Toward Participatory and Sustainable Development

Reinventing Higher Education

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UNESCO Bangkok
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID)

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Reinventing Higher Education

Toward Participatory and Sustainable Development
The theme of the 11th UNESCO-APEID International Conference was “Reinventing Higher Education: Toward Participatory and Sustainable Development.” This begs the question: “Do we need to reinvent higher education?” If yes, then “what needs to be reinvented?” and “how should we do it?”

UNESCO has, indeed, identified a need to question the role of higher education in promoting and educating about sustainable development. Coincidentally, the International Forum on Universities and Participatory Development, hosted by the University of British Columbia (UBC) in November 2006, explored how higher education systems can incorporate participatory approaches to development. The UBC and some universities in Thailand have also been collaborating on the concept of ‘sufficiency economy,’ a theme close to the heart of His Royal Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand.

The 11th UNESCO-APEID Conference, held in Bangkok from 12-14 December 2007, was structured around four sub-themes – Paradigms of Development, Possibilities of Development, Partnerships in Development and Permitting Development. It covered a broad range of issues, and provided a forum for a rich and lively exchange of information.

Based on feedback from the participants, I believe that we all left the Conference very much inspired by what we had heard and discussed. I also believe that the Conference has paved the way for further dialogue, interaction and collaboration to reinvent higher education towards more participatory and sustainable development. I hope that we have collectively started the process of removing the walls that often surround higher education institutions. I also hope that these institutions will play a greater role in re-balancing social inequalities and in formulating sustainable solutions to the challenges of development with - and for - the people, based on the conviction that development itself needs to be grounded in the people’s own cultures and priorities.

This volume, a collection of speeches and papers presented at the Conference, will serve to continuously remind and inspire us to keep that vision alive.

Sheldon Shaeffer
Director
UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
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<td>scholarship of teaching and learning</td>
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<td>UBC</td>
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<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>visualization in participatory programmes</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Participatory processes have been identified as one of the most powerful engines to provoke real transformations in higher education institutions, in order to help them, and those with whom they engage, face the growing demands and challenges of an increasingly globalized and environmentally exhausted world.

Taylor, 2007, p. 1

In December 2007, the Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID), UNESCO Bangkok, convened the 11th UNESCO-APEID Conference entitled “Reinventing Higher Education: Toward Participatory and Sustainable Development.” This volume contains selected papers from that conference, which was held in Bangkok from 12 to 14 December 2007.

The objectives of the Conference were to:

• enhance understanding of the concepts and principles of participatory and sustainable development;
• explore the role of higher education institutions in engaging with communities, NGOs and the private sector;
• encourage the formulation of collaborative participatory and sustainable development programmes and activities;
• facilitate the development of a network of policy makers, educators and learners who will contribute to collaborative learning for participatory development and social change; and
• showcase examples and models of “Participatory and Sustainable Development in Action” (APEID, 2007, p. 1).

The meeting organizers defined participatory development as a bottom-up, grassroots, people-centred approach to development. It is directed at taking advantage of the full potential of all sectors of society, “especially poor and marginalized social groups.” The proponents of participatory development argue that “such development will contribute to processes that can lead to more sustainable development and to poverty reduction through greater empowerment, gender equality, social inclusion and respect for human rights.” This is “based on the conviction that development itself needs to be grounded in people’s own cultures and priorities” (APEID, 2007, p. 1).

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As the title implies, the main purpose of the Conference was to involve universities and other higher education institutions more directly in a dialogue on participatory and sustainable development. Higher education institutions have a key role to play in re-balancing social inequalities and in identifying and promoting inclusive sustainable solutions to allow all members of society access to the benefits of a globalizing world. This purpose was achieved through the interaction of delegates and paper presenters from throughout the Asia-Pacific region and further afield, representing governments, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and local communities.

In exploring the main themes of the conference, participants analysed the implications of participatory development for higher education institutions and how educational institutions might better engage with their local communities. Arguments were presented on how higher education institution departments, staff and students could be more innovative in promoting development through working more actively within their regions and local communities. Many of the participants stressed the concept of forging partnerships in and for development - partnerships that ranged from the local to the regional to the international and that promote linkages between higher education institutions, communities, governments, the private sector, business and NGOs. The dialogue that took place during the conference also explored what sector-wide regulatory frameworks, such as evaluation, monitoring and quality assurance audits, best support and promote higher education’s engagement in participatory and sustainable development. Taken as a whole, the papers presented in this volume well represent the key themes constituting the conference.

Principles of community, or civic, engagement and participation are not new. Universities, individual academic staff, and students have long worked for principles of public good and local benefit through teaching, research and civic involvement (Harkavy and Benson, 1998; Ostrander, 2004; Bond and Paterson, 2005). Since the 1980s, however, a re-emphasis on principles of community engagement and participation has become evident, and the civic role of many universities has been formalized in their mission and goals as a “core value” (Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2001). The increased attention to principles and strategies of community engagement and participation has occurred in a context in which universities are no longer the only producers of knowledge, and where they appear to be more focused on private gain rather than community benefit; on research rather than teaching; and on raising private revenue (Boyer, 1990; Colby et al., 2003; Calhoun, 2006). More broadly, the concern with university-community engagement and participation needs to be understood in the context of a larger concern about disengagement from civic society and decreasing political engagement and participation (Harkavy and Benson, 1998). “The advancing claim is that universities must have some link to and serve some useful purpose in addressing the major issues of the day or else they become socially irrelevant” (Ostrander, 2004, p. 76).

