser trazadas sin nuestra participación.

3.1- Vigencia del cogobierno
La experiencia acumulada en Latinoamérica y el Caribe en décadas de cogobierno, confirma su vigencia y demuestra ser la forma más democrática y participativa en los gobiernos de Educación Superior.

Proclamamos el cogobierno universal entendido como el gobierno de todos los involucrados en la Educación Superior (docentes, estudiantes, egresados y funcionarios) para que a través de la coparticipación, el enfrentamiento dialéctico de ideas, enfoques y propuestas, las políticas de Educación Superior sean decididas por sus actores directos.

3.2- Status estudiantil
Reclamamos se preste más atención a la Carta Estudiantil proclamada por Naciones Unidas.

Creemos se debe aprobar un acuerdo donde se establezcan nuestros derechos a la educación, seguridad social y participación en la toma de decisiones.

3.3- Papel de las Uniones Estudiantiles
Debe reconocerse como parte fundamental de la enseñanza superior, el papel de las Uniones Estudiantiles.

Las Uniones Nacionales de Estudiantes deben ser escuchadas, sobre los diferentes temas, principalmente en los referentes a la Educación Superior, brindándoles todo el apoyo moral y material necesarios para su correcto funcionamiento.

Por su parte, en un mundo que avanza hacia la consolidación de bloques regionales que trasciendan las fronteras de nuestras naciones en lo económico, social, cultural, educativo y demás, adquiere principal importancia la opinión de las Uniones Estudiantiles de cada una de las regiones del planeta.

Debe ser prioridad para la UNESCO el estrechamiento de los vínculos y el contacto directo con estas organizaciones que son el resumen del pensamiento estudiantil continental.

Esperamos a través de estas ideas, y de los documentos presentados según las diferentes temáticas de la Conferencia, dar nuestra aportación a la discusión para transformar la Educación Superior Mundial y encaminarla en el próximo siglo como la institución social dedicada al cultivo, al desarrollo, la transmisión y la difusión de la ciencia, los saberes y la cultura superior de la civilización, en sus más diversas manifestaciones.

La Organización Continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes – OCLAE – asume, como lo ha hecho a lo largo de su historia, el desafío de construir entre todos la Educación Superior del Siglo XXI.
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América Latina y el Caribe unidos por 32 años a la Organización Continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes (OCLAE)

Breve resumen histórico de la OCLAE

La OCLAE es un organismo no gubernamental, con relaciones operacionales en la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO). Posee carácter consultivo en la UNICEF y estatus consultivo especial en el Consejo Económico y Social (ECOSOC). Igualmente es Miembro del Foro Latinoamericano de Juventud (FLAJ).

Somos una organización pluralista que posibilita la participación de organizaciones estudiantiles sin discriminación de género, raza, condición social, orientación sexual, ideología ni religión: tenemos estructura y funcionamiento democrático. La OCLAE es autónoma de cualquier entidad pública o privada, nacional o internacional. Nuestros principios fundamentales son: la real democracia, la plena libertad, la unidad, la paz, la solidaridad activa y pública, la justicia, el antimperialismo, la autodeterminación de los pueblos, el respeto a los derechos humanos, la vida y el medio ambiente.

Como objetivo de trabajo tenemos:

- Promover y desarrollar la solidaridad concreta y combativa entre los estudiantes latinoamericanos y caribeños en sus luchas contra el fascismo, el imperialismo, el colonialismo, el neoliberalismo, el neocolonialismo y la injusticia social.
- Defender la Autonomía Universitaria y la pluralidad de la academia y la enseñanza pública y gratuita.
- Luchar por la liquidación del analfabetismo y la democratización de la enseñanza y el bienestar estudiantil de la Universidad Pública.
- Defender la identidad, los ritos, costumbres y en general la cultura latinoamericana y caribeña.
- Desarrollar una política de cooperación y coordinación con las organizaciones internacionales de acuerdo a los principios que rigen la OCLAE.
- Promover intercambios académicos, culturales y deportivos que tiendan a estrechar los lazos de fraternidad entre las organizaciones estudiantiles.
- Promover el no consumo de drogas y el tráfico de las mismas. Impulsar la medicalización y descriminación de los consumidores.
- Luchar contra la explotación que sufre el medio ambiente y promover un desarrollo autosostenible y ecológicamente saludable.

Realizamos nuestro trabajo respetando la autonomía de las Federaciones Estudiantiles. Pueden ser miembros en calidad de Miembros Plenos o Miembros Asociados, todas aquellas organizaciones estudiantiles nacionales, de los estados, de centros universitarios y secundaristas debidamente constituidas.

El máximo órgano de decisiones de la OCLAE es el Congreso Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Estudiantes (CLAE). En la actualidad son Miembros plenos de la OCLAE 23 organizaciones de 20 países; 8 organizaciones son Miembros Asociados y 6 organizaciones poseen el status de Organizaciones Amigas.
La historia de nuestra Organización no puede verse separada de los Congresos Latinoamericanos de Estudiantes, los cuales sentaron bases sólidas para la unidad en el movimiento estudiantil.

El denominado movimiento reformista se inició en 1908, en el Primer Congreso de Estudiantes Latinoamericanos realizado en Montevideo y reafirmado en 1918 con la Reforma de Córdoba. Seguido de varios encuentros regionales que manifestaban el real de la democratización de la enseñanza y la necesidad de la unión continental matizada por la verdadera solidaridad estudiantil, todo en defensa de las justas causas y el bienestar de los estudiantes.

Al finalizar la II Guerra Mundial y ante la sucesión de golpes militares reaccionarios en América Latina y el Caribe, se reorganiza el movimiento estudiantil y tiene lugar nuevamente el I Congreso Latinoamericano de Estudiantes, en julio 1955, en Montevideo, Uruguay. Fue sin dudas este evento, el motor que inició una primera etapa organizativa del movimiento estudiantil de la región. Se abogó por una universidad abierta a la sociedad, la enseñanza gratuita, la libertad de cátedra y la autonomía universitaria.

El II Congreso se efectuó en 1957 en La Plata, Argentina. Se discutió sobre la situación de las organizaciones estudiantiles de América Latina, el cogobierno, la autonomía y se condenó a los gobiernos dictatoriales. Aquí se acordó constituir la Organización de Relaciones Estudiantiles Latinoamericanas (OREL), como nexo entre las asociaciones estudiantiles del continente.

Caracas, Venezuela, fue sede en 1959 del III Congreso Latinoamericano de Estudiantes. Aquí se proclamó el apoyo al pueblo de Puerto Rico, se aprobó la creación de un Frente Latinoamericano contra las dictaduras y se decidió apoyar a la Revolución Cubana, condenando las agresiones imperialistas a ésta. En la Declaración Final se llamó a luchar por la irrestrictamente libertad de cátedra, por la gratuidad de la enseñanza, autonomía y la exigencia de la participación estudiantil en el gobierno de todas las universidades latinoamericanas.

Toda esta etapa fue testigo del empuje del movimiento estudiantil progresista ante lo cual el imperialismo intenta debilitar y dividir al estudiantado. Con este objetivo, se convoca a un autodenominado IV Congreso en Natal, Brasil en 1961. Lo auspiciaba la Secretaría Coordinadora de la Conferencia Internacional de Estudiantes (CIE-COSEC), organización creada para dividir a los estudiantes, financiada por fundaciones controladas por la CIA. La protesta de la dirigencia estudiantil provocó el fracaso de este pretendido congreso.

"Por la unidad antimperialista del estudiantado" fue la consigna que sirvió de marco del 29 de julio al 11 de agosto de 1966, en la Habana, Cuba para que se celebrara el verdadero IV Congreso Latinoamericano de Estudiantes. La inauguración del Congreso se efectuó en la Cuidad Deportiva de La Habana, ante 15.000 estudiantes.

Los temas centrales fueron: la realidad socioeconómica y política de los países de la región, el papel de los estudiantes en la solidaridad con los pueblos en la lucha por su independencia y liberación nacional, el rol del movimiento estudiantil en la reforma y la democratización de la enseñanza y las relaciones e intercambios entre las organizaciones estudiantiles.

Allí, tras un fructífero debate y ante la inminente necesidad de tener una instancia que fuera capaz de aglutinar a los estudiantes de la región que luchaban contra el salvaje colonialismo, neocolonialismo y brutal imperialismo, se acuerda crear, el 11 de agosto, la Organización Continental Latinoamericana de Estudiantes, con sede en la hospitalaria Cuba, ratificada en todos los Congresos. Fue elegida la Federación Estudiantil Universitaria de Cuba como Presidenta de la misma.

Dentro del martirologio de nuestra OCLAE tenemos a José Varona (Fefel), representante de la FUPI de Puerto Rico en el Secretariado Permanente, quien muere el 24 de marzo de 1968, víctima de heridas recibidas en Viet Nam durante un bombardeo yanqui, cuando se dirigía a visitar una escuela. Fefel cumplía una misión de solidaridad de la OCLAE en este hermano país.
El V Congreso Latinoamericano se celebró en Santiago de Chile en 1973. Se aprobaron resoluciones condenatorias a la penetración imperialista en las universidades. Se discutió todo lo referido a la democratización de la enseñanza por los derechos y reivindicaciones de los estudiantes.

Del 8 al 11 de agosto de 1976 tiene lugar la III Reunión de Consulta de la OCLAE con la participación de 20 países de América Latina y el Caribe. Se constató la integración de un mayor número de organizaciones estudiantiles nacionales a las filas de la OCLAE, la consolidación de los principios de unidad y solidaridad de la región. Asimismo, reafirmó la disposición del movimiento estudiantil de reforzar el combate junto a los sectores populares y se denunció la violación por los gobiernos del articulado de la Reforma Universitaria.

El VI CLAE sesionó en La Habana, del 15 al 17 de marzo de 1979. Se aprobó por unanimidad el proyecto de creación de la Orden "José Rafael Varona" y la distinción "Once de Agosto" como máximas condecoraciones de la OCLAE. Fidel Castro fue el primero distinguido con la Orden "José Rafael Varona".

El 12 de septiembre de 1983 en Managua, Nicaragua, se inaugura el VII CLAE con la participación de 24 organizaciones miembros y 13 organizaciones invitadas. En el marco del Congreso se debatieron temas relacionados con la Universidad Latinoamericana y Caribeña.

Desde 1984 a 1986 con el protagonismo de la OCLAE se efectúan también diversas reuniones y seminarios para debatir el tema de la Educación y la situación de América Latina y el Caribe.

Del 12 al 15 de enero de 1987 se festejó el 20º Aniversario y se desarrolló en La Habana, Cuba, el VIII Congreso Latinoamericano de Estudiantes. El CLAE debatió todo lo relacionado con los temas de la Educación y la defensa de los intereses estudiantiles. Siguiendo el mandato del CLEA se desarrolló en agosto en Montevideo, Uruguay, el Encuentro de Organizaciones Estudiantiles del Cono Sur. En noviembre se efectúa en La Habana el XV Congreso de la Unión Internacional de Estudiantes. A 70 años de la Reforma de Córdoba, en 1988, se realiza el Seminario Estudiantil Internacional “La Universidad Latinoamericana a 70 años de la Reforma de Córdoba”, en Argentina.

En noviembre de 1992 tiene lugar el IX Congreso Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Estudiantes (que así comenzó a llamarse desde entonces). El evento tuvo lugar en Montevideo, Uruguay. Los debates se centraron en la situación política del continente, la crisis participativa en el movimiento estudiantil, la lucha por una mejor enseñanza y mejores condiciones de vida para los pueblos de la región. Punto central fue la lucha del estudiantado contra el proceso neoliberal y sus efectos en la educación. El Congreso acordó cambiar la dirección de la OCLAE para adaptarla a la nueva realidad.

El Secretariado Permanente de 7 miembros fue transformado en un Secretariado Ejecutivo de 3 miembros y un Secretariado General conformado por el Ejecutivo, 5 coordinadores regionales y 1 coordinador de Estudiantes Secundarios, que trabajarian desde sus respectivos países. Por acuerdo del Congreso la organización pasaría a llamarse Organización Continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes, manteniendo sus siglas históricas de OCLAE.

También nos hemos sumado a la causa de los Derechos Humanos, para lo cual se han realizado encuentros para analizar tal situación. El X CLAE se desarrolla del 11 al 15 de agosto de 1995 en Santo Domingo, República Dominicana. En el contexto del recorte presupuestario, la intervención del gobierno en las universidades y la implantación de leyes educacionales al corte del Fondo Monetario Internacional y el Banco Mundial que mutilan la autonomía universitaria, libran a los Estados de responsabilidades financieras en el campo educacional y afectan el funcionamiento de las organizaciones estudiantiles.

Ante esta situación el CLAE reflexionó y aprobó una resolución donde señala la aspiración de una enseñanza menos tutelada y más participativa, popular, pública, gratuita y de calidad. El I Seminario Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Reforma Universitaria se efectúa en 1996 en Sao Paulo, Brasil.
Se inicia aquí el proceso previo a la Conferencia Mundial que convoca la UNESCO, analizando todo lo relativo a la Educación Superior y mirándonos de cara a los retos de fin de siglo. Anexamos todo lo relacionado con estos Foros.

En 1997 se celebra el XIV Festival Mundial de la Juventud y los Estudiantes en La Habana, momento en que la OCLAE participa en varios Seminarios y Talleres, relacionados con la temática Educación y Desarrollo, Género y Juventud, agrupando un importante número de jóvenes latinoamericanos. Ante el 30º Aniversario de la caída en combate del Guerrillero Heroico, la OCLAE desarrolla la Caravana a Bolivia incorporando a numerosos estudiantes de la región a esta trascendental actividad.

Brasil es sede, del 8 al 14 de febrero del presente año del XI CLAE. Se desarrolla la Consultiva de la Plataforma Latinoamericana y Caribeña de la Unión Internacional de Estudiantes y se celebra el II Seminario Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Educación Superior previo a la Conferencia Mundial sobre la Educación Superior.

La prioridad básica de la OCLAE en el presente año es la Conferencia Mundial sobre la Educación Superior convocada por la UNESCO. En este contexto hemos realizado de conjunto con las federaciones, diferentes Foros (ver Anexo) con el objetivo de reflexionar profundamente en todos los temas relacionados con la Educación. El Simposio "La Reforma Universitaria de Córdoba y los retos de la Educación Superior del Siglo XXI" que se efectuó en Mérida, Venezuela (16-19 junio) es un ejemplo de lo anterior. Recientemente finalizó en Nicaragua otro importante Forum :"Universidad y Tercer Milenio", que reunió a un grupo significativo de estudiantes del área donde analizamos temas relacionados con la calidad, pertinencia y acceso a la Universidad.

También en mayo se inaugura la Plaza Latinoamericana de Estudiantes "José Rafael Varona", en el Instituto Superior Pedagógico de Matanzas, dando cumplimiento a Acuerdos del XIV Festival mundial; esto se realizó como culminación de la Jornada de Solidaridad con Puerto Rico.

Participamos en el Forum de Juventudes de las Naciones Unidas en Braga, en el Festival Mundial de Juventudes (Lisboa, 1998) y en la I Conferencia Mundial de Ministros Responsables de Juventudes en Portugal.

Recientemente arribamos al 32 Aniversario de la OCLAE y con los mismos principios, los mismos sueños y la misma fuerza ratificamos la vigencia de los postulados de la Reforma Universitaria de 1918. Denunciamos la tradicional receta del neoliberalismo y las políticas globalizadoras.

Eventos convocados o auspiciados por la OCLAE previos a la Conferencia (Anexo)

1- Seminario Internacional "La Transformación Universitaria en V íesperas del Tercer Milenio" (Montevideo - Uruguay, 13-14 de junio de 1996)

Descripción
Conferencias :
- Universidad de la República : Jorge Brovetto-Rector
- Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo : Luis Julián Lima. Presidente de la Universidad Nacional de la Plata
- Servicio Universitario Mundial : Jorge Venegas
- Unión de Universidades de América Latina : Abelardo Villegas – Secretario General
- Centro Regional para la Educación Superior en América Latina y el Caribe : Luis Yarzábal-Director
- UNESCO : Marco Antonio Dias – Director División de Enseñanza Superior
Talleres:
- Calidad y Evaluación
- Pertinencia
- Gestión y Financiamiento
- Cooperación Internacional
- Información y Comunicaciones

2- I Seminario Latinoamericano de Reforma Universitaria (São Paulo - Brasil, 20-24 de noviembre de 1996)

Descripción
Mesa Redonda:
- Autonomía Universitaria y Relaciones con la Sociedad: Eunice Durham - Secretaria de Política Educaticional (MEC-Brasil) y Roberto Romano (UNICAMP-Brasil)
- Autonomía Universitaria y Financiamiento: Antonio Mancel- Vice-Rector (UNEP-Brasil), Dismario Queiroz (UFSC-Brasil) y Lina del Bio (ANEUC-Colombia)
- Autonomía Universitaria y Democracia: Arthur Roguete de Macedo - Rector (UNESP-Brasil), Adolfo Stubrin (CEPRV-Argentina) y Felipe Serpa - Rector (UFBA-Brasil)
- Autonomía Universitaria y Producción de Conocimientos: Ab Saber (SBPC-Brasil) y Dionisio Saldívar (Universidad de La Habana, Cuba)
- Autonomía Universitaria e Igualdad: Dionisio Saldívar y Daniel Cano (CEPRV-Argentina)

Paneles:
- Relaciones Universidad-Empresa: Joao Cláucho-Rector (UNB-Brasil)
- Control Social y Experiencia de Extensión Universitaria: Vanderley Franck Thies (FEAB-Brasil), Larra Barreto (UFG-Brasil) y Neusa Maria Gunel (MST-Brasil)
- Gratuidades en la Educación Superior: José Luis Bedregal (OCALAE), Paul Singer (USP-Brasil) y Larra Barreto (UFG-Brasil)
- Ordenamiento Global: César Callegari-Dpto. Estadual (SP-Brasil) y Ricardo de Melo (Brasil)
- Financiamiento en Universidades Privadas: Milton Santos (USP-Brasil), Carlos Dantas (USP-Brasil) y Marcos Torres (Brasil)
- Relaciones de Poder y la Universidad: Representantes de la UNE-Brasil
- Políticas de Ciencia y Tecnología: Ubaidara Brito (MICT-Brasil) y Luis Céspedes Espinosa (Ministerio de Educación Superior-Cuba)

3- Conferencia regional sobre Políticas y Estrategias para la Transformación de la Educación Superior en América Latina y el Caribe, convocada por la UNESCO (La Habana-Cuba, 18 y 2 de noviembre de 1996)

Descripción
La OCALAE participó activamente en todos los debates y como resultado de la Conferencia se aprobó la Declaración Estudiantil de La Habana, documento que refleja las aspiraciones del estudiantado universitario en la región.

4- II Seminario Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Reforma Universitaria (Brasil, 9 y 10 de febrero de 1998)

Descripción
Debates:
- La Educación Superior en el Siglo XXI: José F. Silvio - Especialista Principal en Educación Superior (CRESALC-Centro Regional para Educación Superior en América Latina y el Caribe/UNESCO), Venezuela; Cristóvam Buarque-Gobernador del Distrito Federal, Brasil y Lauro Mohry-Rector (UNB-Brasil)
Calidad y Pertinencia de la Enseñanza Superior: José F. Silvio-Especialista Principal en Educación del CRESALC (Venezuela) y Dr. Enrique Juan Marañon Reyes -Ex-Rector de la Universidad de Oriente, Doctor en Ciencias Técnicas y Representante del Ministerio de Educación Superior de Cuba

Cooperación Internacional en el Ambito Universitario: José Wainer- Representante de la AUGM (Asociación de Universidades del Grupo Montevideo), Luis Céspedes-Asesor del Ministerio de Educación Superior de Cuba, Cuba y Medardo Mora Solórzano- Presidente CONUEP (Consejo Nacional de Universidades y Escuelas Politécnicas del Ecuador), Ecuador

Talleres:

Taller 1:
1. La Educación Superior, el desarrollo humano duradero y la paz
2. La relación de la Educación Superior con el sistema educativo global

Taller 2:
1. La libertad académica, la autonomía institucional y el co-gobierno
2. El financiamiento de la Educación Superior

Taller 3:
1. La Calidad Académica y la Pertinencia de la Educación Superior
2. La investigación y las nuevas tecnologías en la Educación Superior

Taller IV:
1. La diversificación de la Educación Superior
2. La Educación Superior y el mundo del trabajo

Taller V:
1. El acceso y la permanencia de los estudiantes en la Educación Superior
2. El estudiante y la sociedad: discriminación social en la Educación Superior

5. Foro de Reflexión Universitaria "La Universidad Argentina a 80 años de la Reforma" (13-15 de junio de 1998), organizado por la Regional del Cono Sur.