The engaged, participating institution thus draws on its academic strengths and resources (physical, social and intellectual) to benefit both the university and its community. Benefits include the building of social capital, contributing to the resolution of local issues, the well-being of the community, local support and economic growth. The engaged institution is not only proactive, but also responsive to issues of relevance to, and identified by, the local community. Community
engagement/participation is an umbrella term that refers to a wide variety of principles and practices, and includes:

- community-university partnerships to address questions of mutual concern
- strategies of economic and social regional development
- teaching and learning for civic participation (including service learning)
- collaboration with local business and industry
- support for social and cultural initiatives
- locally-relevant and applied teaching and research

While it is apparent that successful university-community engagement and participation involve institutional support and acknowledgement at all levels of seniority (Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2001; Holland, 2001; Winter et al., 2005), this will only be achieved when the real benefits of engagement, particularly on the university side of the equation, are acknowledged and become a recognized part of the university culture.

In the context of universities, a community could include its alumni, students and staff, both internal and external, as well as industry, professional bodies, other educational institutions and government (Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance, 2005) while “virtual communities are also becoming increasingly important” (Adams et al., 2005, p. 26). It needs to be noted here, though, that a community will be defined by the context of the question being explored, the role it might play in a project or the stake it might have in the partnership arrangement.

Community engagement and participation can therefore be defined as the mechanism through which universities achieve the goals they have articulated in relation to specific communities in terms of their trinity of basic functions, that is teaching, research and service, whether at the strategic university level or in project-specific contexts (adapted from Delaforce, 2004).

In assessing university-community engagement and participation, it is commonly recognized that significant efforts are directed towards the development of meaningful partnerships in project-and personality-specific contexts. It is this type of *ad hoc* engagement that seems to dominate practice at present. A major problem is that this type of engagement occurs in-situ rather than at the strategic level. Consequently, anecdotal evidence suggests that many university managers are not aware of the breadth of community engagement and participation that currently occurs within their own institutions, which is probably because these activities are generally not reported in any useful way. Thus, we should not close our eyes to the fact that despite prevailing rhetoric, it is by no means self-evident that community engagement is an institutionalized element in the culture of a university. Being not at the forefront of the academic mind, nor of prime importance when it comes to the ever-important issue of generating revenue, it is not at all self-evident that community engagement is sharply delineated and defined in the mindset of institutional policy makers and administrators. As Toope in his contribution to this volume notes, community engagement and participation are not yet at the apex of priorities for all higher education institutions.

Like community engagement/participation, the notion that higher education has a key role to play in sustainability is not entirely new either. Clugston and Calder (1999, p. 31) note that the concern for sustainability “arose in the early seventies as growing numbers of people realized the degradation of the environment would seriously undermine our ability to ensure expanding prosperity and
economic justice.” In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development provided a simple definition: sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

While new definitions and approaches to sustainability have arisen

...each emphasizes that activities are ecologically sound, socially just, economically viable and humane, and that they will continue to be so for future generations. Historically, the term “sustainable” arose among those with environmental concerns, and most definitions reflect this emphasis. It is critical, however, to address social justice issues and to know that there can be no sustainable communities and institutions without social justice. So, too, is humane consideration toward the whole community of life an essential part of true sustainability. Fundamentally, a commitment to sustainability implies recognition that the social and environmental challenges of the 21st century are real and they require that the global economic and political order be grounded in different values and practices.

(Clugston and Calder, 1999, p. 22)

Starting with The Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment (UNESCO, 1972), “there has been a steady development of national and international sustainability declarations relevant to higher education” (Wright, 2002, p. 203). One of the more recent and influential of these is the 2001 Lüneburg Declaration.

In October 2001, a conference on “Higher Education for Sustainability: Towards the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10),” was held at the University of Lüneburg, Germany. The conference was jointly organized by the University of Lüneburg and the COPERNICUS Programme of the European University Association (EUA). It was sponsored by the Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP), which was formed by COPERNICUS, the International Association of Universities (IAU), the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF) and UNESCO. The preamble to the Declaration (2001) adopted by the participants states that:

Higher education has a catalyst role vis-à-vis education for sustainable development and the building of a Learning Society. It has a special responsibility to conduct the scholarship and scientific research necessary to generate the new knowledge needed and train the leaders and teachers of tomorrow, as well as communicate this knowledge to decision-makers and the public-at-large.

The ultimate goal of education for sustainable development is to impart the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills needed to empower people to bring about the changes required to achieve sustainability. Quality education for sustainable development needs to be based on state of the art knowledge and to continually review and update curricula and teaching materials accordingly. It needs to serve teachers, other professionals and all citizens as life long learners to respond to society’s challenges and opportunities, so that people everywhere can live in freedom from want and fear, and to make their unique contribution to a sustainable future.
Building on previous declarations, the Talloires, Kyoto and COPERNICUS declarations in particular (see Wright, 2002), the Lüneburg Declaration (2001) called on higher education institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders to:

a. Ensure the continual review and updating of learning materials to reflect the latest scientific understanding of sustainability;

b. Ensure that the re-orientation of teacher education towards sustainable development continues to be given priority as a key component of higher education;

c. Provide continuing education to teachers, decision-makers and the public at large on sustainable development;

d. Encourage all educational institutions to include in their activities a strong component of reflection on values and norms with respect to sustainable development;

e. Raise awareness and increase understanding of the importance and relevance of technology assessments and risk assessment;

f. Promote the creative development and implementation of comprehensive sustainability projects in higher education, and all other levels and forms of education;

g. Increase attention to the international dimension and provide more opportunities for intercultural exchange in the learning environment;

h. Increase a focus on capacity development and intensified networking among institutions of education; and

i. Promote stronger integration of training and research and closer interaction with stakeholders in the development process.

The Lüneburg Declaration feeds into the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005–2014, which in turn has stimulated a number of further initiatives involving higher education in sustainable development (see Calder, 2005).

Obviously, since the 1972 Stockholm Declaration, the political importance of the role of higher education in sustainable development has become firmly recognized. Also, the scholarly study of higher education and sustainable development has become well established, with its own dedicated journal, the *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, and the number of academic papers on higher education and sustainable development has grown exponentially. However, what is of more recent origin are the notions that higher education institutions should more actively engage with the communities in which they are located (and do so on a basis of equality) and that sustainability itself extends beyond the disciplines of agriculture, engineering and related fields and is a by-product of social interaction.

In one sense, it is a mistake to consider participatory development and sustainable development as separate concepts, for there can be little (if any) truly sustainable development without the active participation of those involved. The future rests on participatory sustainable development in which higher education institutions have a key role to play. According to some, the pursuit of sustainable development in the absence of the participatory element may in fact be counterproductive or even detrimental. Wals and Jickling (2002, p. 222), for example, argue that sustainability “provides
no inherent clues about how one should mediate contesting claims between advocates of incompatible value systems.” and that

...education for sustainability runs counter to prevailing conceptions of education: it breathes a kind of intellectual exclusivity and determinism that conflicts with ideas of emancipation, local knowledge, democracy and self-determination. The prepositional use of “for” prescribes that education must be in favor of some specific and undisputed product, in this case sustainability.

Wals and Jickling (2002, p. 226) characterize education for sustainable development without the participatory element as “big brother sustainability,” based on a hierarchical, authoritative and technocratic approach. In contrast, there is “grassroots sustainability” with principles and approaches much more in line with those expressed at the 11th UNESCO-APEID Conference: integrated, participatory, democratic, social learning. Almost ten years earlier, Korten (1994, p. 11) proposed a similar agenda for development designed

...to support the right of all people to a place in society and on the earth with access to the resources required to create a secure and fulfilling life for themselves at peace with their neighbours and in balance with the earth’s natural systems; to build – complementary to the money economy – strong gender-balanced, non-monetized household and community economies able to replenish the social capital that is essential to healthy societies; and create a global system of localized economies that root economic power and environmental responsibility in people and communities of place.

Wals and Jickling (2002, pp. 226-227), in advocating a more “participatory, democratic, pluralistic, and emancipatory approach to education and sustainability,” draw on the many features of the concept:

- sustainability as (socially constructed) reality (and as such a phenomenon to be taken seriously)
- sustainability as ideology and therefore political
- sustainability as negotiated, the result of (on-going) negotiations
- sustainability as contextual, its meaning is dependent on the situation in which it is used
- sustainability as vision to work towards
- sustainability as dynamic and/or evolving concept
- sustainability as controversial and the source of conflict (both internal and with others)
- sustainability as normative, ethical and moral
- sustainability as innovation or a catalyst for change
- sustainability as a heuristic, a tool to aid thinking
- sustainability as a (temporary) stepping stone in the evolution of environmental education and environmental thought

Participatory sustainability in higher education is, in the end, the creation of an appropriate space for a democratic and emancipatory dialogue:

The process of seeking, rather than setting, standards for education for sustainability, from an emancipatory vantage point, above all means the creation of space. Space for new ways of thinking, valuing and doing. Space for participation minimally distorted by
power relations. Space for pluralism, diversity and minority perspectives. Space for deep consensus, but also for respectful dissensus. Space for autonomous and deviant thinking. Space for self-determination. And, finally, space for contextual differences and space for allowing the life world of the learner to enter the educational process.

(Wals and Jickling, 2002, p. 230)

Much of the evolving thinking on the role of higher education in sustainable and participatory development came together at the International Forum on Universities and Participatory Development, hosted by the University of British Columbia from 20 to 22 November 2006. Drawing on the perspectives presented at the Forum, Taylor and a number of colleagues produced a document intended to commence a structured dialogue on “Higher Education and Participatory Development” (Taylor, 2007).