Seminarios:
- "La Reforma Desconocida"
  Diserta: Dr. Roberto Ferrero
- "Los golpes militares y la Reforma Universitaria"
  Diserta: Arquitecto Luis Rébora
- "La Reforma Universitaria de 1918"
  Diserta: Dr. Luis Marcó del Pont
- "Hacia una nueva Reforma Universitaria"
  Diserta: Dr. Daniel Cano (Responsable del Centro de Estudios para la Reforma Universitaria (CEPRU))
- "La Educación Superior en Latinoamérica"
  Diserta: Ingeniero Químico Jorge Brovetto (Secretario Ejecutivo de la AUGM)
- "Los nuevos desafíos del Movimiento Estudiantil Latinoamericano: Visión y Acción hacia la Conferencia Mundial sobre la Educación Superior convocada por la UNESCO"
  Disertan: Pablo Javkin-Presidente Federación Universitaria Argentina (FUA)
  Rony Gabriel Corbo-Secretario Ejecutivo Organización Continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes (OCLAE)

6. Simposio la "Reforma Universitaria de Córdoba y los retos de la Educación Superior del Siglo X X I" (Mérida-Venezuela, 16-19 de junio de 1998; organizado por la Regional Andina)
Foro-Debates:
- La Reforma de Córdoba y la Autonomía Universitaria: Lic. Poeta Paraima, Dr. David Díaz Miranda y Francisco Martínez (Docentes de la Universidad de los Andes) y Dr. Carlos Moro Yerse (Senador de Venezuela)
- La Reforma Universitaria de Córdoba y la Universidad Latinoamericana de Hoy
- La Reforma Universitaria de Córdoba y la Realidad Económica Latinoamericana Actual: Dr. Carlos Tünnermann
- La Reforma Universitaria de Córdoba y el Movimiento Estudiantil: Mynor González-Ejecutivo (OCLAE)
- La Reforma Universitaria de Córdoba y la Realidad Económica Latinoamericana Actual: Representante de la Fundación Mariscal de Ayacucho.

Conferencias:
- Reforma Universitaria y Extensión Universitaria: Dr. David Díaz Miranda (Universidad de Los Andes)
- Autonomía Universitaria y Políticas Neoliberales: Dr. Carlos Tünnermann (UNESCO)

7- Foro Universidad y Tercer Milenio, México y Centroamérica (Managua-Nicaragua, 8 y 9 de agosto de 1998

Descripción
Debates:
- Tema: Calidad de la Educación Superior: Dr. Miguel de Castilla (PREAL)
- Tema: Cooperación Internacional: Dr. Ricardo Sol- Secretario General (CSUCA)
- Tema: Gestión y Financiamiento: Lic. Rafael Lucio (PREAL)
- Tema: Universidad y Desarrollo: Lic. Francisco Guzmán- Consejo Nacional de Universidades (CNU-Nicaragua)

8- III Semana del Estudiante realizada en la Universidad de la República de Montevideo-Uruguay (21-26 de septiembre de 1998)

Descripción:
Talleres:
- Reforma de Córdoba. Perspectiva a 80 años
- La Universidad Latinoamericana como Agente de Cambio Social
- La función del Intelectual de la Sociedad; ¿Qué intelectual debe formar la Universidad?
- La Universidad y la Transición hacia la Democracia

PERTINENCIA

La Pertinencia como tal siempre ha estado presente en la institución llamada Universidad. Ella fue motor de su creación y de los sucesivos cambios, tanto estructurales como de orientación que ha sufrido a lo largo de su rica historia.

Cuando hablamos de "la Pertinencia de la Universidad" debemos ser conscientes de las disímiles características que adopta la misma de acuerdo al momento histórico y a la región en que nos encontramos. Entendemos la Pertinencia como un concepto polisémico, histórico e ideológico. Como integrantes de una organización que nuclea a estudiantes latinoamericanos y caribeños nos centramos en el análisis de las universidades de nuestra región e intentaremos llegar a algunas propuestas para el desarrollo "pertinente de las mismas".
La Universidad Latinoamericana nace en la época colonial como una réplica del modelo hispánico, como un fuerte acento clerical y escolástico. Dentro de estas características se instalaron en distintas ciudades de nuestro continente universidades al amparo de diversas órdenes religiosas. Su función social era clara: formar una capa social de letrados criollos, encargada de dirigir la vida política, social, económica y cultural de América. Esta élite criolla sumisa a la metrópolis europea velaba más por los intereses de ésta que por los nativos.

Pese a las sucesivas conquistas independentistas la Universidadd Latinoamericana cambió muy lentamente. A mediados del siglo XIX experimenta una transformación marcada por la adopción del llamado modelo napoleónico, con una organización de la enseñanza superior basada en escuelas profesionalistas y autárquicas.

En la última década del siglo XX asistimos a la arremetida de políticas educativas promovidas por organismos crediticios internacionales (Banco Mundial, Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo), teniendo como fin el afianzamiento de la hegemonía mundial de los llamados países desarrollados. Estos organismos, abanderados internacionales del neoliberalismo, priorizan el crecimiento macroeconómico frente al desarrollo social de los pueblos. El BM en su "Priorities and Strategies for Education. A World Bank Sector Review" (1995) realiza una propuesta de articulación entre el modelo neoliberal y un proyecto educador basado en la ley del mercado. Para el BM es imperioso reformar el sistema educativo de los países subdesarrollados teniendo como marco las reformas económicas y sociales de corte neoliberal.

En lo que se refiere a las cometidas de las Universidades Latinoamericanas, compartimos las conclusiones a las que arriba el Maestro Soler Rocas, en un breve pero substancioso análisis del mencionado documento del BM. Soler Rocas sostiene que para este Banco "... a las instituciones de enseñanza superior les corresponde formar, al más bajo costo posible, el capital humano necesario para el buen funcionamiento de la sociedad como ámbito de acción empresarial supranacional, que se apoyará en las universidades privadas para la formación de los cuadros superiores y para la realización de las investigaciones conducentes al crecimiento. El aporte de las Universidades públicas a la elevación del nivel científico y cultural de los respectivos países y su contribución a la salvaguarda de la soberanía nacional no merecen prioridad" (Soler Roca, 1997).

En América Latina y el Caribe estas políticas educativas promovidas por los organismos internacionales antes mencionados han ganado terreno, impulsadas por la mayoría de los gobiernos de nuestro continente, llevando a las Universidades Latinoamericanas estatales y especialmente al movimiento estudiantil a denunciar el hecho y a enfrentarse directamente con el poder político.

Entendemos como funciones primordiales de la Universidad Latinoamericana y Caribeña la democratización del conocimiento terciario y superior y la generación, difusión y aplicación del mismo en pos del desarrollo y la independencia regional.

Reforma

Sabido es que la pobreza económica a la que es sometida la Universidad Latinoamericana y Caribeña afectan el adecuado cumplimiento de sus funciones básicas, las cuales hacen a la Pertinencia de la institución. Consideramos que una mejora presupuestaria contribuiría a solucionar la situación acuciante que vive nuestra institución. Pese a ello sostenemos también que la Universidad Latinoamericana y Caribeña debe reformarse para cumplir con su legado.

La Pertinencia no debe tomarse pasivamente: la Universidad no debe sólo escuchar las demandas de la sociedad, respondiendo a su solicitud de formaciones técnicas y académicas; debe cumplir un importante rol crítico y transformador de la realidad.

Para convertirse en impulsora de cambios sociales y económicos, basados en la igualdad y la justicia social, nuestra Universidad debe romper con algunas características que le impiden generar y aplicar el conocimiento buscando la solución de problemas nacionales y regionales y la convierten en reproductoras del sistema imperante. A decir de D. Ribeiro "... este malogro se explica, en gran
medida, por los efectos de la dependencia socioeconómica y cultural que pesa sobre América Latina desde el período colonial. Nuestras élites, incluso las universitarias, aspiraban nada más que a una modernización refleja que, en el plano económico integrase sus nociones de forma más eficaz en el mercado mundial como proveedores de productos primarios e importadores de bienes manufacturados y en el plano cultural, reproducirse superficialmente estilos ajenos de erudición académica. Sólo Cuba, en América Latina de hoy día, transcediendo la antigua estructura de poder e implantando una nueva, totalmente opuesta a los designios de las antiguas élites dirigentes con respecto a intereses sociales que deberían predominar, pudo emprender una renovación radical de la Universidad." (Ribeiro, 1973)

Algunos de los puntos a priorizar serían:

- Democratizar el conocimiento terciario y superior, teniendo como meta el matricular a todos los jóvenes en condiciones de ingresar al tercer nivel de enseñanza.
- Descentralizarse, brindando cursos de carácter terciario y superior en distintas regiones, en función de las necesidades de desarrollo existentes en cada una de ellas.
- Tener un fuerte vínculo con las actividades productivas y de servicios (políticas de convenios).

Uno de los puntos que debe contemplarse en este ítem es la implementación de pasantías de trabajo para estudiantes, en el área de su formación. Esto permitirá capacitarles en la práctica, tener contacto directo con la realidad social y resarcir en parte el costo que sus estudios infringen a la sociedad, mediante la prestación de sus servicios.

- Racionalizar los recursos humanos y materiales, de manera a potenciar las distintas actividades a desarrollar (investigación, enseñanza, extensión)
- Establecer cursos de carácter no curricular en las distintas áreas del conocimiento, a los cuales pueda asistir todo aquel que desee y esté en condiciones de seguirlos.
- Terminar con la obsoleta estructuración de facultades y carreras, organizándose por disciplinas afines en áreas del conocimiento y flexibilizando los currículos, permitiendo el traspaso horizontal y ampliando las áreas de formación; todo ello con la excelencia como meta. (No existe en el mundo académico diferenciación entre conocimiento clase A y conocimiento clase B. Debemos someter toda producción universitaria al máximo rigor)
- La instrumentación de cursos de actualización para egresados. Dado el acelerado avance del conocimiento, el egresado debe actualizarlo periódicamente. De ahora en más la capacitación deberá ser permanente.
- Implantar programas de investigación que tengan por objeto el solucionar problemáticas nacionales y regionales.
- Desarrollar programas de investigación en nuevas tecnologías buscando cortar con la actual relación de dependencias con los países del "primer mundo".
- “Contrapolitizar”, nuestra Universidad reproductora del sistema actual, convirtiéndola en un instrumento real para la transformación.

Algunos de estos puntos han sido puestos en práctica por algunas de nuestras Universidades, pero debemos extenderlos y afianzarlos.

Proclamamos la Autonomía, el Cogobierno y la Gratuidad como tres pilares fundamentales para poder operar las transformaciones necesarias para edificar día a día una Universidad Latinoamericana y Caribeña comprometida con la realidad regional y precursora de los cambios necesarios para construir un mundo justo y solidario.

**Bibliografía consultada**

CALIDAD

Simón Bolívar proclamó que la Educación es la base de la libertad. Para lograr esta plena libertad se necesita un concepto múltiple y variado de calidad en la Educación Superior. Pero es vital en el desarrollo del mecanismo de dirección de la calidad apreciar la formación del profesional, la educación postgradual, la extensión universitaria y la imprescindible investigación, científica y tecnológica.

Algo de extrema importancia que constituye, sin duda, un sueño estudiantil, es la profesionalización de la enseñanza, factor éste que contribuye a la excelencia en la Formación de los Profesionales.

Lo anterior debe estar matizado por el adecuado acercamiento a la realidad social y económica de cada nación, la vinculación de lo cognoscitivo a lo creador, de la activación en el campo científico-técnico de la adquisición de conocimientos y en el campo práctico, la asimilación de hábitos y habilidades que complemen ten nuestra formación.

Se hace cada vez más necesario que nuestra formación vaya a un perfil amplio, versátil. Ante los retos de fin de siglo, la Universidad debe graduar mujeres y hombres con plena conciencia sobre sus deberes y responsabilidades ante su país y el mundo, con amplia cultura. Mal podría verse hoy la Educación con dosilidad o sometimiento a la llamada autoridad, educar es construir un hombre dotado de autonomía suficiente para que sea capaz de razonar y decidir con la mayor libertad.

Nuestros profesores han de enseñarnos cuáles son realmente las necesidades educativas personales y sociales, con el objetivo de combatir los males que hoy enfrentan nuestras naciones.

Una de nuestras principales demandas es "incluir a los excluídos", a esas personas que no les es posible alcanzar lo inalcanzable, que no les ha sido posible acceder a la instrucción básica y a la formación profesional. Es trascendental aumentar la representación de los grupos más desfavorecidos en la Educación Superior que debe ser accesible a todos los que puedan beneficiarse de ella. Recordamos que en la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos se señala que el acceso a los estudios superiores será igual para todos, en función de los méritos respectivos.

Exigimos desarrollo pero con rostro humano, no se puede olvidar que la Universidad es la cantera de los jóvenes técnicos, profesionales y científicos que llegan a la sociedad teniendo como visión conservar y transmitir la cultura.

A mayor excelencia de la Educación mayor será la preservación de la cultura. La Universidad y sus estudiantes tenemos el rol de mantener la autonomía frente a los intentos de control gubernamental. Se escuchan personas hablando de la sociedad del futuro como una sociedad del conocimiento, es hora de definir si será del conocimiento elitista o democrático. La realidad del ahogo presupuestal, los proyectos de reformas del sistema educativo propuestos por el Fondo Monetario Internacional o el Banco Mundial, donde se limita la autonomía y la gratuidad, el limitacionismo y los claros ideales de lucro, son algunos de los puntos a cubrir en la lucha por la calidad.

Si deseamos una Educación de calidad debemos entonces exigir que ésta sea para la libertad, para la justicia, para la crítica, sentada en jóvenes solidarios no competitivos. Nos oponemos al llamado pretexto de la ideología neoliberal de que la Educación tiene que estar "desideologizada", cien por ciento academizada y tecnificada sin compromiso social, ya que esto transmite una fuerte carga individualista, insolidaria y elitista.
La función formadora de nuestras Universidades no se puede limitar a conocimientos y habilidades, sino también a la formación y consolidación de valores. Debemos cada día ganar en conciencia que estos tiempos imponen retos académicos y científicos, morales y éticos. Un estudiante integral será aquel que esté a la altura de su época histórica.

La realidad social que se vive hoy imposibilita el cumplimiento del precepto de Educación permanente, o sea, que el egresado pueda superarse constantemente y en las puertas del tercer milenio esto ha de ser una conquista a alcanzar. Lo anterior, acceso a los conocimientos del postgraduado, es una medida de justicia social que debe ser promovida.

Uno de los problemas que afecta la calidad de la Educación es la masificación de la misma, esto no quiere decir que estemos en contra del acceso a las Universidades de las mayorías, sino al contrario, favorecemos la búsqueda científica de un método creativo de enseñanza-aprendizaje que se acope a las exigencias del momento actual de forma incluyente y que ayude a mejorar la calidad de la Educación, es por eso que queremos una Universidad auténticamente pedagógica, donde existan proyectos educativos, nos oponemos a los proyectos lucrativos, a la llamada Universidad Virtual. Los gobiernos deben garantizar el cumplimiento del derecho y la calidad en la Educación. No es lógico que se descargue en los estudiantes el costo de su formación.

Otro aspecto que influye en la calidad de la Educación es la investigación científica y tecnológica. No vemos una real Universidad donde no exista un colectivo estudiantil en plena investigación, creación y difusión del conocimiento ; se debe desarrollar el espíritu de investigación en los universitarios. No debe elitizarse el quehacer científico, debemos proponernos masivizar el proceso investigador. Para ello debemos establecer programas universitarios de investigación, donde se planifiquen e integren los mismos.

No es lógico pensar en un proyecto auténticamente pedagógico sin interacción con la sociedad. Para ello es vital extender la cultura universitaria y extrauniversitaria, la llamada extensión universitaria es una manifestación de la dialéctica relación universidad-sociedad. Debe ser un objetivo fundamental la promoción de la cultura desde la Universidad con los estudiantes. Una Universidad intramuros se aísla de su contexto social.

Nos oponemos a comercializar la cultura universitaria y respaldamos la formación de los talentos artísticos en el movimiento universitario.

Como factor asociado a la Calidad se encuentra la preparación y excelencia del claustro profesional. Abogamos por profesores que estén dispuestos a dar todos sus conocimientos en el empeño de enseñar. Queremos profesores que no se conformen con su preparación cultural y constantemente eleven su currículum académico. Profesor es aquel que educa y nos enseña a pensar con plenitud de libertad.

Como miembros del movimiento estudiantil latinoamericano y caribeño, seguido de las tradiciones, de la historia, conocedores del presente y ratificando los postulados de la Reforma de Córdoba, denunciamos los intentos de desarticular las Universidades. Nuestras altas casas de estudio corren el riesgo de quedar de espaldas a los sectores más necesitados y de cara al mercado. Estamos en el deber de crear las conclusiones para que la Universidad responda a los requerimientos de la sociedad. Sólo una Educación Superior comprometida incondicionalmente con el destino de su pueblo será capaz de garantizar la trayectoria ascendente del desarrollo social.

Aspiramos a que se nos eduque en una cultura de paz, donde las desigualdades desaparezcan y todos los jóvenes tengamos derechos con decoro. Donde lo ético juege su rol y la formación integral garantice el desarrollo de personalidades plenas. Ya habíamos señalado que la calidad abarca tres funciones básicas: docencia, investigación y extensión, lo que supone la calidad del claustro de los programas, de los métodos de enseñanza, de su infraestructura, del entorno académico y comprende también la calidad de sus estudiantes. Esto último es vital en la Universidad moderna, necesitamos jóvenes dinámicos, creativos, comprometidos con su Patria y conscientes de la misión autoformativa para generar discusiones libres y enriquecedoras a la calidad de su Educación.
Somos una parte importante de la sociedad, por lo que le interesa a la mayoría asegurar la calidad de nuestra preparación.

No es un secreto que la calidad está condicionada por los recursos asignados. Ante la situación de nuestro continente se ve limitado severamente el cumplimiento de los objetivos que se traza la Educación Superior, provocando un bajo nivel de calidad. Constituye hoy una preocupación la poca interacción que existe entre los sistemas de Educación de cada país, esto es fundamental para la coherente y lógica formación del estudiantado.

Confiamos en los esfuerzos que hoy realiza la UNESCO para situar a la Educación en el lugar que le corresponde. Conscientes estamos del papel que debemos tener en la coyuntura actual. Y con toda la esperanza en una futura Educación Superior de mayor calidad, ratificamos nuestra formación de ser mujeres y hombres profesional y éticamente ligados a los obreros y campesinos. “Ser cultos, - dijo Martí, es el único modo de ser libres” y para ser libres es que vamos a la Universidad.

En busca del conocimiento, del talento, en busca de lo mejor de la humanidad, la Educación Superior debe ser impartida por quienes sientan esta obra de infinito amor, no deseamos robots frente a las aulas. Tenemos claridad del papel que nos pertenece y sabemos que el pueblo agradece nuestras exigencias en pos de una Educación Superior con calidad.

FINANCIAMIENTO: INVERSION NECESARIA PARA EL DESENVOLVIMIENTO HUMANO

Introducción

Al discutir temas tan importantes como: Pertinencia, Calidad, Cooperación Internacional, Gestión y Financiamiento, la Conferencia Mundial sobre Educación Superior debe de tener en cuenta que todos ellos se integran y necesitan de políticas públicas que promuevan su desarrollo integrado. Los análisis y propuestas sobre el financiamiento están insertos en esta óptica. La aplicación de políticas para este sector promueve el impacto más amplio del que encierra el propio término. Cualquiera de los otros temas abordados por la CMES se subordina y es subordinado por el enfoque dado por el financiamiento.

La UNESCO reconoce la relación de la enseñanza superior con el desarrollo de la ciencia y la tecnología en su función esencial del desarrollo humano sustentable. Es por lo tanto, la Educación Superior un área prioritaria en su programa (Documentos para el cambio y el desarrollo en la Educación superior, UNESCO 1995). Entre tanto, buena parte de los países tienen relegado este nivel educacional a planes inferiores. En América Latina y el Caribe el sistema de educación terciario está lejos aún de alcanzar los objetivos que planteamos. Sufre por ser elitista en casi todos los casos y la mayoría de las veces no es correspondido con las demandas más urgentes de la población. Igualmente estimamos que entre el 75% y el 90% del total de las investigaciones y el desarrollo en esta región son producidos por las Universidades públicas. Así mismo son pocos los gobiernos que dan real atención a la Educación Superior. En vez de reformarlas adaptando su estructura a las nuevas realidades emplean desastrosas políticas recomendadas por organismos internacionales de financiamiento. Esto trae aparejado la vinculación total de la vida universitaria a la simple demanda del mercado afectando la enseñanza superior del cumplimiento de su función de base.