While universities and other higher education institutions already engage in participatory development, they can do more, gaining mutual benefit. According to Taylor (2007, p. 1) “engagement helps universities to improve the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of their teaching and research missions” through reflecting “on their role in reproducing inequalities” and putting “more energy into finding solutions to challenging social problems.” Like Wals and Jickling (2002) before them, Taylor and his colleagues wish to move away from a top-down approach to development, towards “participatory approaches in education, action and research, and bottom-up planning and decision-making processes beginning at the grassroots level” (Taylor, 2007, p. 1).

Universities and other higher education institutions are knowledge-producing institutions and the link between knowledge and both social and economic development is now firmly established. In this sense, knowledge is power, and is itself being transformed through the purposes to which it is put. Through their knowledge-producing and transmitting capacities, higher education institutions have the potential “to respond to inequities due to poverty and social injustice by strengthening citizen rights and voice, influencing policy-making, enhancing local governance, and improving the accountability and responsiveness of institutions” (Taylor, 2007, p. 1). They also have the potential to do the opposite.

The vision of those advocating the role of higher education in furthering participatory sustainable development is one of a world “in which all individuals are recognized both as productive, educated citizens and as potential agents of change." They see “universities embodying democratic values, making strong connections between head, heart and hands, and recognizing that their institutional goals go beyond the generation of wealth and the advancement of self-recognition” (Taylor, 2007, p. 1).

Higher education institutions can better train educators to achieve the goals of participatory development, becoming themselves sites of resistance to social inequalities through strengthening their own democratic decision-making processes, making knowledge accessible to all, and exercising responsible political influence at all levels. Some of the concrete actions higher education institutions may engage in to further the goals of participatory sustainable development are to:

- advocate for approval by university governing bodies that outreach from universities to local communities in both North and South is a high priority; outreach projects or programmes, and any support that facilitates these, should conform to the principles of participatory development;
• make an inventory of existing university-based participatory development projects and programmes, highlighting innovations and good practice;

• support and engage in processes whereby priorities of participatory development are generated by communities, are informed by local voices and knowledge, and where research protocols are developed by indigenous communities for people, especially outsiders, who want to work with them;

• promote active engagement of administration, faculty and students in systemic participatory development;

• work on both outcomes and processes of specific institutional change within the higher education sector, such as curriculum change; hiring of persons with participatory development experience; fund-raising; participatory research programme development; advocacy with decision-makers and accreditation bodies; and creating participatory processes inside university;

• take a strategic view of the growth and evolution of participatory development processes by establishing realistic, yet challenging planning and implementation cycles for institutional strengthening;

• engage proactively in policy dialogues around development and change processes, at both the local and the global levels;

• produce publicity for participatory development, including campus, academic production and popular communication; and

• work with funding agencies to have participatory principles included in the requirements for funding. (Taylor, 2007, p. 3)

As creators, transmitters, preservers and receivers of knowledge, higher education institutions – universities, in particular – can play a unique role in advancing the goals of participatory sustainable development. They have an international orientation that is directed at protecting cultural diversity. They can act as a strong counter balance to the more negative aspects of homogenization brought about by educational globalization. However, there is still a long way to go. Higher education institutions need to be more active in strengthening social networks, particularly at the grassroots level. Many of their own processes and procedures require democratization. They can do much more by making new technologies accessible to a much broader range of the community. More community groups, particularly the less powerful ones, should play a more significant role in the research process, particularly with respect to research questions that directly affect them.

Each paper presented in this volume, in its own way, will help strengthen the role of higher education in participatory sustainable development. The dialogue begins with a discussion of “Paradigms of Sustainability” by Richard Allen and Joel Bacha in Chapter 1. The chapter reports on a study aimed at identifying strategies to engage communities in learning with respect to sustainable development. For the study, a three-stage approach was adopted to examine the concept of “sustainability” and the teaching and learning paradigms associated with it. In stage one, an on-line survey was conducted amongst 40 international development professionals to capture what they understood “sustainability” to mean. Six key paradigms and associated metaphors were identified.
Stage two explored the extent to which simulation techniques foster knowledge, skills, values and perspectives associated with sustainable development. Students in two English language courses delivered at Kanda University of International Studies, Japan (where simulations have been used) were asked a series of reflective questions to assess their effectiveness in promoting understanding of education for sustainable development-related course objectives. Four effective simulations were identified, with the researchers concluding that a combination of these may achieve maximum results given that no one singular simulation provided for a comprehensive coverage of all knowledge, skills, values and perspectives involved. Attempting to link the findings of stages one and two, in stage three students’ perceptions of sustainability were monitored over a full semester to assess the impact of simulations on fostering a deeper understanding of “sustainability” in terms of the previously identified metaphors. The results showed a considerable shift in students’ perceptions of sustainability throughout the semester. Starting from an almost non-existent understanding, the students demonstrated an understanding of both the inputs and processes necessary for sustainability by the semester’s end. The authors hence conclude that simulations play a role in developing both new and deeper understanding in students and posited that this may also be applicable in non-formal learning contexts.