Diagnóstico de la crisis

La falta de compromiso reinante entre la mayoría de los gobiernos de los países latinoamericanos y caribeños es más sensible en el problema financiero como podemos observar abajo:
1- El gasto promedio de los países de la región con la educación decreció de 0.5 % de 1980 para 1986 (corresponde al 4.1% del PBI) margen que es cerca de un tercio menor que la media mundial (6%) y es inferior a lo que recomienda "La Declaración de México de 1979" (7%).

2- La media de gastos por alumno en el nivel superior en nuestra región corresponde a apenas al 21% de la media mundial. Entre tanto más de la mitad de los países latinoamericanos y caribeños invierten menos del 14% de esta media.

3- Todas las regiones del mundo (inclusive los países del Africa-Sub-Sahariana) gastan más en Educación Superior que América Latina y el Caribe.

Es tan seria la crisis en las instituciones de la enseñanza superior que la calidad de la enseñanza y la investigación sufren un deterioro creciente. Los bajos salarios pagos al personal docente y técnico-administrativos han causado la fuga de los principales cuadros y elevado la falta de mecanismos de capacitación y recapacitación profesional adecuados.

Laboratorios y bibliotecas generalmente son anticuados o faltos de los instrumentos de trabajo adecuados para su correcto funcionamiento. Acompañando esta crisis se favoreció un aumento vertiginoso de instituciones privadas de Educación Superior. Estas, salvo raras excepciones, no promueven la enseñanza de calidad ni desenvuelven políticas de investigación y extensión. Sobreviven básicamente de las altas cuotas pagadas por los estudiantes.

**Soluciones indicadas**

Como soluciones de los problemas enunciados, los organismos multilaterales de financiamiento proponen la diversificación de las formas de financiamiento de la Educación Superior. En el documento titulado "La Enseñanza Superior. Lecciones derivadas de la experiencia" el Banco Mundial (BIRD) recomienda a los países en desarrollo una mayor vinculación de este nivel de la enseñanza con el sector privado, fomentando la creación de instituciones privadas de Educación Superior y la participación de los estudiantes en los gastos de la misma. La experiencia real ha demostrado el fracaso de estas recomendaciones en la práctica. Los países que adoptaron estas medidas han rebajado considerablemente la calidad de la educación terciaria.

No discordamos de la participación del sector privado en el financiamiento de la enseñanza superior siempre y cuando el poder público se comprometa con los recursos suficientes y constantes que sustenten el sistema público y permitan una real autonomía en las Universidades, en este momento condicionadas por la carencia de recursos.

Si predomina una óptica de mercado, la Pertinencia de la Enseñanza Superior deja de regirse por las necesidades sociales, para esclavizarse a las demandas de éste.

Como ya se ha demostrado anteriormente, casi la totalidad de la producción científica, investigación y desarrollo están en América Latina y el Caribe en las Universidades públicas. La creación y fomento de instituciones privadas no son soluciones para la crisis del sector. Por el contrario, se agrava por estimular instituciones que no se dedican a una enseñanza de calidad sino simplemente al lucro.

Es por esto que consideramos que la última recomendación del BIRD es por demás injustificada. Las recientes investigaciones indican que los aportes de los estudiantes en la asignación de recursos a las universidades de calidad, no traspasan el 20% en los países que se emplean el cobro de anualidades.

Con el cobro de aranceles a los alumnos, se incrementa la diferenciación económica en el acceso y se fomenta la evasión antes de la graduación. Infelizmente algunos países de nuestro continente ya adoptaron estas recomendaciones que están generando distorsiones de severas proporciones en nuestros sistemas educativos superiores.

Políticas del tipo "financiamiento para la calidad" indicadas por el BIRD no son formas adecuadas de financiamiento universitario por promover la privatización del sector y el desvío de recursos públicos a instituciones privadas.
El principal problema de los países en desarrollo es aumentar el presupuesto estatal correspondiente a este sector.

La UNESCO en su "Documento de Políticas para el Cambio y el Desarrollo de la Educación Superior" recomienda "invertir más en la Educación, incluyendo el nivel superior, mediante la participación mundial de todos los sectores interesados a fin de asegurar una base más amplia de recursos" y recalca la necesidad de "reconocer que la Educación Superior es una inversión social importante" y por tanto, deben designársele fondos públicos adecuados.

Principales recomendaciones para el sector:

1- La responsabilidad en el financiamiento de la Educación Superior debe ser del Estado que debe hacerlo de forma suficiente y constante. Otros sectores deben ayudar de forma subsidiaria al poder público.
2- La Enseñanza Superior debe tener la misma atención que los demás niveles educacionales por ser complementarios y componer un mismo sistema.
3- La enseñanza debe ser gratuita a todos los niveles incluyendo el superior.
4- Las decisiones sobre el destino de la educación terciaria deben darse en forma paritaria y democrática con la participación de toda la comunidad académica y de la sociedad en el proceso.

Plan de acción

1- Aumentar los gastos, en los países en desarrollo, en educación al mínimo recomendado por la "Declaración de México" – 7% del PBI – designando de este monto lo necesario para desarrollar una enseñanza superior de calidad.
2- Fomentar programas de asistencia estudiantil que aseguren la permanencia de los estudiantes en los cursos y ayuden a reducir la evasión.
3- Creación de un fondo mundial de apoyo a los países en desarrollo que permita avanzar en el nivel de la Educación Superior y la universalización de la misma.
4- Creación y fortalecimiento de organismos especializados en gestión financiera a nivel nacional o regional, que evalúen y califiquen la gestión de nuestras instituciones. Los mismos pueden darle seguimiento al plan de acción aprobado en esta conferencia.

LA COOPERACION INTERNACIONAL EN LA EDUCACION SUPERIOR

Situación de las Universidades en América Latina y el Caribe

"Somos aquí una minoría física de esa gran masa que hace posible la existencia misma de la Universidad... Tomamos la palabra por los que tienen una Universidad donde desarrollarse humana y profesionalmente y también por aquellos cuyas casas de estudios son avasalladas en sus principios y valores fundamentales." (3)

Cercanos al antes prometedor año 2000, el escenario que presentan las Universidades es similar en todos los países de nuestro continente; se ha encontrado en la educación privada un perfecto negocio, se reduce y retrasan las entregas de los presupuestos universitarios, se viola sistemáticamente la autonomía universitaria, se intervienen y militarizan las instituciones de Educación Superior, se destituyen autoridades universitarias democráticamente electas y se nombran personeros del gobierno de turno, se limita el acceso de los estudiantes a la Universidad, se implantan aranceles y cuotas, se aprueban leyes que contravienen los principios de una Educación Pública y Gratuita y violentan la
autonomía universitaria, con lo que merma la calidad de la enseñanza y no se puede disponer de la infraestructura necesaria para una Educación para el desarrollo.

De la Universidad tecnológica, científica y humanista definida como institución cultural, generadora de conocimiento científico en función de intereses sociales, de la autonomía política y funcional que se entiende como paradigmas de la Universidad moderna, se intenta imponer un concepto de Universidad que la entienden como “Fábrica de Títulos”, que debe investigar lo que el mercado le financia, que desaloja de sus programas todo enfoque humanista, formadora de seres aptos para competir los unos contra los otros, que jerarquiza y reproduce las diferencias sociales e intenta homogenizar las identidades.

El Banco Mundial-BM-dice: “Los países dispuestos a adoptar un entramado político para la Educación Superior que privilegie una estructura institucional diferenciada y una base de recursos diversificada, poniendo el mayor énfasis en los agentes y en la financiación privados, continuarán recibiendo atención prioritaria”. El proyecto que impulsa el BM tiene su centro en la privatización, elitización y mercalización de la Educación Superior, impone el modelo norteamericano de producción de conocimiento universitario subordinado a la exigencia del gran capital, como proyecto a universalizar. La investigación aplicada desaparece de las universidades y queda bajo el financiamiento de las empresas, la relación universidad-cultura queda castrada bajo la exigencia de dominación política y maximización de ganancias, convirtiendo la enseñanza humanística en conocimiento no rentable y las universidades en empresas que forman los hombres que necesita el mercado y no los hombres que regulan social y ambientemente el mercado.

En este contexto se habla de crisis de la educación y de la escuela, de la pertinencia de la Universidad, pero este análisis no ha de tratarse como la crisis de la educación sino como la crisis de la sociedad que formula sus códigos, porque todo proyecto educativo está inserto en el interior de un proyecto de ser humano. Un sistema social intolerante, competitivo, excluyente e insostenible social y ambientalmente, no puede demandar pertinencia para la Universidad. Por tanto la inadaptada para proveer una Universidad popular de los humanos y para los humanos, no es la escuela en sí sino la sociedad misma. Antes de preguntarnos qué tipo de Universidad queremos hemos de preguntar a qué tipo de sociedad aspiramos. Es fundamental que independientemente de su estructura jurídica u organizacional, la Educación Superior mantenga su carácter de función pública y demuestre fehacientemente a la sociedad que cumple sus funciones con un óptimo nivel de calidad.

¿Qué entendemos por cooperación internacional?

La cooperación internacional debe estar ligada a la solidaridad humana y oponerse al individualismo, la competitividad, la fragmentación, la discriminación de cualquier tipo, la instrumentalización y manipuleo político de cualquier naturaleza. Esta cooperación no debe ser condicionada, más bien se debe buscar el beneficio mutuo para que todas las partes involucradas se sientan satisfechas con el trabajo realizado, se debe tener un balance que permita un desarrollo continuo y evite que la cooperación sea asistencialista o paternalista.

Creemos que la cooperación internacional se debe fundamentar sobre bases como: la unidad, frente a todo lo que atente contra la humanidad y su entorno; el desarrollo, entendido como el avance de la ciencia y la técnica en beneficio de la sociedad y la protección del hábitat de la humanidad; el humanismo, como forma de potenciar toda la capacidad intelectual del ser humano en forma integral; la difusión cultural, incentivando el conocimiento de las riquezas culturales y autóctonas de nuestros países respetando las costumbres y tradiciones de los pueblos que conforman ese gran arco iris que es la raza humana y la investigación objetiva, para conocer los problemas que aquejan a la humanidad y contribuir a su superación y solución.

La cooperación internacional no debe atentar contra los patrones y procesos académicos de las Universidades, ni su autonomía, debe evitar entrometerse en las políticas educativas, más bien debe
colaborar para que éstas se actualicen y desarrollen de acuerdo a las necesidades de su entorno y así colaborar a disminuir las diferencias en el desarrollo social de los países.

La cooperación internacional es necesaria para coadyuvar a la solución de problemas y males que aquejan a la humanidad y al planeta, principalmente en las actuales circunstancias donde cada día el mundo afronta situaciones que no involucran a una sola nación, sino transcienden más allá de las fronteras de nuestros países, situaciones que pueden llevar a la humanidad a una era de creciente bienestar o a una de incalculables males.

En la coyuntura actual cuando predomina la política de globalización y desarrollo tecnológico-científico que evidencia la capacidad intelectual del ser humano, se contraponen situaciones que cada día acentúan la asimetría entre ricos y pobres; la proliferación de los conflictos religiosos y étnicos, la degradación y destrucción de la naturaleza y el predominio de antivalores que niegan la vigencia de los valores humanos. En muchas ocasiones la cooperación internacional ha sido utilizada para influir como política ingerensista, en situaciones internas, principalmente en los países dependientes o menos desarrollados, esto atenta contra los principios de soberanía y autodeterminación. Este tipo de "cooperación" se debe erradicar.

La cooperación internacional en América Latina y el Caribe

Las universidades de Educación Superior tienen las funciones en esta sociedad de preservar, acrecentar y transmitir los valores culturales pero a su vez, en muchas ocasiones, representan la vanguardia para los cambios culturales y el desarrollo de la ciencia y la tecnología en un mundo en el que cada día más se avanza de una forma acelerada. Esto hace necesario que las universidades aúnen esfuerzos para poder mantenerse dentro de los niveles pertinentes y poder cumplir con sus objetivos, con la calidad que exige su entorno.

Las universidades de nuestro continente se encuentran en una franca desventaja frente a las universidades de los países desarrollados, -unas más que otras-, esto implica que la colaboración entre las Universidades de la región se debe priorizar, es decir, la cooperación internacional en forma horizontal. Esto serviría para realizar proyectos en conjunto, intercambiar experiencias y conocimientos para acrecentar el desarrollo académico en las áreas en las que se efectúa la cooperación así como enfrentar de manera conjunta la desventaja de ser países dependientes o menos desarrollados.

Un aspecto fundamental en la Reforma de la Educación Superior y de sus instituciones en América Latina y el Caribe es el reconocimiento de la internacionalización de los procesos educativos y de la necesidad de buscar alianzas para poder responder adecuadamente a ese proceso (1) tomando como base lo mencionado anteriormente se hace necesario dinamizar y fortalecer los proyectos de cooperación que existen en América Latina y el Caribe como la UDUAL, OUI, el CSUCA, la AUGM, CUNET, CRESALC, etc... a nivel estudiantil la OCLAE además de buscar los mecanismos para coordinar el trabajo de cooperación entre estas instancias. De esta manera se aprovecharían al máximo todos los recursos con que cuentan las instituciones de Educación Superior evitando que las transferencias tecnológicas se conviertan en una forma moderna de coloniaje, además de tener la posibilidad de que, los grandes intelectuales y científicos de América Latina y el Caribe, puedan desarrollar sus capacidades y no se vean en la necesidad de emigrar a instituciones con mejores condiciones fuera de nuestra región. Por otra parte, esto permite sociabilizar el conocimiento y las experiencias entre intelectuales y científicos de diferentes nacionalidades generando desarrollo.

Debemos reconocer que aún entre los países menos desarrollados existen diferencias en cuanto a la calidad de la Educación Superior y el desarrollo que tienen algunas Universidades en los campos de la investigación y la técnica. Por esta razón, la función principal de la cooperación internacional debe ser ayudar a disminuir la asimetría interna entre las Universidades del Continente y éstas y sus pares de otras latitudes. Por otra parte, la cooperación internacional no se debe visualizar como un elemento fundamental para el desarrollo de la educación en nuestra región, sino como una ayuda para que este desarrollo se concrete.
Finalmente y no por ello menos importante, la cooperación internacional "debe basarse por encima de todo en la participación y la búsqueda colectiva de la calidad y pertinencia de la Educación Superior" (1) en función de mejorar las condiciones de la sociedad y su entorno.

La cooperación internacional y los estudiantes

La Reforma Universitaria de Córdoba de 1918 revolucionó la Educación Superior, y en esa revolución fue fundamental la participación de los estudiantes. Hoy a pesar de ser otra coyuntura esta situación continúa siendo valedera, la comunidad universitaria necesariamente debe hacer un diagnóstico de la situación actual de la Universidad y los estudiantes. Estamos dispuestos a enfrentar esta situación de una forma positiva.

Creemos que es necesario involucrarnos en un debate abierto con autoridades, intelectuales, docentes y toda la comunidad universitaria en general para definir una estrategia conjunta que impulse el desarrollo de una Educación Superior pertinente y de calidad, de cara a los retos que nos presenta el próximo milenio.

Los estudiantes no somos ajenos a la cooperación internacional, históricamente hemos coordinado acciones encaminadas a defender los derechos estudiantiles y a apoyar a los sectores populares que reivindican mejoras sociales. Existen en nuestro continente una gran cantidad de organizaciones estudiantiles regionales por especialidad que constantemente realizan actividades de intercambio, dirigidas a mejorar el conocimiento y desarrollo de su respectiva especialidad.

Como parte vital del esquema universitario se debe brindar la oportunidad al movimiento estudiantil de participar en los diferentes órganos de dirección, que elaborarán las políticas de cooperación internacional para la región, -actualmente el movimiento estudiantil sólo participa dentro de la estructura del Consejo Superior Universitario Centroamericano -CSUCA-, de esta forma los estudiantes también podríamos brindar nuestros aportes al desarrollo de la Educación Superior.

Nuestro continente, de manera general, se enfrenta a una maquinaria compleja y moderna que trata de mediatizar a la sociedad imponiendo modelos de vida diferentes a la idiosincrasia de nuestros pueblos, tratando de divorciarnos de nuestra cultura, de nuestra historia, para imponer un modelo neoliberal globalizado que generalice el comportamiento y el actuar de la sociedad respondiendo a los intereses y políticas que impulsan los grandes centros de poder económico a través de los organismos internacionales -FMI, BID, Banco Mundial.

Las Universidades de nuestra región tienen un enemigo común que utiliza toda una serie de mecanismos para menoscabar y deteriorar la imagen de estas instituciones ante la sociedad, el caso de la Educación Primaria y Secundaria es más patético, en un alto porcentaje estos niveles de educación ya han sido privatizados. Los gobiernos de la región han abandonado la atención a estos sectores de la educación, incentivando así el ingreso de los educandos a colegios e institutos privados. De esta forma nuestros gobernantes esquivan la responsabilidad constitucional de garantizar la educación para todos. Todas estas políticas tienen la característica de estar definidas dentro de un esquema global, por lo tanto las alternativas de solución y contraparte deben ser, de manera general, internacionalizadas y necesariamente deberá existir una cooperación entre los afectados.

Propuestas

- Como ya mencionamos, la cooperación se debe basar sobre principios de unidad, desarrollo, humanismo e investigación. Buscando el máximo beneficio social y la protección de nuestro entorno. Se debe incentivar el intercambio académico de científicos, docentes y estudiantes para la obtención de nuevas experiencias y conocimientos.
- Realizar un estudio de las necesidades prioritarias de la región para la conformación de maestrías y doctorados en las Universidades del Continente que respondan a estas necesidades, con un alto nivel académico y contenido social. Paralelo a esto, la elaboración de un banco de datos de los intelectuales y científicos de la región que presten sus servicios en otras regiones para iniciar un programa de "profesores visitantes" en estas maestrías y doctorados.
De acuerdo a las políticas definidas por los máximos organismos de las instituciones universitarias y estudiantiles de la región y teniendo una adecuada coordinación y seguimiento, conformar redes de sociedades científicas y realizar actividades académicas encaminadas a incentivar las actividades científico-técnicas a nivel de pregrado entre estudiantes de diferentes nacionalidades.

Iniciar el proceso de conformación de una comunidad universitaria de América Latina y el Caribe integrada por los docentes e investigadores de mayor nivel para que pongan todas sus capacidades en función "del fortalecimiento académico, científico, y tecnológico, que impulse el acceso al conocimiento, su creación y utilización, el desarrollo y adaptación eficientes de tecnologías apropiadas a las soluciones de los distintos problemas que más afectan el desarrollo integral de nuestras naciones" y a disminuir la asimetría entre Universidades de la región y las de sus pares en otros continentes.

Se debe realizar una evaluación de las Universidades con necesidades y requerimientos muy semejantes para que coordinadamente impulsen-con sus propios recursos-planes académicos conjuntos de servicio y desarrollo institucional.

Formular la coordinación de actividades y proyectos entre las diferentes instancias y organizaciones regionales y subregionales para explotar al máximo los recursos y capacidades de las Universidades del Continente.

"Pensamos que el reto mayor de las universidades del futuro será la formación de hombres capaces de transcender el crudo realismo de nuestros días, hombres que sientan que la solidaridad es más rentable que el egoísmo, que el costo de la codicia es superior al de la generosidad" (3)

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Higher Education for All

A ddress by: Mr. Keshav Raj Pandey
ASA
Nepal

From 4-9 September 1998, the Asian Students Association held a regional conference on education in Bangladesh. More than 40 students from 19 countries in the Asia/Pacific region attended and examined the Draft World Declaration and Framework for Priority Action. The students asserted their right to intervene when decisions relating to their interests are taken by policy-makers. This paper is the result of their deliberations in Bangladesh.

Based on our collective experience of the globalization of education, many important issues confront students in the Asia Pacific region and demand our critical and immediate action. We are concerned by the accelerating globalization of education which is controlled by certain countries and multinational companies. This has worsened the crisis in education systems in certain countries of the region. Globalization has meant the rampant commercialization and privatization of educational institutions. Education is now regarded as a high-priced commodity for the benefit of a world of work, which is another manifestation of the dominance of big business in our lives.

We affirm that education is a right. The globalization of education has curtailed this right for students all over the world - in developed and developing countries alike. This has thus violated the democratic rights of students.

These are serious concerns and we wish UNESCO to be aware of them.

While we agree with the main premise of the UNESCO document that higher education is in a state of crisis brought about by decreasing public/state financial support and by increased enrolments, we disagree with the proposal contained in the Framework of Action that governments must promote the principles of education for work, lifelong learning for all, diversity, flexibility, cost-sharing and internationalization as part of the educational policy in order to respond and adapt to changing national and global conditions.

While UNESCO acknowledges this threat of commercialization in higher education, it does not oppose it. Domination of education by certain countries remains a reality and intensifies the crisis in educational systems. UNESCO should recognize this fact and recommend appropriate changes which help solve the crisis. Instead, UNESCO seems to condone the demands of globalization.

We understand the model proposed by UNESCO as follows:

1. higher education should produce a "thinking work force" compared with training the medium-skilled workers who were needed for manufacturing in the 1970s and 1980s;
2. higher education should produce graduates who are entrepreneurs rather than job-seekers. UNESCO claims that graduates should "accept the need to keep changing jobs, update their knowledge and learn new skills" because these are times when the equation "degree = job" no longer applies. Surely this is another way of apologizing for increasing unemployment by calling people "unsuccessful entrepreneurs" as well as legitimizing a flexible labour policy or contractual schemes which attack job security and worker wages;
3. state support for institutions should continue but academic freedom and institutional autonomy should be given to private institutions through accreditation. This system accelerates privatization and the cost of tuition;

4. cost-sharing and alternative funding are supported. UNESCO notes the risk of state detachment from higher education in matters of funding and the danger of an excessive demand to commercialize the activities carried out by higher education institutions. However, it absolves the state and instead calls on the public to show it can compete with other organized interests for financial attention from public sources. This means that the education budget will be more reduced than ever before and will compete with, for example, military expenditure and debt-repayments, since these are considered as priority national interests. Also, it contradicts itself by saying that "it is timely to discuss shifting the burden for the expansion of higher education from public to private sources" thus giving its full nod to the privatization of higher education;

5. teaching and learning should be flexible and research should be rationalized. This means improving quality by developing contractual agreements for the employment of teaching staff and diversifying the student population by instituting entry and exit points for higher education and making public research compete and co-operate with this activity in the private sector;

6. the duplication of knowledge should be avoided, resources should be pooled and a "division of tasks" amongst the universities of the world should be promoted. The euphemism "internationalization" has meant that "protectionist" barriers in education systems have been broken down.

In sum, this framework is geared to initiating another wave of redesigning educational systems to suit the needs of globalization. They will not in any way relieve the crisis in education. On the contrary, these policy changes would intensify the colonial, commercialised and repressive educational systems in our respective countries.

Will these policy changes create better access to higher education for students? Will the curriculum and pedagogy of higher education be improved so as to ensure national development which is independent and pro-people? Will and should government funding be increased for tertiary education? The statements contained in the Framework of Action and in the World Declaration on Higher Education appear to be threatening our rights and our welfare.
Higher Education in Africa in the 21st Century: A Student’s Perspective.

Address by: Mr. Felix Abeeku Yawson
IAAS, Ghana

Background

Many African higher educational (HE) institutions are undergoing various reforms to face the challenges of a world which is constantly changing. However, they are still confronted by many obstacles. Most of these obstacles have been identified, mentioned and discussed elsewhere prior to this conference. The problem now, is how to overcome these obstacles. In cases where the solutions have been found, there is still the problem of implementation. One of such many cases is the management and financing of higher education.

It has become conspicuously clear that most African governments cannot afford the financing of higher education alone. Cost sharing is the prescribed solution in most countries. In my view, the management and financing of higher education should be a shared responsibility of governments, the private sector and other partners including students. The emphasis is on students who can afford to study. Higher education should not be the privilege of only the rich. Then the issues of quality and relevance of are brought into focus.

The private sector, like any rational entity, will not invest in and employ poor quality graduates. In as much as everyone must be encouraged to enter higher education, quality must not be sacrificed on the altar of massification. Parents and communities at large will be reluctant to invest in this sector if they do not see its relevance in their communities. A student who is so unsure about getting a job in the future, considering the high unemployment rates, will obviously not be motivated to finance his education even if he or she can afford it.

On the other hand, how does the university staff produce high quality students when they do not have facilities to teach and train? Or, when they work under very unfavourable and unrewarding conditions? How does the university become relevant in society if they do not have the means to do research on solving the problems of their community? These are the real realities of higher education in Africa as we enter the next millennium. There is the need for policy guidelines to facilitate the identification and diversification of new sources of finances that are so crucial in bringing about improvement. The time to act is now.

A new vision of higher education is needed which combines the demands for the universality of higher learning with the imperative for its greater relevance in order to respond to the expectations of the society in which it functions. Higher education must translate into an instrument of change and development. Three issues come to mind anytime I think of higher education in Africa in the 21st century. They are:

- What should be the qualities of the African student in the 21st century?
- What should be the profile of the African graduate in the 21st century?
- What should higher education in Africa be in the 21st century?

The New African Student

The new African student should be willing to learn with a sense of purpose and meaning. A student who has a hand in the decision-making concerning his own teaching and training. An individual who is committed to solving the problems of his community and dedicated to the service of his country in
addition to earning an income in the future. One who will use dialogue to solve problems rather than resorting to strikes, riots, demonstrations etc. which do not usually end on a peaceful note. He or she should be someone with the capacity for critical thinking, moral judgement and concern for justice. He or she will be a hardworking student, ready to persevere to achieve his ambition.

**The New African Graduate**

The new African graduate must be knowledgeable and also must have know-how. He/she must have the ability to access, analyze, optimize and utilize information properly. He/she will be a graduate who is able to manage his abilities. I mean an entrepreneurial graduate. A globally aware professional with social and communication skills as related to teamwork, leadership, verbal and written presentations, persuasion, attention to detail, foreign language competence etc. A graduate with motivation and perseverance and willing to pursue higher learning.

**The New African University**

The new African university must not only be a place where students go for education but also a place where societal problems of industry, agriculture and health etc. could be addressed. Higher education which is expected to produce graduates who can be not only job seekers but also successful entrepreneurs and job creators. An institution with closer partnership with employers. Institutions of higher education and employers have the responsibility to foster new modes of communication which do not marginalize the voice of society at large. The new African university should be a place to which governments will refer social and political problems and not be looked at as a political opposition arena.

I look forward to a day in Africa, when higher education - and particularly teaching and research - will effectively contribute to the organization of modern society and be more closely involved in actions aimed at reducing poverty, preventing and resolving conflicts, protecting the environment, improving health care provision and nutrition, promoting the principles of civil society and developing other levels and forms of education.

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*IAAS-International Association of Agricultural Students*
Learner Demand for Tertiary Education

Address by: Dr Alan Wagner
Principal Administrator
Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs
OCDE, Paris

In this panel, we are asked to provide comments on issues and developments in our regions from the ‘student perspective’. That is a challenge for an Organization such as ours which includes as Members countries in three global regions -- Europe, North America and the Asia-Pacific -- and works with countries in other regions as well.

I will make two points today, which follow from an OECD-wide perspective and, more specifically, a comparative study of the first years of tertiary education recently published by the OECD under the title Redefining Tertiary Education. I use as my justification for this more global approach an observation by Odd Eiken, the former Deputy Minister of Education in Sweden:

It is a fact that few areas are more local than the education system. But, at the same time, it is no exaggeration to say that there are few areas undergoing such rapid internationalization as education. Problems and challenges facing education systems in most countries are remarkably similar, despite the local and national influence that education policy traditionally has.

On the evidence of presentations and comments thus far in the plenary, commissions and thematic debates such as this one, issues of access, quality, responsiveness and funding (among others) appear to apply widely -- even if national structures, approaches and circumstances differ.

This brings me on to my first point. If there is a common element to the response in a wide range of countries, it is the sheer force of demand. The increase in the numbers aspiring to some form of study at a stage or level beyond secondary education is now so great as to suggest that patterns of participation and learning -- if not programmes and teaching -- are “student-led”. Students already are influential, through the choices they make and the ways they seek to learn. One key development to take into account is that nature and substance of learning are as likely to result from the decisions and actions of students as well as the programmes organized on the basis of policy at government and institution levels.

This poses a considerable, and perhaps not fully recognized, challenge to systems and institutions -- but also to students who now assume more responsibility for their own learning through their choices among programme options, combinations of qualifications and ways and places of learning. Here is an important area where students can take the lead -- and in some countries already are taking the lead -- in: providing information about course contents and requirements; assisting in establishing contacts and links with employers; and enabling students to acquire more specific job-related skills which may not otherwise be developed in regular study programmes or through institution-provided support services.

My second point is that the student perspective needs to be widened to include those who are not now participating, those who have left without qualifications and those who have completed their studies. In this connection, student groups (perhaps working with UNESCO to build on student NGO input into the consultation on graduate employment) might explore ways to engage graduates more fully in their work -- not least because if we are to believe what has been said in the documentation for this World Conference, with echoes in the work of the OCDE and other international organizations and fora and reinforced in several interventions in the opening session, you will have an increasing need to return to tertiary education to continue learning over the course of your adult life.
A scholar and a gentlemen - to be or not to fund?

Address by: Dr. Robert F. D’Alessandro
LL.M., M.St; (Oxon), LL.D. (Malta)

1. Higher Education - the challenge of challenge

Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, teach him to fish and he can feed himself.

Whilst modern education has this inherently utilitarian characteristic of enabling self sufficiency, its essence remains the nurturing of knowledge, values and competences which enable one to interact positively within a group, be it the family, school, or society at large. From the onset however, one must bear in mind that higher education is truly the tip of the iceberg, particularly in so far as character-building, learning, info processing and expression skills are concerned, and thus specific discussions on higher education can necessitate the building upon particular local, national or regional foundation. Such interlinking is fundamental given the fact that higher education must work with the ‘raw material’ prepared by secondary education- and therefore should at least have an appreciation or the structural weaknesses of each new intake of students.

Our point of departure should thus be to understand where students are coming from (in terms of subject matter covered and learning skills), so as to facilitate the ability of each individual to understand his or her own potential and make career decisions accordingly. At the first level of higher education, this basic function becomes more sophisticated, firstly because of the capacity of the student to develop and secondly because of the complexity of the information and processes which are being taught. The core questions we must ask is whether higher education is fulfilling this dual need of enabling one to get to know oneself in terms of cultural heritage, and that of providing the opportunity for one to attain a level of competence in a chosen field or fields. Whilst students are the primary clients and beneficiaries of higher education, in the medium and long term it is society as a whole that will suffer or benefit from graduates able to integrate constructively into society, as opposed to the alarming path of graduate unemployment. For this reason analysis, strategic planning and implementation should involve all significant actors in the relevant spectrum, namely students, teachers, administrators, professional bodies and prospective employers. Often however this is not the case, instead policies are drafted upon agendas which second development of individual potential to the race for improve statistics to satisfy local or regional politics, often loosing touch with grass roots needs, and the challenge of risk and change management.

2. Student perceptions and employers’ expectations

In many societies, university students are viewed as if spoilt children who are sheltering or ‘parking’ away from the so called ‘real world’ of work. Sadly this mentality tends to broaden the ever existing gap between the oft uninspiring academic input received at universities (rather than a stimulation of minds) and actual job requisites. It would seem that the greatest challenges facing higher education are the need to do far more (better instruction to more students) with current resources, and the need to inbuild a versatility that can enable the graduate to cope with the ever changing demands of employment - both cases require creative thinking and determined entrepreneurship.

It is remarkable that so little importance is ever given to the science of thinking, instead young minds are left to wander untrained, in the hope that a thinking process will be developed naturally by each student in his own time. Higher education must teach lecturers how to inspire - teach students
how to think, how to harness the power of their minds, otherwise society risks losing significant resources in terms of young minds which falter solely on the basis of uninspiring lecturers, rigid examination techniques and unreasonable memory dependence. Imagination is the key to development, be it in a small grocery store or the design team of a space shuttle, it must therefore be kindled and rewarded. Moreover students are citizens they will graduate, and interact in jobs as well as social groups, enter into transactions, take on responsibilities, have the right to vote, and deal with people and institutions on a daily basis. It is therefore imperative that higher education enables rather than stifles or stunts the growth of one’s personality. Anybody who has been involved in student organisations, or who has interviewed active members of such societies, can immediately see the benefits of such initiative and experience. Taking responsibility for projects, team building, self preservation, managing cultural diversity are lifeskills which can make or break a career, and yet sadly the majority of students are too tied up with information storage for exam regurgitation, rather than with the local and international opportunities for growth as a person. The world of work needs at worst a maintenance of standards and at best the potential to improve upon these, hence the widespread preference for selecting of a candidate on the basis of character whilst ready to hone the specific skills as a training period. The burden of bringing expectations of the world of work to prospective graduate is one most public institutions shirk from, and yet this is a necessity, particularly since many graduates may have no previous work experience, let alone familiarity with the specific demands of individual areas.

3. The cost of quality – who pays the bill?

Although each country has its unique set of circumstances, there are certain problems which are universal, such as the lack of work for the graduates. It must be borne in mind that it is not for higher education to determine whether the matching of individual and institutional resources will result in employment, however it is the responsibility of higher education to ensure that the best possible use is made of such time, effort and resources. Overcoming the widespread isolation of theory from practice, is a process which in the author’s view should be addressed from the perspective of increasing the stakeholding of the corporate, institutional and entertainment worlds. In an era determined by marketplace of vested interests. The challenge now becomes that of making it profitable for investors to participate in the enhancement of higher education. This approach inevitably brings with it a new level of accountability and maximization of resources, as universities would have to ‘re-invent’ themselves so as to accommodate social partners, and more importantly deliver in order to survive, rather than be cradled by the characteristic laissez faire budgets and reviews of public funds.

Increasing demands upon shrinking human and financial resources, signal the need for a culture change where higher education can no longer be realistically expected to carry the full burden of free tuition. Limited resources are often stretched to the point of dilution of core competences and a lowering of standards. Whilst higher education should be accessible to as many people as possible, standards must be maintained, since the flooding of a particular sector with sub-standard graduates is likely to have serious long term effects. Quality education is greatly determined by the proportion of resources available, thus whilst most administrators have a clear idea of what can and should be done to achieve better results, costs are often prohibitive, particularly when topped by the inertia accumulated within a staff status quo disinterested in improvement. It seems only logical therefore that students as direct beneficiaries should not be enslaved with outrageous loan terms, but rather be assisted to take responsibility for themselves, and pay some from of graduate tax at a stage when this is economically feasible.

4. Conclusion – the need for fusion of education and practice

In an ideal world the goal of higher education would probably to be to nurture each student as the complete all rounder, that is a scholar and a gentleman, coupling academic competence with civic integrity. Although fearing that this latter virtue has been left totally in the hands of society’s ailing family structure, or else restricted to isolated instances of tutorial-like guidance for the privileged few, it is
the author’s opinion that the enhancing of such values should remain a priority within the parameters of higher education. The universal values of ethics, fairness, respect for cultural diversity and rule of law can make or break family units, industrial relations, and entire social systems, and should not be passed over as if some luxury or coded disguise for the venerable force of old boy or other ‘special’ networks that allegedly signal to employers that the desired combination of elements is guaranteed by one of its own, as opposed to a seemingly better qualified outsider. Even such unfairness is the way of the world, and higher education must take up the challenge to combat this most subtle form of discrimination that promotes nepotism over meritocracy.

The romance of university is no longer what it was, indeed we live in fast and unforgiving times characterized by pressure, competition and the need to cope with everchanging situations. Higher education too must restructure itself in response to the needs of the world beyond its cloisters, certainly not as a factory with production quotas bonuses and misplaced performance dictates, yet as an exemplary patron of standards of excellence. To his end the best building materials a graduate can be given are 1. The self confidence to think independently and learn new things, 2. The experience of social interaction, and 3. The competence of subject matter within an integrated dynamic whole not a public cocoon nor a private ivory tower. It is in this spirit of change that I urge this gathering to transcend the noble words of ceremony - higher education demands new resource synergies of which this conference is the first. It definitely deserves our sincere resolve since it is only by discussion that one can sharpen one’s ideas.
Higher Education and Unemployment: The Challenges!
skills for the new entrepreneurial graduate...

Address by: Mrs J. Claire K. Niala
Young BPW
Kenya

The world is changing. It is becoming smaller everyday. In the new globalized economy, economic borders are shifting and student mobility is on the increase. Graduate unemployment is increasing. In Mombasa (a coastal town in Kenya) a group of young women graduates were facing the usual challenges of unemployment. They were both failing to find work as Mombasa’s main industry—tourism was in decline and yet they lacked the capital to start their own ventures. Instead they turned their hand to what they could do for the community. With minimal sponsorship they began to supply snacks at popular sporting and entertainment events. As their name grew, it led first to local and then international distributors using their network and services to market their goods at these events. They recently launched a new CD for an established Kenyan artist. Now, they are able to give a percentage of their profits from every event they participate in to charity.

I asked the co-ordinator of this group of ‘young professional women’ what made them different from many of the other despairing graduates failing to find work in their region. She told me that it was all due to their change in ‘attitude’. She said: “So many people are waiting for someone to come and bail them out. We have all realized that unfortunately what we learnt at college is no longer applicable. Hotels and tour companies are retrenching staff rather than hiring so we have decided to take control of our own future.” This is a common sentiment. Many of the life skills the women are now learning they did not learn through higher education. They are literally starting again. In this group’s case it has meant complementing their business by further attending short courses on self-development, communication and counselling. They hope to use share this knowledge with other graduates.

The overriding attitude towards recent graduates is that they are ill equipped to handle the reality of a new world. The environment has changed and there has been a shift in the kind of expectations that the world of work has:

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<tr>
<th>Traditional Expectations</th>
<th>New Expectations</th>
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<tr>
<td>A job for life</td>
<td>Contractual work-employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Command and control management</td>
<td>Team work and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little emphasis on vision</td>
<td>Strong emphasis on vision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little diversity</td>
<td>Cross-cultural interaction and international understanding</td>
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These are just a few examples of some of the skills expected from the new entrepreneurial graduate. In a recent survey conducted by Seth Godin with over 700 respondents (524 of whom formed executive management in their organization), the following 10 virtues appeared most frequently as ‘virtues that turn ordinary people into extraordinary leaders.’

- Ethics
- Teamwork
- Honesty
- Curiosity
- Hard work
- Intelligence
- Self - motivation
- Sense of humour
- Initiative
- Creativity
These are skills that are consistently under-represented in most traditional higher education curricular. For example, the first of the virtues mentioned, Ethics, is often only taught in specific courses such as philosophy. It should be incorporated into all areas of higher education as:

*A person who embodies a sound value system will, to the highest degree possible, exhibit loyalty, organisation, esprit de corps and a reasonable degree of intelligence, to be a “total person.”*

Bill Kraft  
C.E.O., Healthcare system

It is this ‘total person’ that the world of work is demanding. It is this ‘total person’ that institutes of higher education should be committed to producing.

One of the basic reasons for this gap between the expectations of the world of work and the graduates produced by the institutes of higher education is that:

“Colleges are still too concerned with the academic side and do not realise the primary importance of students’ emotional health. The object of higher education is not merely to impart knowledge but to equip maturing young men and women with improved ways of thinking, working and living. Most of our leaders in government come from college ranks, and so do the scientists who are all important today.”  
Polatin and Philitine.

Institutions of higher learning are often have shortages of human and material resources but budgets are unlikely to increase rapidly. What is required is a change of attitude towards education and the emphasis on life skills that the new entrepreneurial graduate can use after formal education. Outside professions like law, medicine, engineering and so on, in which specialized training is required, many graduates say they do not truly ‘use’ their degree. Historians work as educationalists, industrial designers as human resource managers and the list goes on.

“Attitudes are the most distinctive and indispensable concept in social psychology. Social attitudes can act as indicators and predictors of behaviour. To change attitudes can be seen as a meaningful starting point for modifying behaviour.”  
Stalberg, Frey and Allport. This change in attitude is not just required by the institutes of higher education alone by also by the triumvirate incorporating the world of work and the student/graduate.