Professor Stephen Toope in his contribution on “Sustainability, Social Change and the Role of Universities” argues that universities should be a role model by applying the principles and practices of conservation and sustainability as they engage in teaching and research. Taking the University of British Columbia (UBC) as a case in point, and emphasizing the important role played by student interest and activism, Toope in Chapter 2 demonstrates that a university’s resources in teaching and research can contribute to social, economic and environmental sustainability at both the local and global levels. Sustainability in this respect is seen not as an end in itself, but as a process whereby the university can achieve other social and environmental goals, and as such can reconcile three imperatives: the ecological imperative to stay within the biophysical carrying capacity of our planet, the economic imperative to provide an adequate material living standard for all, and the social imperative to provide a system of governance that propagates values held dear. Although the process of implementing these notions of sustainability has been slow – UBC’s first initiatives started as early as 1976 – Toope provides evidence of real progress in the three related, but distinct, areas of learning and research, campus operations and community outreach. With regard to learning and research, UBC currently offers some 300 courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels dealing with issues related to sustainability, whilst in research, an emphasis is placed on community consultation and partnership. UBC also attempts to apply the principles of sustainability to its daily operations and business practices. For this, a Sustainability Office has been established, sustainability coordinators have been trained, and a Sustainability Street has been created, demonstrating the principles of urban design and sustainability in actual operation. With regard to community engagement, UBC’s students and faculty engage in exchange, consultation and collaborative research, and development projects with their local community. In particular, Toope focuses on a number of student-driven projects that embody a clear understanding of the need to work collaboratively towards the goal of sustainability and taking what has been learned in the classroom into the field. In this way, the students not only share their knowledge and energy with their community, they also demonstrate the values of global citizenship.
In “In Search of Relevance: Higher Education for Participatory Research and Sustainable Development,” Rajesh Tandon presents in Chapter 3 his personal perspective and analysis on how the principles and methodologies of participatory research can be applied to promote a greater contribution by higher education towards sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. He argues that a paradox exists in the field of higher education. With economic growth moving forward, a growing demand for higher education occurs in all countries. Yet, this demand appears exclusively linked to labour market requirements that further fuel economic growth, thereby marketizing both the contents and pedagogy of higher education, and resulting in a dominance of the “private good” over the “public social good” conception of higher education. This, according to Tandon, will result in non-sustainability rather than sustainability. To reverse this trend, he argues for participatory research. Originating some 30 years ago from the world of practice, in particular adult education and community development and social change, participatory research espouses the relevance and contribution of popular knowledge and innovations in practice. Its key premise is the recognition and utilization of knowledge for the purpose of transforming power relations in social systems. It allows for learning about the dynamics of social-political systems, and is closely linked to bringing about change in those systems to achieve the desired public values of equity, justice and peace. As such, participatory research links knowledge production to mobilization in order to act and solve problems. In the last 15 years, attempts have been made to link participatory research methodology to teaching and research, and Tandon highlights a number of positive examples from different regions. He ends his chapter with a series of challenges that faces higher education institutions, resulting in four key questions. The challenges identified by Tandon are what he calls (i) the power equalization challenge – those who today have power must reach out to those who do not; (ii) the challenge of authentic participation within higher education – how to stimulate, incentivize and mainstream real engagement; and (iii) the challenge of democratic citizenship – to maintain and strengthen higher education’s role in preparing future active citizens of our society who respect democratic principles. Tandon’s challenging research agenda, contained in his four final questions, focus on (i) how to link participatory development, deepen democracy, and promote both as natural human phenomena; (ii) the effects of commercialization and monopolization of indigenous knowledge; (iii) the purpose of knowledge; and (iv) ethics and values.

Samuel Lee in Chapter 4 discusses the role and responsibility of “Innovation of Higher Education for Sustainable Development,” offering insights from the Korean system, with emphasis on the importance of education for economic, social and political development. He identifies the higher education sector as having a “crucial role for sustainable development,” particularly in the areas of scientific and technological research, and research relating to harmonious living through politics, environmental science, social studies, etc.; through training and producing teachers skilled in sustainable development and able to impart this knowledge to students in an interdisciplinary manner; and through higher education’s production of leaders in society, who need a strong grounding in sustainable development so as to take a leading role towards a sustainable future. Lee emphasizes that the higher education sector needs to examine the structure and programmes available to ensure that they are appropriate for sustainable development education, particularly in relation to research institutes and projects. To conclude the chapter, Lee stresses that “re-orienting existing education at all levels to address sustainable development is very urgent and necessary,” with the higher education sector playing the key role of capacity builder. To achieve sustainable
development, innovation is required in research institutes and programmes, in curricula of general and professional education, and in developing partnerships between universities and the broader society.

In Chapter 5, Peter Taylor writes that it is time for a transformation of higher education that grasps the opportunities and challenges arising from participatory development. Taylor emphasizes that the role of higher education institutions is increasingly important in the local and global context in our changing society, particularly in relation to the shifting perspective on knowledge, itself, which influences the role and responsibilities of the university sector. Along with these greater opportunities, the sector is also experiencing external pressures, as political movements can inspire change, but can also inhibit it.

The political transition from national to transnational organizations is influencing the notions of development and sustainability. Progress is more focused on human development, though goals still seem difficult to meet. Within this changing environment, the role of higher education institutions and knowledge is crucial, with the tertiary education sector needing to become more innovative and responsive to ensure effective participation.

The notion of participatory development may be crucial to higher education reform, with opportunities for universities to make significant contributions to, and experience significant benefit from, engaging with their communities, though more must be done in this area. Taylor outlines a vision, purpose, goals and guiding principles for the development of the tertiary sector, along with calls to ensure that action is taken for their realization.

Charas Suwanwela’s Chapter 6 suggests that the role of the higher education system should be examined in the context of the philosophy of the “Sufficiency Economy,” which promotes moderation, the middle path, wisdom and empathy, in order to promote humanity and human rights in society. The Sufficiency Economy philosophy, which was proposed by the King of Thailand, entails three principles and two underlying conditions: moderation, rational decision-making based on knowledge, and immunity against harm, with the underlying conditions of knowledge/wisdom and morality/ethics. The chapter examines this philosophy in the context of current medical and pharmaceutical examples, but also notes that the university sector can play an important role through education, research and social services. It concludes by asserting that Sufficiency Economy may be able to lessen the undesirable consequences of competition and promote collaboration for sustainable development.

In Chapter 7, Sharifah Shahabudin notes that while much lip service is paid to the universities’ role in community development, there is still room for improvement in terms of actual behaviour. Community service should be part of the universities’ social contract with society, based on the financial and other resources they receive from society. Community service is an activity involving mutual benefit. “The university gains,” according to Shahabudin, “by enhancing the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the educational and research programmes through links to the ‘real’ society/world. The community gains through direct engagement of the university’s expertise, resources and research outputs in participatory, bottom-up, people-centred development.” Through partnership, the community becomes the living classroom.

At Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), there are two major types of university-community partnerships. The first type is initiated by the students themselves through student associations.
The second model involves the faculties and is primarily discipline-based and may or may not involve students. UKM has established a University-Community Partnership Office as a one-stop centre for community outreach and industry partnerships. Shahabudin provides several examples of both types of partnerships, and concludes that to fully integrate community service with the university’s mission it must count both towards student credit and staff appraisal.

Leonora Angeles in Chapter 8 looks at the implication for teaching and learning of participatory development in higher education through exploring the “Scholarship of International Service Learning” within capacity-building projects involving north-south partnerships. The quality and rigour of the “scholarship of teaching and learning” (SoTL) is brought about by “producing and disseminating pedagogical research in peer reviewed contexts, such as journal publications, conferences and other practices of different learning communities.”

While SoTL traditionally has been classroom-based, it also is being extended through community and international service learning. The teaching and learning that occur through these projects are considerable both in terms of quantity and relevance. This is a result of the formation of “dense networks” of governments, community members and educators in capacity-building projects. The projects contribute to policy formation and the formation of new research agendas. Angeles argues that “as the learning within these projects is cast within the frame of capacity-building or capacity-development goals, they have strong potential to contribute to participatory and sustainable forms of human and social development.”

Chapter 9 presents Dorte Kristoffersen’s exploration of “Quality Assurance of Higher Education as a Means of Capacity-building.” Kristoffersen provides an overview of the main quality assurance (QA) processes for higher education and the parameters for making decisions about QA programmes for capacity-building purposes, with the aim of demonstrating how QA can be organized to provide support for development processes in the higher education sector.

Following an analysis of external QA processes and the main QA principles and approaches, there is further analysis of good practices in QA systems and the self-evaluation function, which is noted as “an efficient tool for internal development.” The chapter also provides an analysis of scope and criteria at the programme, institutional and global levels, which are important aspects of QA programme design. Kristoffersen provides valuable insights for QA programme design, particularly with an emphasis on the “fitness-for-purpose approach,” which adapts the QA process for the development of the organization in question and the higher education context in which it is situated.

Chan Lean Heng in Chapter 10 examines the challenges and prospects for “Putting Participatory Development into Practice.” She argues that, while the modern university and capitalist economy have helped to advance the human race in some respects, the neo-liberal emphasis on commercialization, commodification of knowledge and market competition serve to exacerbate inequalities. Worsening global inequalities are highly visible in terms of social exclusion, wealth distribution, consumption patterns, health, and so on. Inequality, insecurity, exclusion and poverty are features of the developing world despite or because of the material prosperity of the developed world. Chan asks whether or not universities can help address these concerns.

Her answer is no, so long as universities are dominated by the neo-liberal, market-oriented, capitalist agenda. “Competition for world-class recognition has propelled universities into techno-
bureaucratic institutions as they vie for measurable accomplishments and visibility instead of developing partnerships for people-centred development,” Chan argues. Global market competition has favoured the disciplines of business, engineering, commerce and IT, while weakening the humanities and social sciences and their power to help enfranchise oppressed populations.