All three have to participate to bring about the changes required to improve the current situation where the needs of the community are not being met. There are already positive steps being taken towards this change. The use of work placements, for example, during the degree course can provide the student with an experience of the ‘world of work’, thus enabling them to gain an insight into what skills they might need. It may bring to light issues like self-awareness and stress management, previously not considered by the student.

The world of work and higher education institutions, however, also have to provide adequate support for the student. Work placements should be meaningful. There should be two way communication between employers and educators with regards to curricular adjustment. All three should work together to create an atmosphere of mutual co-operation and understanding.

Finally, cross-cultural learning is another area of growing importance. While a new universal etiquette is still emerging to incorporate new technologies such as the Internet, there are still many cultural differences that need to be appreciated in order for there to be international understanding. This usually happens informally with students interacting with people from different backgrounds. International student exchanges can be used as a starting point to formalize this education as due to alliances such as the European Community, working regularly with different nationalities is already a reality.

In short, there is a new global awareness of the changes that are affecting the world. In order to be leaders of change, the new entrepreneurial graduate must begin life long learning even at the level of higher education. Skills must be constantly renewed, and the world of work must also play a role in nurturing and developing tomorrow's leaders.
Le point de vue d’un industriel

Intervention de : M. Michel Romieu
Président Directeur Général
Elf Aquitaine Gaz

En tentant d’apporter ma contribution à ce grand débat, je ne peux m’empêcher d’indiquer que ma vision du sujet est probablement légèrement déformée à travers le prisme de ma culture française plutôt portée vers les formations généralistes ainsi que par mon milieu d’origine qui est celui d’un ingénieur de grande école scientifique française.

Aussi, vais-je essayer de présenter mon point de vue à partir de mon expérience de cadre dirigeant d’un grand groupe international déployant ses activités au plan mondial et avec l’expérience que m’ont apporté quinze années d’activité professionnelle hors de France.

Vous comprendrez donc que les réflexions sur les évolutions souhaitables de l’enseignement supérieur découlent davantage de ma perception de l’évolution des besoins des entreprises et du marché du travail (approche bottom-up) que d’une réflexion socio-culturelle ou philosophique.

Je me souviens que lorsque dans les années soixante j’ai choisi de devenir ingénieur, cela correspondait à mon souhait de participer à l’effort de la nation de reconstruire le pays après la Seconde Guerre Mondiale et de remettre la France sur les rails, sur les routes, dans les airs, bref de répondre aux besoins de modernisation du pays. Mon choix, une fois le diplôme en poche, d’entrer dans une société pétrolière nationale, est cohérent avec cette analyse.

Trente-cinq ans plus tard, l’environnement s’est profondément transformé ; la France est complètement intégrée dans la construction européenne, l’Europe doit elle-même faire face aux défis de la mondialisation ; ma société est désormais privatisée, plus de la moitié de ses actionnaires sont étrangers et ont la faculté d’arbitrer leurs choix d’investissement en fonction de la perception qu’ils ont des performances et de l’avenir de chaque entreprise.

Il est impossible qu’une telle évolution des besoins des acteurs économiques des grands pays industrialisés n’ait pas des conséquences profondes sur les ressources humaines situées en amont et, en premier lieu, sur l’enseignement supérieur. Il me semble, en effet, que les facteurs de progrès à prendre en compte sont à rechercher au niveau des besoins des grands acteurs économiques, qui sont essentiellement caractérisés aujourd’hui par :

- un impératif permanent d’adaptation des hommes et des structures à l’évolution des technique et des marchés.

- une nécessité de diversification des ressources humaines pour apporter des réponses globales pertinentes aux besoins des consommateurs de biens et services.

- une prise en compte de la dimension internationale dans le gréement des équipes et la gestion des ressources humaines ; une valorisation croissante du qualitatif sur le quantitatif, le diplôme s’effaçant vite derrière le potentiel humain, la capacité d’initiative et les qualités morales du personnel.

- un besoin de formation continue accompagnant – ou plutôt devant anticiper – l’évolution des technologies.
Ce sont donc ces différents aspects que je vais passer en revue pour recenser quelques facteurs de progrès possibles pour l'enseignement supérieur.

1. **Couverture des besoins évolutifs des entreprises**

Cette réflexion doit s'exercer très en amont et dès l'enseignement primaire, en particulier pour l'utilisation des technologies de l'information qui doit être assimilée dès le plus jeune âge. Il s'agit d'ailleurs là d'un formidable facteur d'égalisation des chances au sein d'une même nation – et même entre nations riches et nations pauvres – grâce à l'abaissement considérable du coût d'accès aux réseaux de l'information, type Internet.

Si l'enseignement secondaire a principalement pour mission de donner une bonne culture générale, on ne peut plus se désintéresser des débouchés qui pourraient être offerts aux étudiants. Il s'agit là bien souvent d'un sujet tabou. Nous sommes en France où l'université continue de former des masses compactes d'étudiants dans des disciplines certes passionnantes, comme par exemple la psychologie, mais sans application réelle et évidente dans la vie professionnelle. C'est pourquoi les efforts qui ont été entrepris, en particulier dans les pays anglo-saxons, pour rapprocher les autorités universitaires du monde du travail et de l'industrie doivent être poursuivis ; l'objectif de l'enseignement supérieur étant bien de préparer à la vie professionnelle.

2. **La diversification des formations**

L'approche globale ou systémique des marchés rend de plus en plus nécessaire la constitution d'équipes multidisciplinaires capables à la fois d'anticiper les besoins du marché, de réduire les coûts de production, de négocier les partenariats industriels et commerciaux, de monter l'ingénierie financière requise, puis de gérer des réseaux commerciaux. Cette approche par unité décentralisée de gestion d'actifs qui permet de réduire considérablement le nombre des niveaux hiérarchiques, de motiver le personnel à travers un élément de rémunération directement lié aux performances de l'entité à laquelle il collabore, prend aujourd'hui un caractère universel.

Il convient donc que l'enseignement supérieur soit en mesure d'assurer la formation d'experts dans toutes les disciplines concernées et à un haut niveau. Nous sommes ici bien loin d'un enseignement supérieur qui ne serait que le prolongement du second degré et formerait des étudiants "bons à tout et propres à rien".

3. **L'internationalisation des formations**

C'est sans doute le challenge majeur en Europe où des concepts aussi évidents et urgents que l'interfécondité des universités, la reconnaissance transfrontière des diplômes, l'adoption d'une charte de qualité par les écoles d'ingénieurs, se situent encore au stade embryonnaire. Dans le domaine des ingénieurs que je connais le mieux, je voudrais citer pour exemple l'EMF, Engineer Mobility Forum, encore connu sous le nom de Washington Accord, qui certifie les formation d'ingénieurs de différentes disciplines et auquel adhèrent les principales universités et grandes écoles des États-Unis, du Canada, de Grande-Bretagne, de la République Sud-Africaine, de l'Australie, de Hong-Kong et du Japon.

Vous comprendrez aisément l'intérêt d'une telle charte de qualité pour les prescripteurs d'ordre comme les gouvernements ou pour les maîtres d'ouvrage. Qui s'étonnera en effet qu'une entreprise de travaux publics souhaitant recruter des ingénieurs pour la construction d'un pont à Singapour exige la référence EMF et soit quelque peu imperméable à la hiérarchie subtile qui peut exister entre l'Ecole des Travaux Publics de Paris et l'Ecole d'Ingénieurs du Génie Civil de Barcelone.

Je ne parlerai même pas de la question des langues, considérant que le bilinguisme langue maternelle/anglais est une nécessité absolue, et la maîtrise d'une troisième langue un atout essentiel.
4. L’enseignement supérieur doit également remplir une mission essentielle dans le domaine de la formation continue dont les besoins ne cessent de s’affirmer sous la double pression :

- de l’évolution et des progrès technologiques, et d’une manière générale des métiers concourant à la gestion des entreprises ;

- de la mobilité croissante du personnel des entreprises conduisant ces dernières à remettre en cause leurs formations "maison" les plus lourdes et donc les plus chères.

De ce point de vue, l’optimum économique semble être de transférer à l’enseignement supérieur le soin d’assurer cette formation continue et de la rendre plus universelle pour les personnels qu’il forme.

Je terminerai en exprimant un souhait qui s’adresse plus spécifiquement au système français d’enseignement supérieur caractérisé par une dualité université-grandes écoles qui s’avère aujourd’hui un peu dépassée.

L’attrait des entreprises françaises pour les diplômés des grandes écoles est essentiellement dû au jugement qu’elles se font du potentiel et de la puissance de travail des intéressés, qui ont dû franchir à un âge précoce le barrage sévère d’un concours.

Les expériences de création de passerelles entre l’université et les grandes écoles peuvent permettre de corriger cette image au bénéfice à la fois de l’université et des grandes écoles en même temps que l’une et l’autre s’ouvriraient davantage aux étudiants étrangers.
Educating Tomorrow's Business Leaders

Address by: Mr. Eric Zahrai,
Vice President of European Baha'i Business Forum,
Paris, France

Most business leaders agree that radical changes have taken place in the workplace over the last few decades. They also agree that these changes have created a business environment characterized by complexity and intense competition in which new factors for success and even the survival are emerging.

The future of work itself has become a major issue today, giving rise to considerable press coverage, innumerable articles and publications.

If we listen to Jeremy Rifkin and some writers' vision of a jobless world (1) and other less apocalyptic opinions that there is nothing inevitable in the world being unable to provide full employment - it is evident that something fundamentally different from the past is happening.

The underlying changes are clear: Markets are increasingly global, the workplace is more mobile; competition - cutting across national boundaries - is keener and less predictable; rapid technological innovation and particularly computer-mediated work are transforming the industrial economy into a knowledge and information based economy.

Such changes go beyond Peter Drucker's proposal in 1993 that "the disappearance of labour as a key factor in production is unfinished business of capitalist society "(2)

At the same time consumers have become more demanding on their preferences and an increasing number of women and minority groups have entered the workplace.

The shock of cultural diversity and lifestyle change many orthodox policies and attitudes of people involved - particularly those at the helm of corporations. It is this fact that may induce the most significant change.

In addition, employees, customers, the communities in which they work, and the NGO’s are nurturing expectations that the corporations become more socially and environmentally responsible.

Under such circumstances, corporate strategy can no longer be formulated solely in terms of short term profit objective.

Strategy should also embrace global rather than national markets and be concerned with corporate social and environmental responsibility. In short, all these changes impose a new business and work ethic.

We in the European Baha'i Business Forum, share the view that the changing pattern of the workplace and the economy require not only heavy investment in higher level technical education and permanent on-going training of the young - our future business leaders - but also capacity to deal with diversity in a globally inter-dependent world, considering work in the spirit of service to the community, practising the art of consultation in the process of decision making, sharing willingly the fruits of employees' efforts, recognizing our responsibility to preserve the natural resources of our planet and integrating the notion of female/ male partnership in all human endeavours.
We do realize that the teaching of such bold subjects in universities and management schools is difficult objectives to attain given different global problems.

Increasing demands may come, however, from visionary business leaders wishing to recruit graduates suitable for their value-driven operations to enhance corporate image and contribute to the long-term survival and development of their enterprises.

They must be prepared.

Again all this requires heavy investment but there is no alternative. As Sir Claus Moser has put it "Education costs money - But then, so does ignorance".


Higher Education for a New Society : A Student Vision

Education for Lawyers and an Example of an Entrepreneurial Educational Enterprise

Address by: Dr. Wallace R. Baker
Baker & McKenzie
USA

I am a senior partner in the international law firm of Baker & McKenzie which employs about
6,000 persons with about 2,500 lawyers of diverse nationalities located in nearly 60 offices in 34
countries. I have written an article in the UNESCO book GRADUATES' PROSPECTS IN A
CHANGING SOCIETY, relating to Education for the Legal Profession. Our firm is not only a
business but its activity is professional in nature. In addition, it is an educational institution which
spends a great deal of time and money educating young lawyers to function in a multi-national legal
setting. It also continually educates its mature lawyers to insure they remain up to date with the latest
knowledge. It is easy to recognize that we have entered a knowledge revolution where science and
technical knowledge is produced faster and faster and communication of information is nearly
instantaneous. Other bodies of knowledge also need rapid updating as a consequence.

Job Prospects and Education for Law Students

With the extension of the free enterprise economies in the world, the job market for lawyers
appears generally favorable. However, in the last decade very rapid recent growth in law graduates in
developed countries has resulted in a painful surplus when economic growth has not been vigorous.

Another trend observed by a sociologist Elliot Krause\(^2\) is that lawyers and other professions,
such as doctors, engineers and architects, in developed countries have to a greater or lesser degree
declined in influence with the advance of capitalism. Business and business considerations tend to
overpower the professional associations which controlled and/or protected and nurtured its members.
This is illustrated by the entry of the big five accounting firms into the legal services field and the
increasing size and mergers of law firms. Law is becoming more of a business – which hopefully will
be in the best interest of the consumers, including the poor but that is not certain.

Employment as a lawyer will be enhanced by having the best general education, the best basic
legal education, and by acquiring outstanding writing and speaking skills plus knowledge of a specialty
in a field of high technology or intellectual property, or other emerging fields of law where there is
real growth.

It will also be most useful to have knowledge of other fields of knowledge which have some
relation to Law - philosophy, physics, bio-chemistry, brain science and others - since Law will
increasingly be drawing on other disciplines in the future. Horizontal transfer of knowledge between
disciplines will become more important in addition to the customary accumulation of deeper and
deeper knowledge in each specialized field. The latter is the vertical dimension of knowledge which
encourages specialization but it alone is insufficient in today's society where many problems require
interdisciplinary solutions.

The outlook for lawyers is more pessimistic if the Rule of Law and minimum ethics are not
respected in a society. There is less need for lawyers if the basic legal rules are not enforced.
Unfortunately many countries do not have adequate ethical and legal standards to properly regulate

\(^2\) ELLIOT A. KRAUSE, DEATH OF THE GUILDS - PROFESSIONS, STATES AND THE ADVANCE
society. Even in developed countries lawlessness hampers construction of a better society in particular in poor areas in large cities where violence is rife.

Language skills, particularly the knowledge of English and at least one other language is a requirement in most jobs in the law. The internationalization of the law business has been a fact of life for the past 40 years.

Legal education needs to be constantly adjusted to the needs of the job market by on-the-job training (summer jobs or short term temporary jobs or apprenticeships) for the students so they well understand the needs of employers.

**A New Type of University Designed for Jobs**

In addition to educating students for the Legal Profession, I would like to give you an example of a new developing university which has grown up in Arizona. It provides recognized Degrees in Business, Education and Nursing. Its characteristics are:

1. **Students Pay** - All students have jobs. If a student pays she or he is more serious about studying, more mature and demands high quality. It is not cheaper than state supported universities and courses are given at night because most of the students work.

2. **Purpose of the University** - The purpose is to grant a college degree that is designed to enable the student to get a better job, or a promotion and teach her or him how to make better oral presentations at company meetings.

   Mr. Sperling, a well-educated person with a Ph.D. in economic history from Cambridge, founder of this university, stated: "Higher education is one of the most inefficient mechanisms for the transfer of knowledge that have ever been invented. I decided to go back to my economics and conceive of education as a production function in which you specify the learning outcomes that you want - they are your product - and then do a regression and figure out the most efficient way of producing them."

   Universities were invented nearly a thousand years ago to produce clerics and priests. The purposes of most universities are different now. This university was created to improve employability of students not to prepare them for the church nor to give them a good general education to prepare them to be good citizens.

3. **The university makes a profit** - This university is a US corporation quoted on a stock exchange. It pays dividends to its shareholders and looks for growth. Soon it hopes to expand to the Far East where it sees a huge market in China.

   This unusual example illustrates an educational institution only focused on facilitating employment. However it also underlines the many ways higher education is financed in the United States. The prestigious private universities, often found on the east coast, have massive endowments from charitable gifts made by wealthy individuals who were successful industrialists. The most remarkable gift was that of Mr. Rockefeller, the founder of Standard Oil, which financed the creation of the University of Chicago - one of North America leading universities. Each state in the US has a state university, with some excellent departments in many fields of endeavor. These universities are often very large and receive their financing from state tax revenues.

   In conclusion, there is great diversity in financing sources which allows two thirds of the secondary school graduates to go on to tertiary education, which is probably as it should be in a democracy where education is the best guaranty that democracy will prosper.

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3 James Traub, The Next University, Drive Thru U., The New Yorker, October 20 & 27, 1997, describing the University of Phoenix in Arizona.
Student voices and dreams for the Higher Education in the 21st century

Address by: Mr. Walter Prysthon Junior
International Movement of Catholic Students
IMCS - Pax Romana
Brazil

Higher Education in a new cultural environment

The more or less recent process called as "globalization" presents an extraordinary increase of exchanges throughout the world: finances, trade, information, people. It can represent positive opportunities of cultural and productive sharing. But it also causes social exclusion and cultural uprooting. Young people are often the most affected and/or seduced by these processes.

The technological revolution has accelerated the pace of change. Certainties are challenged. We daily witness these changes in young people's language and attitudes. Their ways of relating to one another, to nature, to a transcendental dimension are also changing. New expressions of youth culture can be identified, leading to new challenges to the learning experience in secondary school and in higher education institutions.

It should also be noted that the amazing development of technologies make youth a curious and interested public. Two main challenges become obvious: to widen the possibility of access to technology and to educate people to make critical interpretations and use of information, based on an ethical approach.

The globalization of the economy, its effects on the employment market and on the daily life of people also suggests the need for adapting the contents and method of learning. However, this should not lead us to believe that education systems can offer solutions to all economic problems of the societies.

Seeking a new definition of education's role in society

Formal education has been highly challenged by new realities. The advent of a knowledge society does not seem to slow down a certain growing importance of educational institutions, whether secondary or tertiary. Traditional references to educational systems are questioned today. Students are exposed to different information sources outside formal education and are less confident about the opportunities that school and university offer to enter the job market.

The socially attributed tasks of the education system such as the transmission and development of sciences and culture, the education of citizens, their participation in solutions of social problems, and its role in the economic life of societies by preparing young people for entry into the labour market, still remain valid. Nevertheless, the challenge of higher education institutions is to find new ways of achieving them.

The life and aspirations of students

Often, going to classes at university or at institutes often means routine, time taken from sleep and rest, due to long days and evenings spent studying, and perhaps also a hindrance to more interesting and pleasant activities. The years of study seem to be identified with the necessary sacrifice to achieve
a particular objective, long wait for “real life” *. This is a question which is related to the motivation of students and should be taken into consideration in order to provoke institutional responses.

Daily life for many students is marked by economic precariousness. There is, moreover, a growing insecurity regarding the future, especially with regard to employment. The selective character of the world of work and growing precariousness of employment increases this insecurity. Students have pressures from their family and from higher education systems.

Students are not fully considered as actors in education. They are not considered as builders of knowledge and other creative subjects, nor as citizens who are potentially opinion-makers and who are influenced by social, political and economic dynamics.

To be recognized and to have one's views taken into account seem to be two of the most important claims expressed by students. In various ways, they show their desire to be fully considered as able to direct their lives and their education. This right is still often denied to them within higher education institutions.

Also, higher education institutions genuinely ensure their mission of formation and research by becoming more and more a place of encounters and dialogue between all their stockholders such as students, individually or through their representatives, unions and associations, as well as lecturers and the those providing other services.

**Building a new perspective: Education for the 21st century**

There is a need to advocate a reversal of priorities, putting human beings at the centre of political preoccupations and propositions, and promoting a solidarity-based approach which takes into account the need to participate in higher education institutions in the struggle against poverty and social exclusion. At the world level, this approach means also promoting cultural understanding and peace among nations and peoples.

The basis for a new definition of the cultural role of education (Education for the 21st century) from a student perspective is:

- helping students people to recognize themselves within a cultural heritage;
- creating conditions for the young generation to live today;
- permitting them to dream of a better and shared future for the whole of Humanity.

helping students to recognize themselves within their cultural heritage

It is a fact that young people today has more difficulty in recognizing themselves in historical processes. This relies on a certain self-centred vision, which is considered old-fashioned and out of touch with their academic needs which existed before they were born.

Education can help to find the meaning of cultural traditions, allowing a better understanding of oneself that should lead to an openness towards others.

**Creating conditions for the young people to live today**

Amongst the conditions for living today, we would like to mention the promotion of participation and social integration within one’s own society as well as the encouragement for developing, through a pedagogical approach, the meaningfulness of studies and of being student today.

Often the references and the motivations for learning are only projected into the future. For many students and parents, real life only begins after finishing schools and from the moment they have a job. Studies are considered a passage which shall be as short as possible.