Universities are at a crossroad and must change if they are to contribute more effectively to an “ethical knowledge base” in support of the public good, and in so doing help alleviate many of the world’s inequalities. Re-visioning the role of universities involves changing the means of knowledge production and the way in which students are trained, making students more socially responsible and critical. True participatory development can help accomplish these goals through a grassroots, bottom-up, democratic approach that opens up the university to the needs and concerns of all citizens. Participatory development is “pursued deliberately as an alternative approach to counter the mainstream capitalist model of economic growth and capital accumulation that is highly exclusive and unsustainable,” writes Chan. But participatory development is not in itself a universal panacea. As with the university, it too must be re-claimed, re-conceptualized and re-politicized if it is to truly serve the interests of the poor and disenfranchised.

The final chapter in this volume by Victor Ordonez contains the closing address for this varied and successful conference. It focuses on the key theme of sustainable development, and how the university and higher education sector play a crucial role in promoting and enabling sustainable development in our societies. Following the four plenary session themes, Ordonez urges us to consider the following points regarding sustainable development:

- **Paradigms for development**: The increasing speed of knowledge transmission and development requires universities to take on the pursuit of sustainable development, to marshal their efforts and resources to address issues such as threats to the economic, social and cultural spheres of our society.

- **Possibilities for development**: Two main types of case studies were presented – those innovations introduced as a concession to the importance of education for sustainable development and those which showcased a fundamental shift in orientation of the mission of the university. We must continue with these innovations in the sector.

- **Partnerships for development**: The task of sustainable development requires partnerships at the global, national and international levels to adequately address the upcoming challenges.

- **Permitting or promoting development**: Moving from the conceptual to the practical, and changing these thought processes to actions in the sector are very important. (Three practical questions to promote action in this sphere are proposed.)

Ordonez concludes his remarks and hence the present volume with a call to consider that sustainable development requires a “fundamental shift, a fundamental re-orientation on how we look upon our work and how the urgency of this new perspective demands no less than a revolutionary re-thinking and re-doing for sustainable development.” He urges participants to lead the charge in practical pursuits of sustainable development within their institutions and their communities at large. Indeed, the call to arms for the promotion of participatory sustainable development in and through higher education should extend far beyond those attending the 11th UNESCO-APEID Conference to all those who work in and care about universities and other higher education institutions.
References


Introduction

Authors writing on the subject of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) often view education as an essential component for the future success of society (Wade, 2007; Cortese, 2006). They argue that if society is to grow and flourish, then sustainable development, supported by ESD, needs to foster sustainable growth. So why, as Wright and Hooper (2001) suggest, does it seem that the concept of sustainable development is often so alien to the general public? Is the complex nature of sustainable development preventing its own message from reaching the people who least know about it and can make the most difference? If so, how do we best promote understanding of the idea of sustainability and, in the process, the skills, values and perspectives associated with change for sustainable development? And for those in the know who are aware of sustainable development on different levels, to what extent is there agreement on the meaning of terms associated with the concept, such as the meaning of “sustainability”? Finally, how influential are factors like culture and language on these understandings?

As we move towards the middle of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), surely all of those involved in ESD would welcome higher education research into the questions above. As communities of learners, educators, policy makers, academic institutions, private sector organizations, youth and media continue to build a global partnership to move ESD forward, it is important for higher education to look more deeply into the concepts associated with sustainable development in order to find some of the answers that will help facilitate the growth and promotion of sustainable action. For this reason, the research outlined in this chapter examines one of the most important ideas associated with sustainable development, the concept of “sustainability”, and the teaching and learning of various perceptions, or metaphorical paradigms, associated with this concept.

* Written by Richard Allen, who teaches and researches education for sustainable development at Kanda University of International Studies, Japan, and Joel Bacha, a project officer for the Education for Sustainable Development Programme at UNESCO, Bangkok.
Background

The origins of ESD

To establish a basis for conducting sustainability-related research and moving forward with relevant teaching and learning for the future, it is important to understand ESD from a historical perspective. Several key events in the past four decades have shaped ESD into what it is today. Parkin (2001, 2002) identifies the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment as a starting point for the ESD concept since participants at the event advocated for education as a key tool in promoting sustainable behaviour across a wide societal spectrum. The focus of sustainable development at this time centred on the environment in recognition, even in the early 1970s, that human activity was having serious environmental impact. Sustainable development began to materialize on the global political agenda as a broader concept following the 1987 publication of the *Brundtland Report* by the World Commission on Environment and Development. This report set the stage for the crucial Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At this event, 187 countries adopted the Rio Declaration which set out 27 principles for achieving sustainable development and simultaneously adopted *Agenda 21*, a guiding document for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2007). The Rio Declaration is a key document as it demonstrates a paradigm shift among the world’s leaders in accepting that present-day actions pose risks to the present and future welfare of both human beings and the environment. As Hicks (2007a, p. 8) says, “The welfare of both people and the planet were now seen as two sides of the same coin”.

Wade (2007) explains that, at the 1992 Earth Summit, education was again recognized as a crucial component of sustainable development. This emphasis is duly noted in Chapter 36 of *Agenda 21*, which outlines the pledge of the world’s leaders in Rio to embed environmental, as well as development, issues into all levels of education and learning. The wider agreement of what sustainable development stands for, and the importance of education in facilitating a sustainable future, led to the concept of ESD. Then, following an increase in regional conflict after the end of the Cold War, an increase in the income gap between the rich and poor and long-term environmental degradation, the Japanese delegation at the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg heeded the call from a number of non-profit organizations (NPOs) and lobbied support for a decade of ESD. In recognition of the overwhelming amount of support received, the 57th session of the UN General Assembly declared the UN DESD (2005–2014) in December 2002 and the DESD was officially launched in New York in March 2005.