Formal education processes should, however, lead students to find themselves participating in the possibilities and responsibilities offered by the relationship with knowledge. To be students should be
an attitude of facing reality and problems with a desire to reveal, to grasp and, if necessary, to transform them. To be student is to wish to research, question and develop creative sensitivity.

This perspective shall be put forward by developing among students certain attitudes regarding their studies, i.e. their academic education, and their role in social life (attitudes towards others, towards higher education and society) and to help them to find meaning and happiness in and through their studies.

**Enabling students' capacity to dream for a better and shared future for the whole of humanity**

IMCS always enquiries about and underlines the meaning of studies: the training and the development of skills given by education, and higher education in particular, should not be based on a vision which is utilitarian and stresses purely personal benefit. On the contrary, education and skills should serve society as a whole.

Higher education should provide an environment to develop imagination, revitalizing one’s ability to dream. At the same time, it should encourage young people to try to undertake projects based on solidarity.

**The particular task of IMCS in Higher Education: perspective and proposals**

1. **Citizenship education:**

   The role of higher learning for people who assume responsibility for the social development of their own communities (higher education community, local area, city, region, country) has to express itself through a real citizen perspective and through the exercise of academic and non-academic activities. This is expressed in a particular way by encouraging the autonomy, leadership and team relationships, and through the awakening of a sense of responsibility towards others. For this purpose, we put forward some proposals:

   .. to encourage student participation in decision-making and management situations at university;
   .. to give more emphasis to interdisciplinary programmes, including those begun by students, to develop creative initiatives for areas or groups requiring priority social attention. This includes projects in the economic area (e.g. small and micro-enterprises).

2. **Transmission of knowledge:**

   Higher education institutions must as their main mission to transmit and “create” knowledge. These perspectives of transmission and creation are linked to education and research. Taking these elements into account, one should:

   .. ensure through higher education methodology, on one hand, the link between the acquisition of basic notions and instruments of apprenticeship, and on the other hand, the application of knowledge. This application of knowledge will express itself in an important way through reaching a greater number of students and creating research activities;
   .. promote the recognition of extra-curricular and cultural activities previously mentioned in the framework of academic education;
   .. try to ensure the quality of education through rigorous evaluation processes, starting within universities themselves, and establishing on a regional and/or national level, inter-institutional committees of evaluation with active student participation.

3. **Professional integration:**

   The goals are:
to endow all universities and higher education of a system of counselling that will orient and accompany students during their entire education;

- to ensure equal access to necessary information in order that students take maximum advantage of all the opportunities that the university offers;
- to provide students with skills and methods for the best use and exploitation of information in order for them to fully enjoy the learning process, to define their professional projects and accordingly to adapt curricula, and eventually, to constructively manage their failures;
- to favour the exposure of students to professional realities through the increase of professional training, allowing graduate students to gain experience which is nowadays more and more in demand.

4. Contribution to social development

Relevant education addresses the global and specific needs of each country and region, in particular their cultural aspects. Concrete actions to improve the environment of each higher education institution should be encouraged.

5. Academic mobility

Exchanges within our movement confirm the richness of inter-cultural contacts and their benefits for young students. The reality of globalization, even with risks of cultural homogenization, clearly shows that there is great cultural diversity. The incredible level of exchanges of goods and information (via the Internet) and the growing tourist industry, requires in return an inter-cultural experience and dialogue which can be offered in the framework of inter-institutional exchange programmes between different countries and regions of the world.

We believe that a consequence of mobility (although not immediate) is that it can create a better understanding among different cultures, thus favouring the role of higher education in building a culture of peace.

Academic mobility should be further improved amongst researchers as well as among students, through international programmes of exchange and training in different areas of knowledge.

These experiences shall be accompanied by institutional evaluation and follow-up both for researchers and students.

IMCS is proposing, together with other NGOs, the adoption of a Charter of the International Student, aiming at guaranteeing favourable conditions (material and legal) for study and defining the value of the training received abroad in relation to the development objectives of the “sending” countries.

Conclusion

Globalization challenges us to understand and participate actively in the new cultural processes. These are instruments which bring hope for young people. The ideas and propositions presented here are a simple but not exhaustive list of the experiences and problems of young students, who are members of IMCS in around 70 countries. They view higher education as a key factor in promoting changes for a fairer world and continuously renew their commitment to working towards this goal.
Realidad, sueños y desafíos para transformar la Universidad

Intervención de: Sr. Julio Casas Calderón
JECI
Perú

1. Los universitarios en el Perú

Cada año, más de 305,000 jóvenes se matriculan en las distintas universidades de todo el país. Un 59% estudia en universidades públicas o nacionales y el 41% lo hace en universidades privadas. En los últimos años, la oferta de la educación superior de las universidades privadas se ha multiplicado. A esto hay que añadir que la mayor parte de estas universidades se encuentra en Lima Metropolitana, ciudad que alberga el 43% del total de los universitarios.

En promedio, un joven egresado de secundaria demora tres años en ingresar en la universidad. Durante ese tiempo se prepara en centros preuniversitarios privados o, en el caso de alumnos de menores ingresos, por cuenta propia. Sólo un 37% de los matriculados en el primer ciclo de las universidades ha terminado el colegio el año anterior. Además, el acceso a la universidad en el Perú, no se basa tanto en el mérito y la capacidad del joven, como en su conocimiento memorizado y su condición económica, que marcan la posibilidad de asistir a un centro de estudios de calidad.

Cifras recientes de la UNESCO comparan la inversión en estudiante de educación superior entre América Latina y Europa. Mientras que en el primero el Estado invierte en promedio $1,485 dólares en cada estudiante, en los países de la Unión Europea se invierte $10,030 dólares en estudiante.

En el Perú, cientos de jóvenes estudian en los más de mil institutos superiores tecnológicos que existen en todo el país. Podemos afirmar que en su mayoría ofrecen una formación de baja calidad y no se presentan como una alternativa seria a la universidad. Por este motivo, la demanda para ingresar en esta última sigue siendo alta.

Trabajando para estudiar

Un 24% de los universitarios ha interrumpido la carrera por lo menos una vez. Esto se debe en gran medida a los graves problemas económicos que atraviesan y que les hacen dedicar buena parte de su tiempo a trabajos ínfimamente remunerados.

El porcentaje de universitarios que trabajan y estudian al mismo tiempo es de 31%. En este caso se encuentran más estudiantes de universidades públicas que privadas. Un 73% de las familias tienen un ingreso por debajo de los $ 345 dólares mensuales y sólo un 5% tienen ingresos mayores de $ 920 dólares mensuales. Se calcula que 1 de cada 4 universitarios autofinanza sus estudios en el Perú.

Poca innovación académica

Los docentes universitarios reciben en general bajos salarios. A pesar de ello, un 45% se dedica exclusivamente a la universidad, lo que repercute en la precariedad de sus ingresos y en el tiempo para actualizar e investigar en actividades complementarias. Los docentes que tienen acceso a información son sólo el 29% del total nacional. Y los que declaran tener acceso a bibliografía reciente son, en el caso de la universidad pública, sólo el 53%. Por otro lado, sólo un 10% de los docentes en la universidad tiene un postgrado en el extranjero.
En el caso de los estudiantes, los que utilizan frecuentemente la computadora en la universidad son el 13% del total nacional. En los últimos años, el acceso a internet ha aumentado significativamente, sin embargo, pocos poseen computadora en casa y el costo de la línea telefónica es muy elevado.

Finalmente, sólo un 3% de los universitarios está suscrito a revistas especializadas. El grueso, por lo general, lee lo imprescindible para pasar sus cursos o lo que le recomienda un profesor que, probablemente, tampoco esté suscrito a fuentes de información especializadas.

2. Una visión de los estudiantes: la Universidad para una nueva sociedad

En junio de este año pasado, los jóvenes estudiantes salieron a las calles para hacer sentir su demanda por una real democracia y por el respeto al Estado de Derecho en el Perú. No tenían grandes propuestas ni mayores consensos detrás de ellos, pero sí la convicción valiente y generosa de que en nuestro país no se puede vivir violentando permanentemente las instituciones que aseguran el ejercicio de la justicia y la democracia participativa para todos.

En el caso de los estudiantes de universidades nacionales, la cuestión tenía más agregados: protestar por la intromisión de las comisiones interventoras en el manejo académico y administrativo de las principales universidades y exigir que la política económica del gobierno otorgue mejores oportunidades económicas a aquellos que no puedan sustentar sus estudios.

Por una ciudadanía estudiantil

La acción descrita de los estudiantes no vale tanto por un supuesto ‘despertar’ a la participación política, en verdad nunca estuvieron dormidos, ni por presentar un ‘pliego de reclamos’ al primer ministro, como por el impacto profundo que ha dejado en la opinión pública. Sobre todo en aquellos que propugnan que el mercado también soluciona el problema de la educación superior en el país. Las pocas virtudes que ofrece la competencia en una educación socialmente estratificada como es en el Perú, se vuelven insignificantes frente a la caída de la calidad producida por decenas de universidades e institutos tecnológicos que sólo se preocupan de ser ‘rentables’ económicamente. El mercado, a veces, se ocupa de bajar la calidad.

Los universitarios hoy sienten el impacto de una globalización que trae muchas oportunidades pero para pocos. El reto está en conseguir una suerte de ciudadanía estudiantil que elimine las diferencias en cuanto a calidad y posición en el mercado de trabajo para todos.

Sí, la ética importa

Las movilizaciones estudiantiles en el Perú han tenido, principalmente, un contenido ético: el país no le pertenece a un grupo de personas; las instituciones y la vida de las personas importan. En el Perú, durante casi 10 años, ser estudiante en una universidad pública y tener rasgos étnicos andinos era sinónimo de ser sospechoso de terrorismo. Durante ese tiempo se cometieron muchas violaciones contra los derechos humanos y miles de jóvenes murieron en la guerra contra Sendero Luminoso, muchos de ellos, eran inocentes. Por ello, es importante para nosotros reivindicar los derechos de las personas y su aspiración a una vida digna con igualdad de oportunidades. Tanto las movilizaciones como la reciente organización de las brigadas estudiantiles para ayudar a los más afectados, como siempre los más pobres, por los desastres del fenómeno del Niño, son un ejercicio de solidaridad que permite tener otra visión del país, a veces muy crítica pero siempre movilizadora hacia una nueva sociedad.

3. Haciendo camino para transformar la universidad

Nos preguntamos, ¿en qué medida la universidad de hoy, la peruana y también la latinoamericana, está formando al joven y a la joven para ser ciudadanos ? ¿Qué significa preparar para la ciudadanía en una situación en que el 90% de la población no puede disfrutar de los beneficios de la globalización ?

Un horizonte de desarrollo da un papel esencial a la investigación científica y a la innovación permanente. En este contexto, ¿puede un país del Sur destinar sus mayores recursos a la educación
básica sin preocuparse por la calidad de sus profesionales? ¿Cómo superar las asimetrías con las universidades del Norte y al interior de nuestros países: capital versus provincia, privadas versus públicas?

El problema de la universidad es complejo. No basta con poner mejores ladrillos a la universidad y retirar al ejército que la custodiaba. Lo que está detrás es qué podemos esperar de la universidad en términos de calidad, de vinculación al mundo del trabajo y de aporte a la construcción de una sociedad con oportunidades equitativas para todos.

Cambiar la educación en el Perú es un imperativo ético y estratégico para el desarrollo de los países del Tercer Mundo. No hay manera de ver la real importancia de la educación para el desarrollo humano y el desarrollo sustentable si no se la ve en un horizonte de medio y largo plazo. Es hora de proponer un acuerdo para la educación en su conjunto y para la universidad en particular, que comprometa a quienes hacen las políticas educativas e institucionales, a los gobiernos y congresos, la prensa, los docentes, los investigadores, los estudiantes y sus familias, los empresarios y los agentes del mundo del trabajo y los diferentes grupos de la sociedad civil.
The Students' Role within Higher Education Change and Development: Vision, Action and Regional Perspectives.

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Introduction.

This document is addressed to all students and other stakeholders in higher education, such as national policy-makers, institutional leaders, professors and researchers, representatives of the labour market, IGOs, NGOs, UN System agencies, who are willing to take an active part in the discussion on the current status and desired future of higher education, focusing on the active role that the student community can play in the reform of national higher education systems to cope better with the challenge of sustainable human development in the 21st Century.

Since students are the most concerned by higher education, they have the right to participate in the discussion and convey their opinions to the decision-makers, responsible for the elaboration of higher education policies. They should, in turn, involve more and more students in the reflection processes leading to national reforms of higher education systems, showing that they are aware of the real needs of contemporary knowledge-intensive societies and of people.

Students should elaborate constructive suggestions for new strategies which will have to be adopted in order to change the status quo of higher education according to their future needs and current expectations.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is:

* to attract the attention of the student community to the urgent need to play an active part in the reform of higher education systems and institutions,
* to offer them some hints and guidelines for further reflection and a scheme of action to confirm their role as full partners in the renewal of higher education, and,
* to sensitize all the stakeholders involved and make them aware of the necessity to involve students in the global reflection on higher education at an institutional, national and international level, because today's students are tomorrow's citizens and leaders. In particular, national and institutional decision-makers should place students and their needs at the centre of their concerns and action-plans.

I am convinced that students possess the competence, the energy and intellectual capability to take decisions concerning the creation, organization and evaluation of higher education content and programmes, and I hope that the reader will agree with me or, at least, will consider this possibility as a realistic one.

This paper is structured in three parts.

The first part is about the vision for the future of higher education that students have shaped by identifying basic needs, these exist in the unsatisfactory reality of current educational models which lack societal values and, in a certain way, relevance for the students' personal life and professional aspirations.
The second part offers a framework for concrete action that the student community could implement so as to take an active part in the process of change and development of higher education systems, showing students to be reliable and competent partners with institutional, national and international policy-makers.

In particular, it is of basic importance for students to:

* assess and evaluate the quality and relevance of their educational systems on the basis of the skills and abilities they should develop in order to cope with the challenges of a demanding labour market and the ones launched by modern, hi-tech, more and more individualistic and inter-dependent societies;
* develop a sense of criticism and a deeper awareness of the rights they are entitled to as students and as individuals accessing higher education institutions;
* contribute to the reflection and discussion on which higher education policies to adopt at the dawn of the 21st century by putting forward constructive proposals and strategies to reform current systems. In particular, they should focus on the role they can play in this respect, asking themselves what they can do to change higher education, not simply asking the other stakeholders what they can do to offer students a better education.

In this section, the key question is "To what extent do students contribute to..." and certain fields of action will be mentioned, in order to offer some examples that, of course have no general validity, but should be put into a specific historical and geographical context and can be considered as realistic examples of student initiatives and participation in higher education.

Finally, the third and last part will focus on regional perspectives and approaches to the reform process of higher education.

The students who attended the various regional consultations, as stakeholders, were asked to confront their own expectations and views on their educational systems with other partners' opinions and evaluations; the results of those fruitful discussions are presented by the 'Regional Declarations' and 'Action Plans' resulting from the consultations (see: La Havana; Dakar; Tokyo; Palermo; Beirut).

This section intends to briefly introduce the reader to the main problems facing higher education systems in the different regions of the world, on a student perspective, so that regional and local diversities and peculiarities can be taken into consideration while discussing global strategies to reform higher education, since diversity is at the origin of our cultural richness and our human creativity.

I hope that the contributions offered by students can be taken into consideration by representatives of national governments and other partners while discussing higher education policies at a global level, in Paris, in October 1998, at the World Conference on Higher Education.

1. Students' Vision of Higher Education.

1.1 UNESCO and the Student Community.

In consideration of the basic fact that students are the "raison d'être" of all higher education Institutions, in the past decade UNESCO has been involving more and more the student community (consisting of international, regional, disciplinary and multi-disciplinary student NGOs) in the discussion on higher education.

The student community has showed itself to be fully aware of the main issues dominating this sector today and their complexity. While they understood that solutions were not easy to define, they put forward some concrete proposals, especially about new strategies for partnerships between students and other stakeholders being now more aware of their responsibilities and duties, as well as their rights, in higher education.
The student community is emerging as a credible, reliable partner and must play its full role in bringing about positive and equitable change within the sector.

Students are, by now, well integrated into the higher education community, at international level: they are actively participating in the UNESCO Collective Consultation on Higher Education, a platform consisting of all the NGOs active in the field. An open and fruitful dialogue is currently going on between them and the other stakeholders.

At the invitation of the Director General of UNESCO, students undertook a world-wide discussion on higher education, which resulted in the publication, by UNESCO Paris, of a document entitled: "Higher Education in the 21st Century: a student perspective", as part of the Organization's 50th anniversary celebrations. All the higher priority topics are extensively presented in this document, as they are seen from a student point of view.

In particular, they insisted that attention be paid to the discrepancy between their aspirations for their studies and what they actually got from their experience. Students confronted the ‘reality’ of their studies (why, what and how do they actually study) with the ‘vision’ (why, what and how they should study), and the following paragraph will introduce the reader to the basic concepts of this new vision.

1.2 Students’ Vision for Higher Education Objectives and Policy: Towards the 21st Century.

Students recognize that the higher education sector is now undergoing profound changes due to the increased demand for access, reduced public funding, diversification of institutions and courses, growing internationalization and the persistence of the employment crisis in many countries.

Taking into account the unsatisfactory reality of current higher education, students defined their vision for the future of this sector by identifying basic needs, the most relevant to students being:

* the need to strike a correct balance between education and training;
* the need to provide diversified teaching and training and institutional variety in response to the request for a) diversified education according to personal attitudes, interests and talents, and b) multi-skilled generalists and/or for specifically skilled graduates who will become members of the workforce of the future;
* a great need for a renewed recognition of human values in higher education which have been eroded in modern culture, including harmony, peace, co-operation, community solidarity, honesty, justice, equality, compassion and mutual understanding;
* a need for a "holistic education", which treats students as whole persons, not purely as containers for notions, but as hearts for feeling and caring and wills for acting. A holistic approach to education implies affective as well as cognitive learning, qualitative as well as quantitative knowledge, faith as well as reason. Students should develop as persons who learn, learn to do, learn how to be, learn how to live together and with the others;
* need to be helped to value education not only as a key factor to get a job, but for the way it enhances life, liberates people from ignorance, enables individuals to fulfil their human potential and self-governance, and to serve their community;
* a need for a sense of purpose and meaning which should develop self-esteem in students to allow them to become responsible for their lifelong choices and for the moral use of what they learn. Students should reach the maturity needed to use properly the acquired knowledge, competence, and skills, showing desire to continue learning.
* a need for an education providing capacity for critical thinking and moral judgement, necessary for civic involvement and active participation in today's global society. This implies more social and cultural relevance of programmes of teaching and training, fully respecting local historical, religious, socio-cultural traditions and heritage: the patrimony of humankind;
* a need for a major concern for justice within educational institutions (admission policies, scholarship awards, grading practices, governance, and ethical and scientific rigour in all activities) and in society as large (racial and sexual discrimination, militarism, economic exploitation, persecution and censorship of dissent, abuse of the environment). Professors, in primis, should act as models of justice and equity in assessing and evaluating a student's achievements;
**a need for humanistic renewal of technical curricula and scientific research, in order to bring back science to serve human beings and not vice-versa;**

**a need for cross cultural competence and skills, enabling students to live and work in a multi-cultural environment and to understand “differences”. Knowledge and solidarity are two different concepts: individuals can not be forced to express solidarity towards other people from different cultures and countries, nevertheless, they can be educated to know about the existence of ‘the others’ and about their relative diversity;**

**a need for skills to start entrepreneurial projects and exercise leadership and team attitudes;**

**a need for new skills and notions to improve access, analyze, optimize and utilize information properly, especially regarding new technological means of communication;**

**a need for the inclusion, in curricula, of environmental education to cope with sustainable human development and to take up the responsibility for the protection and preservation of our common environmental heritage and patrimony;**

**need for a wider and more efficient system of vocational counselling to allocate individuals better within the institutional setting;**

**a need to strengthen and diversify the non-university sector to ensure better educational opportunity for all citizens**

### 1.3 Some Proposals.

Invited to comment on the teaching and learning processes currently used within their institutions, students reacted constructively proposing that higher education institutions should provide the following:

**first of all, access to the studies for a maximum number of persons who have the intellectual capability and preparation required;**

**to guarantee the above mentioned "preparation required", institutions of primary and secondary education should be enabled, by the adoption of measures of correction at national level, to allow equity in the education of students coming from different socio-cultural contexts;**

**the development of multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary curricula to match the challenge of a holistic education better;**

**a major emphasis on education as an interactive process (stimulating the intellectual curiosity of students through working and learning in teams etc.);**

**a redefinition of the meaning of ‘achievement’ in a system which is pushing young people towards excessive study at the expense of other important life skills;**

**the promotion of the concept of Lifelong Learning for All, for learning to learn should be the ultimate goal;**

**the change of higher education institutions from ‘ivory towers’ into fora of debate and discussion which reflects the challenges and needs of society. This should result from a greater co-operation between state, local government, academia, students, NGOs and business;**

**enhancing the role of higher education institutions as centres for community change, by creating a closer link between students and the local community outside their institution;**

**promoting teachers' mobility and taking an active part in student mobility schemes, to increase cross-border relationships among colleges and universities;**

**establishing an international system of recognition of qualifications, as in the model proposed by UNESCO/Council of Europe, due to the need for an increasing mobile labour force;**

**giving to higher education a real international dimension, by strengthening communication among various universities through the exchange of researchers and teachers, joint programmes and courses, comparative analysis and evaluation of courses, curricula and grading system, international recognition of academic titles, credit-transfer systems, etc.**

Inter-institutional competition should aim to encourage creativity and stimulate innovation within the different educational systems;

**intensifying efforts to provide more opportunities to improve foreign language competence and skills in every kind of higher education institution, vocational, scientific or those related to the humanities;**

**developing a proper relationship with the new technological means of communication and information, especially when used for the purpose of education, because it can have negative...**
psychological impact on students who may miss the warmth of human interaction in their learning environment.

1.4 The Delors Report: "Learning: The Treasure Within": a good source of inspiration for students.

The 1996 Report published by UNESCO and entitled: "Learning: The Treasure Within", presented by the "International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century", chaired by Mr. Jacques Delors, affirms that education throughout life, from basic educational level up to post-graduate courses, should be based on four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.

* Learning to know, by combining a sufficiently broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in depth on a small number of subject. This also means learning to learn, so as to benefit from the opportunities education provides throughout life.
* Learning to do, in order to acquire not only an occupational skill but also, more broadly, the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams. It also means learning to do in the context of young peoples' various social and work experiences which may be informal, as a result of the local or national context, or formal, involving courses, alternating study and work.
* Learning to live together, by developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence - carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts - in a spirit of respect for the values of democracy, pluralism, mutual understanding and peace.
* Learning to be, so as to develop one's personality better and be able to act with even greater autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility. In that connection, education must not disregard any aspect of a person's potential: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities and communication skills, religious ethic and social attitudes.

These four pillars should be the foundations of a 'vision' of Education that should inform and guide future educational reforms and policy of higher education, in relation both to content and methods.

2. Students' Opinions on Action towards a New Role in Higher Education.

Now that a 'vision' of the desired future of higher education, for the 21st century, has reached a large consensus, we are at the point to ask students to move from theoretical discussion to practical proposals for further implementation and action, since action speaks louder than words.

The starting point for appropriate action is to assess and evaluate the current situation. Starting from analyzing the conditions of access to higher education institutions in their countries, students should continue by reflecting on their own rights as enrolled students and as individuals willing to get into the system.

The next step is the evaluation of the quality of the overall academic environment and relevance of curricula and pedagogic methods in use.

At this point, students are ready to elaborate proposals and articulate strategies for change in education policies and programmes. This implies a real 'mobilization' of students at institutional and national level: they should organize themselves in strong and well-organized associations or unions and discuss about education during seminars or ad hoc workshops.

Also, as we previously said, it is of fundamental importance for students to establish international networks for communication and information-exchange among different countries and universities, student associations and NGOs etc., so that a constant analysis of the outside world reality can help guide student action better at local level and young people from disadvantaged areas (in terms of higher learning and research) can receive information, know-how and moral support from more industrially developed countries.
The ultimate goal should be the realization of a real, global student solidarity, the basis of future peace in the world.

2.1 Access to Higher Education: legal references to a fundamental right.

"Everyone has the right to education. (... ) Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit". (Art. 26.1 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Dec. 1948). Paragraph (a) of Art. 4 of the International Convention on the Fight against Discrimination in Education, adopted by the 11th Session of UNESCO General Conference on 14 December 1960, in Paris, stipulates that: "States Parties to the present convention engage themselves to formulate, develop and apply a national policy aiming at making higher education accessible to all, in full equity, on the basis of each one's capacity".

The world has witnessed in the past few decades the emergence of a new phenomenon, well known as: The "massification of higher education", which caused an over six-fold increase in student enrolments world-wide.

Considering this enormously increasing demand on higher education and the limited human and financial resources, higher education institutions have established criteria to select university students. This fact obviously contradicts the principle of: "Education for All" stipulated in the above mentioned articles and with the challenges of the 21st Century which require sustainable development of all citizens skills.

The time is right for students from all over the world to start lobbying at institutional and national level to reaffirm the principle of the right to education for all, on the basis of merit, according to the above-mentioned legal references.

In particular, they should carefully consider whether in their respective local and national systems students experience any kind of difficulties or discrimination to access university or any other desired programme, on the basis of any of the following criteria:

* financial status;
* lack of infrastructure (building for classrooms etc.) and/ or distance problems;
* family origin and social status, other than financial;
* sex of the student;
* religion - language - nationality;
* numerus clausus (a fixed number of students allowed to access to courses, per year);
* others.

In the case of a positive answer, students, already organized and united into National Student Unions or associations (legally recognized by the appropriate national authorities) should open a direct dialogue and a democratic confrontation with the decision-makers on this matter, aiming to shift from an elite-based to a merit-based approach in any policy concerning access to higher education.

Students from countries with no national student union (Lebanon, for instance) should work to set-up a national organization as soon as possible, aiming at opening a dialogue with competent national authorities on an equal basis.

National governments should not, in any case, forbid the establishment of such student organizations by law, for they are a basic tool for education to citizenship and active participation in society.

Keeping as a main priority the action of lobbying for access to higher education, students should be aware of other "rights" which belongs to their status, a 'status' that nowadays still need to be precisely defined by the International Community, since no international documents legally define what a student is and what his/ her rights are.
I hope that in the near future UNESCO will be able to promote a "Declaration of Higher Education Students' Rights", an official document assessing the rights and duties for students and educational institutions, that can be adopted by Member States as a sign of real commitment to national reform plans in this field, at the dawn of the 21st Century, in the name of the pact of honour made with national students in the signing of the Bill of Human Rights, about fifty years ago.

The definition of the status of students should focus on the basic concept of students as 'whole persons'; acknowledging this fact, State Parties should assess students' rights within the context of higher education institutions, paying particular attention to:

- rights related to quality of education;
- rights related to information;
- rights related to participation;
- rights related to auxiliaries services;
- rights to quality of life in the campus and academic environment.

2.2 Students Assessing Quality of Higher Education.

Paragraph 3 of article 26 of the International Bill of Human Rights stipulates that "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups". This includes the global development of human personality at physical, intellectual, social and other levels.

As we previously said, the "International Commission on Higher Education for the 21st century" presided by M. Jacques Delors, has defined, in its report published by UNESCO under the title: "Learning: the Treasure Within", the basis of the education of human personality, as follows: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, learning to live with the others, and learning to be.

On the basis of this definition of "learning", students should assess and judge the quality of the education they receive starting from the abilities and competence they are supposed to develop to enter the 'real world'.

Skills that we expect to develop in higher education can be stated under the three following titles: academic, personal and business skills.

* Academic skills:
  - general and specialized knowledge;
  - capacity in applying knowledge;
  - logical analysis;
  - analysis and critique;
  - to resolve problems;
  - written communication;
  - spoken communication;
  - capacity to deal with numeric and statistical data;
  - computer skills;
  - capacity to carry out research.

* Personal skills:
  - self-confidence;
  - self-control;
  - awareness of ones weaknesses and strengths;
  - creativity;
  - autonomy;
  - knowledge of international and national matters;
  - desire to continue learning
* Business Skills:

- positive attitude towards job opportunities and risks;
- ability to determine priorities;
- interpersonal skills (relationship building);
- persuasion skills;
- presentation skills;
- ability to work in groups;
- leadership skills;
- mastery of foreign languages;
- motivation and commitment;
- flexibility and perseverance (Source: Great Expectations, Kate Purcell, CSU, United Kingdom 1996)

Only by confronting the above mentioned skills with the reality of their current education, can students judge the quality of their curricula and academic programmes and choose to take effective measures in an attempt to change the situation.

Students must expect higher education Institutions to form high level staff and self-confident individuals, capable of assuming responsibilities assigned by Society, on the basis of the following elements:

* teaching and non-teaching competent enthusiastic staff;
* modern and well-studied programmes, inherent to nowadays technological environment and global world;
* modern equipment
* competent and enthusiastic students;
* adequate infrastructure and academic environment (classrooms; laboratories; gymnasium, equipment, libraries, etc...);
* competent administration;
* convenient academic environment (student activities, clubs, sports, theatre, cinema, extra-curricula discussions and activities, professional orientation, academic and psychological orientation and support, just to mention some...).

Students co-operation and support to guarantee a good quality of life in the campus is an element of fundamental importance; by respecting basic courtesies and taking care of all the campus equipment and property, students first of all express the level of civilized behaviour reached by their society. Too many times, in many parts of the world, university building and areas, that should be considered as the highest expression of the cultural richness of a country, are dirty, visibly ruined, with walls covered with graffiti.

If students show real concern for the physical conditions of the institutions they live and study in, administration and non-teaching staff will be motivated to contribute as well and to do their best for a correct management of the overall academic environment, that would lead ultimately to a real advancement in scientific and research achievements.

Also, students' behaviour and attitudes towards teaching and non-teaching staff contributes a lot to the creation of fruitful academic environment; respect, tolerance, a certain humility, curiosity and a genuine desire to continue learning should be the major feelings expressed by students all along their student life.

2.3 Students and Lifelong Learning.

Our generation of students is discovering that today's society is moving towards a model of "Lifelong Learning for All", which is gradually replacing the prevailing model of selective and concentrated learning and study for a limited period. Learning to learn should be the ultimate goal for students will have to accept the need to keep changing jobs, update their knowledge and learn new skills, since the knowledge acquired at university will soon become obsolete.
Students will have to realize soon that Lifelong Learning for all is, in itself, a basic value of higher education to respect, protect and promote in society. Unfortunately, the complexity of this concept leads to a certain cultural refusal and negative attitude showed by most of young people, and it is quite easy to understand why people attending about 40 hours a week of compulsory classes may speak against the idea of spending the rest of his life in such conditions...

National Student Unions, regional and international student NGOs and associations should take up the responsibility and the duty to work to create a new sensitiveness in favour of Lifelong Learning among students, since it is of fundamental importance and it constitutes a basic pillar for Education in the XXI Century.

Especially in institutional contexts where promotion and reinforcement of this principle is totally lacking, students themselves should take the first step by organizing campaign in favour of LLL, or seminars and/or workshops, or other activities together with representatives from the labour market, associations and trade-unions, professors and other partners from the economic or political sectors.

2.4 Women in Higher Education.

"If you educate a boy, you educate an individual; if you educate a girl, you educate a family and a nation". - African Proverb -

This proverb should inspire students and, after an attentive evaluation of their local situation, they should be able to address demands for specific measures to their own national authorities to ensure equal access to tertiary education and encourage adult education for women.

Concrete proposals for an improvement in this sense should be formulated after consideration of the following:

1- What do students think of women's status in higher education? What are women's expectations of higher education?
2- What are their suggestions concerning the access of women to higher education (fixing of a minimum quota per year; scholarship or grants for young woman; curricula tailored to women's interests and needs; or others)?
3- How can students contribute to the reinforcement of Adult Education and Women's Education, in particular? (e.g.: student service to local community; structured interaction between HE Institutions and the external community etc.).

2.5 Students and the Financing of Higher Education.

Teaching human security, research and social service should underpin of higher education, but we all acknowledge the obvious fact that only with suitable funding can education realize its mission. Students are used to seeing all their requests for reform and attempts to change and innovate national systems to crash against the sadly famous financial wall: 'lack of money' is the most frequent reason for higher education institutions and policy-maker to stay inactive, for money is a basic condition for change and development, research and advancement in knowledge, both in industrially developed and developing countries.

We are nowadays facing a situation in which, demand for higher education is enormously increasing, and, many national governments are cutting back budgets for education and research. This fact has therefore created an urgent need for 'alternative' financial resources, bearing in mind that the composition of the student community is changing (e.g.: social background and sex, age, etc.).

Students should take into consideration the following resources:

- public funding;
- private sector funding (banks, industries; professionals, etc.);
- taxes and student fees;
- grants and scholarship on the basis of merit;
- profit from selling books and others;
- other funding resources.

What do students think of the use of these resources? What do they suggest in order to rationalize the expenditure? It is very important that students do contribute to the discussion on higher education bearing in mind the 'limits' imposed by budgetary conditions; only in this way they can realistically propose some alternatives. For example, in Slovenia, the National Student Union is highly responsible, in terms of financial management in the university; students are showing that they are good and wise managers and they are exercising entrepreneurial skills by owning and managing publishing houses, student housing, bars and cafeterias on the campus etc.

2.6 Governance of higher education and student participation in the decision-making process.

The key-question is: to what extent can/should students contribute to the governance of higher education institutions, in practice? Students should, now, consider their role in the following contexts:

- student participation in the decision-making process;
- dialogue with professors and university administration staff;
- dialogue with government and national authorities;
- dialogue with regional and local authorities;
- other partners, namely firms and other actors from the private sector.

Special emphasis should be put on the word "dialogue", for it is the base of a real participation of students in the governance of higher education. Students should, first of all, through their representatives, be informed about all the main directives and principles guiding the administration and management of their own institutions and curricula.

Then, a partnership between students, decision-makers, teaching and non-teaching staff, administrations and other authorities must be based on a common interest in higher education, mutual respect and credibility and should be seen as a prime way to renew this sector.

Students should also focus more on strategies for interface between: higher education institutions, employers and graduates, since the development of new strategies to enhance the coalition of the higher education community and its major partners is one of the possible solutions to ensure a more concerted and effective co-operation to meet the challenges of sustainable human development and peace.

I am convinced that student organizations, especially national and international ones, which have already gained a certain credibility, can try to establish direct contacts with the economic agents by:

- organizing events, such as conferences and fora, where recruitment staff of companies can meet students and present them the criteria of selection in their own firms, giving information about the skills and specific competence required; possibilities of internships; general employment policies etc.;
- organizing 'job fairs' where young graduates get in contact with big companies, and by the means of an interview students and graduates approach companies and they have a chance to enter the labour market through the main entrance directly into the world of work;
- encouraging companies to invest money in research activities in the university (not only applied research);
- collecting information from the economic sector and spreading it among students, creating a kind of self-managed counselling service focused on realistic possibilities of graduate employment.

Student organizations, in general, come up against several difficulties in their attempts to establish a concrete and effective action of partnership with the private sector, due to:

a) the enormous amount of human resources and money that this would require and,

b) the "time consuming" kind of activities that it would imply: students have to accept a trade-off between studies and this extra-curricular activity, and most of the time student choose to save their
energies to study instead of getting involved in these associations involved in socially useful activities, which can contribute substantially to the establishment of closer links between university and the world of work, new graduates and employers.

Concerning partnership strategies involving the private sector, academia and national governments, students strongly support a model where state, higher education and industry (and the private sector in general) are players who play their roles in a very balanced and co-ordinated way.

I would like to stress the importance of the state which, in such an arrangement, is responsible for:
1) protecting the academic freedom and independence of universities by drawing up a proper legal framework;
2) being attentive to the needs put forward by the developing productive system and by the civil society;
3) properly funding and financing higher education and research, giving priority to the need for a larger number of individuals to enter higher education.
Here, I would like to stress the importance of the creation of a good and effective scholarship and grant system (based on "merit") that could fill the gap created by an unfair distribution of wealth in society which can cause social exclusion of certain groups. This exclusion can only be reduced by an open and widely accessible education;
4) offering a student union the possibility to be part, on an equal footing, of the decision making process leading to all the relevant decisions concerning creation, organization and evaluation of higher education content.

3. Regional Perspectives

3.1 Students participating in the preparation of the World Conference on Higher Education: a role played at the international level.

The 1998 conference, (5-9 October) has been preceded by a series of regional consultations:
* Latin America/Caribbean: Havana, Cuba, 18 November 1996
* Africa: Dakar, Senegal, 1-4 April 1997
* Asia/Pacific: Tokyo, Japan, 8-10 July 1997
* Europe: Palermo, Italy, 25-27 September 1997
* Arab States: Beirut, Lebanon, 2-5 March 1998.

Some representatives from international, regional, and national student associations and NGOs have been invited to attend the regional consultations and take an active part in the discussion on higher education at regional level.

Moreover, students were present at other complementary meetings and events, such as:
* meetings held by IGOs and NGOs during the period 1996-1998
* meetings of the Student/Employer Forum on Graduate Employment 1996-1998
* other symposia and round-tables with specific groups which will contribute to the discussion of the topic.

3.2 Latin America/Caribbean.

In this region of the world, higher education institutions, and universities in particular, can count on a long and solid tradition of "autonomy and co-government". Within this general, favourable climate of freedom, students could find a proper environment to express their creativity, to affirm their status and needs both in the higher education sector and in society as a whole.

In 1918 (see: "Reforma Universitaria de Córdoba"), students from this region started to have a great impact on the governance of higher education institutions and on current political and societal issues;
in the last years, they maintained their social and political role and they still play an important role in the political life of Latin American countries.

Students participating in the Regional Consultation held in La Havana presented a 'Student Declaration' whose main points are the following:

* "fight for the rights of students who cannot access to higher education because of the conditions of extreme inequality and social injustice prevailing in our (their) countries";
* criticisms addressed to the governments of the region which "decided to implement adjustment policies based on economic efficiency that ignore the social and ecological costs";
* a demand for "democratization of higher education" as a concept in opposition to the elitarism of education;
* a re-launch of the concept of "criticism (...) necessary as an inherent function of higher education. Criticism as construction, or criticism as a protest, as the context demands;
* a strong believe "in the principles of Córdoba, where the social relevance of the Latin American university was reassessed, on the basis of: autonomy, co-government, social responsibility of the university;
* a strong opposition to "the doctrine promoted by the World Bank because we (they) believe it is irreconcilable with the dearest tradition of the Latin American university;
* trust in the project launched by UNESCO, for the reforming of higher education in the 21st Century;
* a need for a higher education which trains "people who speak the language of the Colombian fisherman who, in their apparent ignorance, invented the word FEEL-THINKING to designate a language that speaks the truth".

3.3. Africa.

This region is nowadays facing ongoing development problems, including social and economic stability and peace, and in certain parts of the continent the socio-political situation is so unstable and dramatic that all the main efforts of international organizations and donors are focused on basic education, as it is an indispensable means for reconstruction and development in this region.

In this context, higher learning is seriously risking to be marginalized, projects for higher education institutions and programmes are left aside and students do not feel motivated to access to higher education, for it may not offer enough chances to enhance their lives.

Unfortunately, neither the "African Regional Declaration", nor the "Action Plan", take into consideration students' role within the reform process of Higher Education in the African continent.

3.4 Europe.

In Palermo, Sicily, in September 1997, several representatives from international student NGOs recognized by UNESCO were present to express their main concerns about higher education and to open a direct dialogue with the European Rector Conference, the association which co-hosted the European regional consultation, together with UNESCO-CEPES.

All of them had plans and proposals to put forward, and they could actively join workshops and parallel sessions (dealing with case-studies), but unfortunately, only one representative could speak on behalf of European students, in plenary sessions.

Nevertheless, they had the chance to come together, to discuss and decide which were the most relevant inputs that had to come from students, in the discussion of a "European Agenda for Change in Higher Education".

It appeared absolutely clear that the major concern of students regarding higher education is:

the need for increased student participation in the governance of higher education institutions, and
increased participation of student organisations at all levels of the HE decision-making process: international, regional, and national.

In fact, students from this region realize that they are not yet sufficiently involved, by institutional and national decision-makers, in the process leading to all the decisions concerning creation, organization and evaluation of higher education content.

This need is felt as more urgent in the countries in the South of Europe (e.g.: Italy), were universities maintained a very traditional structure and internal regulation, according to the principle of academic freedom and independence, which does not give any decisional role to students in the ‘Senatus Academicus’.

Other points of special importance raised by students were:

1. enhancing European mobility schemes, (at a continental level) to:
   a) increase physical and intellectual mobility of students and teaching-staff, and b) help Eastern and Central European institutions to cope with political and social demands resulting from the transition to market economies;
2. adoption and implementation, by the Member States, of the proposals made by the UNESCO/Council of Europe Joint Convention, regarding the recognition of degrees and diplomas (necessary to the development of mobility schemes);
3. curriculum development, to include problem-based substance;
4. renovation of the pedagogical process and methods to foster more interactive teaching and learning plus a equitable and constructive dialogue with students;
5. extra-curricular activities development and financing (essential to ‘develop a broad set of attributes in terms of personal and transferable skills and competencies in order to increase students’ employability in a “knowledge society”, and in an intrinsically uncertain labour market’);
6. promotion of more constructive relations between higher education institutions and the world of small and medium size enterprises;
7. the need for internships in firms as an integral part of degree courses, research training in a work environment, career guidance services;
8. the European dimension in higher education (see: teaching of foreign languages; mobility; networking and partnership; multi and inter-disciplinary curricula; international research programmes etc.);
9. enhanced status for higher education teaching personnel (to improve quality in education).

3.5 Arab States.

In my opinion, the students from this region have a fundamental problem to solve: they are not yet a "community of Arab students", in the sense that, up to this moment, they have not developed the awareness to be a group of individuals facing basically the same problems within this same higher education context, within the same geographical region. Notwithstanding the existence of one regional student organisation (GUAS), and several national student unions, communication among these groups, internationally, is almost non-existent; there is also a general lack of knowledge about the reality of higher education systems in neighbouring countries, statistics and figures are very rare, and 'student mobility', in the Arab States, is a concept unknown, especially if we do not consider the brain-drain phenomenon as mobility.

It is true that the Arab States present a very complex and diversified reality; in a context of cultural (not linguistic) and religious diversity, economic disparity and social volatility, it seems to be realistic the existence of a community of students not homogeneous and united, but there is still space for activities aiming to unify students in the region and to let them sharing knowledge and resources for a common purpose.

International student NGOs, especially the ones recognized by UNESCO and/or members of the UNESCO Collective Consultation on Higher Education, should take up the responsibility to help
national student unions and associations from this region to establish a solid network for communication and exchange of both information and students.

Furthermore, regional events such as student consultations and meetings should be organized on a regular basis to strengthen the flow of information and to develop common and effective strategies for action towards international institutions, national governments and local institutions. Starting from the opening of a direct dialogue with the above mentioned actors, students should aim to the acquisition of the role of full partners in the decision-making process concerning their education.

Only by affirming their 'status' will Arab students be able to discuss with the other stakeholders about the main problems of higher education systems in the region, namely:

* discrimination in accessing to higher education;
* gender discrimination;
* lack/ inadequacy of infrastructures;
* lack of dialogue between students and national authorities;
* lack of financial means and public or private scholarships;
* curricula of studies not relevant to students' personal life and to the current labour market
* lack of flexibility in higher education (no para-university institutions; short degrees; technical and/or vocational diplomas etc.);
* absence of a system for 'counselling' and 'orientation programmes';
* lack of a computer network in Arabic language, established by universities and national labour organizations and institutions present in the region;
* need to promote lifelong learning and to create open universities, to better meet the needs of worker-students.

It is important to note that the Arab Regional Conference, held in Beirut, was the only regional consultation hosting a "Students' Forum", a three-hour panel discussion, held in the Plenary Session, in which student representatives from National Unions from the region and NGOs could present and discuss with the audience their perspectives on the status of higher education systems and programmes in the Arab region.


Bearing in mind that students are rational individuals, young citizens, willing to take an active part to the reform of higher education policies at global level, and taken into consideration the different regional assets and priorities in this sector, I hope that the reader, once evaluated the 'vision' and proposals for concrete 'action', will agree on the fact that there is an urgent need for major involvement of students in this process of change and development.

Finally, it is a responsibility of the student community to strengthen internal co-operation and communication in order to fully play the role it deserves, as the party most concerned by higher education.

I hope that, the "Action Plan" resulting from the WCHE, will include a statement recommending to Member States to undertake a process of exploring the feasibility of study for a "Students' Charter" aiming to define at international level the legal status of students in higher education.
**Opening the Big Door**

**Student Declaration on Equality, Democracy and Quality in Higher Education**

Address by: Mr Benson Obua Ogwal, All Africa Students Union (AASU)

1 **Introduction**

Democracy defines a political system in which power - directly or indirectly - rests with the people. In that sense democracy implies actual participation of each individual in the decision-making process. Therefore each individual should act as a responsible citizen. The key to the development of this responsibility is education and free access to information in a pluralistic and open media landscape.

Learning how to participate and take an active part in a democracy is a continuous process. The higher education system is the best forum to teach and learn democracy. This means that all levels of education must be open to everyone and that all are given equal opportunities. The professor must be given full freedom and autonomy.

Education is the answer to the numerous problems we are faced with. Therefore each country should have its educational policies tailored to its peculiar needs within the context of global environment.

1.1 **Access to Higher Education**

The right to education is guaranteed in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (Article 26). The access to higher education is not without barriers. People from a disadvantaged social background, cultural minorities, physically disabled, women and refugees are facing various obstacles, leading to lower representation in higher education. The processes of globalization and change in the educational system from a national welfare service to an international economy-driven market must not disturb the principle of equity in access to higher education.

2.1 **Financial barriers**

All over the world the funding for higher education is decreasing, affecting both the accessibility and the quality of higher education. In principle we believe that higher education must be free of any charges. Financial barriers must not prevent access to higher education.

The increasing costs of higher education give a reason for concern as the living standard has severely declined in certain parts of the world during the same time. This tendency leads towards an elitist higher education only available for a small, privileged group of society. We ask for a social security that recognizes students' needs for housing, food, medical care, study material and transportation. This way, financial barriers can be restricted. The state has the main responsibility for the financial resources of education. Regarding those countries which do not have a fair policy of student financial assistance, curriculum adaptation is suggested in order to allow students to work and study at the same time.

We note with deep concern that one of the major limitations on adequate state funding for higher education is a result of the structural adjustment programmes and conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on many of our countries. Therefore we strongly condemn this action by these Bretton Woods institutions and urge states to have the ultimate control over their budgets from which they should prioritize the funding of higher education as a social expenditure.
2.2 Socio-Cultural Thresholds

Socio-cultural factors play a vital role in the road to higher education. Youngsters possessing the necessary skills for a higher education may be barred from entering by their families or their social surroundings.

In a lot of societies women still meet discrimination in higher education. The percentage of female students in higher education has increased in some parts of the world, but in their working careers they are still disadvantaged compared to their male counterparts.

In many parts of the world the difficult situation of cultural minorities in higher education requires immediate action. Cultural minorities are seriously disadvantaged and they always encounter a lot of difficulties. They also have different needs, demands and expectations. The development of multi- or intercultural learning is very important. It gives us insight into different cultural realities necessary for mutual understanding.

2.3 Political Thresholds

Many students face difficulties pursuing higher education due to the political crisis in their countries. Countries in conflict or those recovering from their ruins of conflicts do not consider education a priority. Besides being destructive to infrastructure and lives, conflicts are disruptive to studies, sometimes delaying whole generations of students and affecting academic calendars. The international community should help such countries to reconstruct and rehabilitate their higher education systems. More importantly, preventive diplomacy and peace education should be used as tools for forestalling conflicts, whether inter- or intra-state, and their resulting devastating effect.

In several countries, cultural minorities are denied the right to higher education in their native language. These rights, formerly guaranteed, are threatened to be or have been abolished recently. We see a danger in these developments and support actions to re-establish these rights.

3. Student Participation in Decision-making

Higher education is the key to our future, the key to being able to cope with the knowledge society. As major stakeholders in all levels of education, student participation in the decision making process is vital and important. Students’ right to organize in order to seek their rights and interests, and students’ right to participate in all levels of decision-making should be enshrined in applicable national or sub-national laws.

Institutions of higher education should be a model of a democratic community. They should reflect the elements of such a society and thereby give the students the tools to integrate and form an active part of the democratic process. The structure of the institutions of higher education should instill democratic understanding within all groups (e.g. students, professionals, workers, teachers and administrators).

The elements of the structure should be:

- Equal opportunities for active participation and involvement in all aspects of institutions of higher education.
- Dialogue and recognition of all arguments as the underlying principle in the decision process.
- Institutions of higher education should be open to the rest of the society, giving and receiving knowledge and critical arguments in relation to that knowledge.

The authorities of higher education institutions, students, and academic staff have to accept each other as equal partners in the democratic process of developing higher education. To this end, the work has to include listening, discussing and most importantly, building of trust among the participants. This will give students the keys to relate critically toward new and existing information and knowledge, and the possibility to understand the responsibility towards democratic values, the responsibility also to pass on the fundamental meaning and importance of these values to the coming generations.
In the building of higher education, students need to have a broader perspective, and they have a responsibility towards society and to people who are not included in the knowledge society. We recognize the power of students and how it can be used in society so as to make a difference. Student participation should be possible for all students regardless of socio-economic background. Everyone must be given the opportunity to take part in the knowledge society.

3.1 Higher education in the Twenty-first Century

Higher education in the twenty-first century will face a lot of old problems, but we need to keep in mind that new and unexpected situations will arise as well. Students shall face these problems and must find new, creative solutions fitting the spirit of the age. We demand recognition for our sense of responsibility for our own higher education. Students should participate and be supported in their participation in the organization of our higher education at different levels. We are partners rather than clients. Decisions made at national, regional and international levels influencing higher education or students’ social life cannot be taken without consulting us.

Higher education is expected to strengthen a person’s ability to act as resource in a democratic society and to be a responsible citizen. Student organizations and other international organizations dealing with higher education have a vital role to play in discussions and decisions taken at a regional and international level and their potential should be actively used.

3.2 Student Organizations

To secure good student input at all levels, student unions and organizations cannot be underestimated. They should play a central role in their institutions’ development. Student organizations can provide their members with training courses and background information. They make sure the voice of the students will be heard at all levels and act as an intracommunicative body.

The creation and development of student organizations need active support from both local, regional and international bodies and national governments. At the regional level also, student structures need support; morally, materially and financially to be able to play their rightful roles such as dissemination of information and student leadership training at all levels as well as being the counterparts and interactive partners to institutions and decision-makers to make the students’ opinion heard.

Efforts to promote and strengthen international solidarity among student organizations in order to create continuous and constant interaction in defence of democracy and human rights must therefore be strongly supported.

At the end of the 20th century, in the year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, we reaffirm the importance of free access to higher education, the fundamental role of the state in funding education, the autonomy of the institutions and the full participation of students in the decision making bodies in all aspects of the higher education system.

We, as students, are very grateful to UNESCO for giving us the opportunity to gather here at the World Conference on Higher Education. We are proud of our collective efforts which yielded this joint statement on behalf of the students of Asia, Australia, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Arab States, Europe and Africa. And we hope that these fruitful relations we have had so far with UNESCO in the preparations and conduct of this conference will continue not only with headquarters but also with the UNESCO regional offices in Beirut, Bangkok, Bucharest, Santiago, and Dakar.

This declaration was sponsored by the regional student organizations of the world:
National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB)
Asian Students Association (ASA)
Continental Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Students (OCLAE)
General Union of Arab Students (GUAS)
All Africa Students Union (AASU)
The declaration was presented at the plenary session of the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in Paris, France on 7th, October 1998 by Benson Obua Ogwal, Secretary General of AASU.

Authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in signed articles and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

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Synthetic Report

Chair: Baroness Tessa Blackstone, Minister of State for Education and Employment in the House of Lords, United Kingdom. In her opening words, the Minister insisted on the need to advance proposals to ensure high-quality education and for students’ viewpoints to be taken into consideration by decision-makers.

Panel I: Social Issues and Higher Education

Seven panellists participated in it; five of them were students, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Denmark, Egypt and Brazil. A professor from Hungary and an expert from FAO also addressed the audience. During the discussion, twelve speakers from the audience. During the discussion, twelve speakers from the audience also took the floor.

Speakers emphasised the following themes:

- Higher education has a social responsibility in the human development, in the defence and promotion of human rights and in democracy building in each country. It shall form student to a future social, political and cultural leadership, and share values and knowledge that promote social integration.

- Equal access to all levels of education should be on the basis of merit, and regardless of sex, religion, ethic or socio-economic background.

- Extensive use of the new information and communication technologies was highlighted many times; both as a tool to improve the quality of education and as a must to prepare professionals for a competitive market.

- The need to widen the scope of students participation in policy and decision-making at institutional, national, regional and international level, curricula development and evaluation. In this realm, freedom of expression, co-operation and dialogue involving all partners were also highlighted as a way to develop responsible citizenship.

- Funding is an overwhelming concern. Students stressed the responsibility of governments in funding higher education and would like to be involved in the discussion of budget and funding mechanisms, expressing concern for budgetary reductions in teaching and research, affecting equal access to disadvantaged groups and mushrooming of low-quality private education.

- While world problems require emphasis on humanistic solutions, students have to face the paradox of educational policies which, on the one hand, stimulate market-oriented approaches and, on the other, do not provide the financial possibilities for the building of long-term skills.

- Students must be recognised not as clients but as full partners in higher education.

At the conclusion of this first panel, Mr. Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO, thanked the students for allowing the opportunity for UNESCO and higher education stakeholders to listen to their views. In his address, while naming exclusion as the world’s most serious problem, Mr. Mayor stressed that Higher Education needs to be a permanent space for learning, a permanent rebellion without violence. We must dare to share.
Panel II: Regional Perspectives

Seven panellists participated in it; five students representing the different regions of the World plus one UNESCO staff member and one representative from OECD. They addressed the audience presenting their respective organisations and thanking UNESCO for enabling them to participate in the student panel, within the framework of the World Conference on Higher Education.

Major points were:

- Higher Education institutions can be actors in social changes, in producing new knowledge and in transforming societies. They should enable the leaders of tomorrow to promote and uphold a culture of peace in any society. They should be supported, financially also, by governments in this pursuit.

- Different societies requires different models of Higher Education. Many students expressed their opposition to a single model which emphasises privatisation as education is a right to all. Scholarships and grants should be provided to ensure that individuals can effectively enjoy this right.

- Higher education institutions should preserve their autonomy vis a vis the market. In order for them to protect their autonomy, to preserve academic freedom, ensure quality in teaching and protecting students’ rights, clear criteria should be established and sustainable funding mechanisms identified by all the stakeholders.

- There is a need to take into consideration the category of graduate students who simultaneously teach and do research. This group does not belong to any traditional category in Higher Education and their rights are not recognised.

- There is a need to establish dialogue between teachers, students and decision-makers. The educational system should see students, not as clients, but as partners and as the leaders of tomorrow.

- Policy-makers should not ignore that higher education brings ideas for the future.

- As we see a growth in student participation the net result is more student led choices and an emphasiz on life-long learning. To that end, student NGO’s could contribute more often as service-providers.

- Strong emphasis was put on physical and intellectual mobility, seen as a means of sharing of knowledge and experience and as a basic tool for mutual understanding and academic freedom. Mobility schemes should be strengthened both financially and geographically, to include mobility schemes between developed countries and developing countries.

- It was noted that structural adjustment programmes and attendant conditionalities place serious limitations on States to meet their financial obligations to Higher Education needs. Ultimate control of national government should rest with governments from which they should prioritise funding for Higher Education.

- Strong emphasis was put on physical and intellectual mobility, seen as a means of sharing knowledge and experience and as a basic tool for mutual understanding and academic freedom. Mobility schemes should be strengthened both financially and geographically, and included in cooperation between developed countries and developing countries.

- Higher Education institutions should guarantee all informative and infra-structural means to ensure full participation in academic activities to disabled students.
Students should actively play a role within higher education reform at national level and strengthen the dialogue on this issue amongst stakeholders at international level.

In her closing remarks, Baroness Blackstone said “There is no free education; somebody has to pay”. And left an open question to the audience as to how to organise an equitable system of financing in Higher Education.

Panel III: Entrepreneurs’ Panel

The entrepreneurs’ panel featured eight experts representing employers and young graduates. It focused on issues related to improving linkages between higher education and the world of work, one of the three main objectives of the WCHE. Strong emphasis was put on the need to strengthen interaction between higher education institutions and those who employ graduates.

The discussions covered how to optimize these linkages so that today’s graduates acquire the entrepreneurial skills necessary for their working lives. It was noted that the knowledge society of the twenty-first century would require a much greater number of people with graduate-level education and training. It is thus essential to modernize both the curricula and teaching methods to facilitate the acquisition of communication and interpersonal skills. These skills then complement the traditional capacities of analysis and research that characterize graduate education.

Particular attention was paid to the profound change that has taken place in the nature of work itself, which will necessitate not only life long learning for graduates but also, the international validation of their diplomas. In addition, research is undergoing significant change. In universities, this is conducted primarily for the benefit of humankind, while businesses undertake research for economic benefit. It was recommended that a stronger partnership be forged between higher education and the economic sector to achieve a better balance in research and its results.

With regard to globalization, it was considered that this phenomenon is social and not merely economic. Consequently, in all regions, professionals with broad understanding of our multicultural world and with flexible attitudes to deal with constant change, are needed to manage social development. Proactive experiences which permit students to develop these entrepreneurial attitudes and skills include: working in groups and communities such as NGOs, undertaking internships in the professional sector, and initiating their own cooperation projects.

In fact, the dialogue between higher education and the world of enterprise is a bottom-up process – that is, it must be fully supported by higher education institutions, by students and by employers. Their inter-relationship must be based on shared ethical values. In this manner, the necessary foundation is laid for more effective interface between the sectors involved. In reality, the interest of these sectors converge, namely, to ensure that soundly educated citizens and professionals contribute to the socio-economic and cultural development of their respective societies. This is the essence of being a graduate.

Lastly, although the renovation of higher education may continue to meet resistance in certain areas of society, it is important to eliminate mistrust between its different stakeholders. For this, the building of partnerships and UNESCO’s role in this process are crucial.
Recommendations for Future Action

I. Advocacy / Sensitization

1. Provide for student presence in institutional decision-making bodies (senates, university councils etc.)

2. Provide for presence of students in: - assessment and evaluation mechanisms  
   - curriculum development  
   - management of higher education institutions so as to ensure the quality and relevance of academic credentials

3. Provide for the involvement of students in the reflection processes leading to national reforms of higher education systems (think tanks, commissions, Green Paper mechanisms etc.) including the renewal of systems and institutions to meet the needs of lifelong learning

4. Provide for the participation of students in regional and international organizations which contribute to the global reflection on higher education

5. Provision by professional bodies to establish closer dialogue with students at national, regional and international levels (the Student Forum should be extended to these levels)

6. National Students’ Councils could be established to express the view of students to educational authorities and professional bodies

7. Provision for protection of student rights and conditions (e.g. social insurance to be provided at low rate or even free) in the Youth and Educational policies of each country

8. Further investigation to set up specific legal instruments, such as a Student Charter, to protect student rights

9. Promotion/adoption of an International Student Charter to promote and protect the status of students abroad (same benefits as local students etc.)

10. Application of mechanisms which promote the recognition of qualifications (diplomas + practical experience)

11. Assistance to NGOs to strengthen/professionalize their advocacy capacities for student rights, conditions and participation in decision-making

12. National Days on Higher Education to be organized by National Commissions and Students in order to generate a debate on the priority needs of the country as follow-up to the WCHE
II. Training

13. Support to student NGOs which promote leadership training (social or professional) to help their members to carry out research and training

14. Strengthen schemes to promote the exchange of both people and knowledge (via CITs) so as to render the mobility principle more equitable (5% students benefit now)

15. Commitment by higher education institutions to mechanisms to assist professional development: e.g. establishment of career orientation services, placement for work experience during studies and graduate placement offices to assist employment opportunities

III. Research

16. Commitment by relevant bodies and organizations to produce in depth research on Student Issues: status, conditions, professional development

17. Strengthening of research and training capacities via centres of excellence for south/south mobility (programme UNITWIN)

Goals for 2010

- Every country to include the student voice in its national body responsible for reflection related to policy-making in higher education

- Increase the access of the 18-24 year old cohort to post-secondary education by a specific percentage, e.g. at least 30% higher than is currently the case

- Establishment, in each country, of a specific mechanism to permit dialogue between students and national employers’ bodies, and/or the inclusion of the student voice in existing structures

- By 2005, an agreement should be reached with the national authorities on the International Student Charter and/or Charter for International Students