Global education and ESD

The political development of ESD over the past four decades shows how the comprehension and acceptance of sustainable development evolved and the vital role education has in promoting sustainable development. There is, however, more to the story. Global education over the same thirty-year period may have played an integral part in ESD’s growth. Hicks (2007a) gives some interesting insight into this notion by showing how global education can be seen as an umbrella for all issues-based education,¹ of which ESD plays a part.

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¹ Hicks (2007a) identifies several issues-based education such as Global Education, Development Education, ESD, Peace Education, Race and Education, Futures Education and Citizenship Education.
Looking into issues-based education, Hicks (2007a) describes Development Education and Futures Education which are intrinsically linked to the growth and current understanding of ESD. In philosophical terms, “all education springs from images of the future and all education creates images of the future” (Toffler, 1974, p. xxii). In support of Hicks, Tilbury and Wortman (2004) emphasize the continuing importance of Futures Education in ESD through the concept of envisioning which engages people in establishing a vision for a better future. Other forms of issues-based education described by Hicks, such as Peace Education and Citizenship Education, could also be argued to have played varying, and often significant, roles in the evolution of ESD and its importance today.

Since the late 1990s, global education has surged forward in a number of teaching and learning contexts, so much so that, in the UK, policy now exists to include ESD in the national curriculum (Hicks, 2007b). When looking at similarities in more recent conceptual frameworks for global education, Hicks identifies four core “required” elements, or dimensions, of global education: (a) the Issues Dimension, (b) the Spatial Dimension, (c) the Temporal Dimension, and (d) the Process Dimension. All four dimensions play a key, recurring role in much of the literature relating to ESD, including the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2004–2015): International Implementation Scheme (UNESCO, 2005). Thus, whilst policy makers and international organizations have continued to advocate for education’s role in sustainable development on a political level, global education has continued to contribute to the evolution of ESD by exploring issues-based education and pedagogy for fostering the values, skills and perspectives associated with change for sustainable development.

**Research Rationale**

The extent to which learning communities grasp sustainable development concepts still needs to be explored. At the Asia-Pacific Regional Launch of the DESD, Dr. Emil Salim, adviser to the President of Indonesia, demonstrated the difficulties in conveying the meaning of ESD-related concepts from one language and culture to another (UNESCO-UNU Asia-Pacific Regional Launch of the DESD, 28 June 2005). As ESD is a global initiative, the need to communicate sustainable development ideas across languages and cultures is essential for engaging all learning communities in change for sustainable development, including students in formal and non-formal learning contexts, educators, community groups, policy makers, the private sector, youth and the media.

Difficulty in conveying the meaning of sustainable development is also acknowledged by Wright and Hooper (2001) who suggest that, although the concept of sustainable development has intellectual rigour, public understanding of the term is limited due to its overly academic use and complex nature of the concept. As one veteran environmental correspondent in the UK says, “The number of times you will hear spokesmen for environmental groups on the radio talking about sustainable development and other international gobbledygook … without bothering to explain what it is about. You can just hear people mentally turning off all over the country” (Wright and Hooper, 2001, p. 22). Wright and Hooper’s research into sustainable development shows that, across many sectors of UK society (the media, political circles and the general public),

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2 Wealth and poverty, human rights, peace and conflict and the environment.
3 Interconnectivity and interdependency between issues, people, places and countries at local and global scales.
4 Interconnectivity between past, present and future and possible versus probable futures.
5 Exploring pedagogies to promote values thinking.
understanding of the term among respondents who were actually aware of it, also differed widely. They note that, inevitably, the success of sustainable development will be influenced by public understanding of the concept, and the language associated with the term will play a key role in this understanding.

To comprehend why sustainable development may be such a challenging concept to grasp, it helps to look at the nature of language itself. Cook (2005) explains that language in general may differ based on context and semantics. The word, “boy,” for example, can mean a male, juvenile or human being. In certain contexts, however, “boy” might also refer to a 5-year-old child, a young man of fifteen, or even a forty-year-old adult (e.g. “boys” night out). Cook notes that, inherently, cultural and contextual variations contribute to different understandings of language, in addition to one’s generation and the location in which one lives. In the case of complex sustainable development concepts, therefore, different understandings may also be inherently different among individuals from different backgrounds and cultures.

**Using metaphor**

It may be possible to clarify understanding of sustainable development concepts and how they differ through the use of metaphor. A metaphor acts as a bridge for understanding one idea in terms of another (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999). Cortazzi and Jin, for example, explore different uses of metaphor for “teacher”. In their study, they found culture to be an influential factor in the creation of metaphor. Where those in some cultures viewed a teacher as a “friend”, those from other cultures viewed a teacher as a “parent”. Although the perception of a teacher varied among those in different cultures, the metaphorical representation of “friend” and “parent” easily conveyed an understanding of how those in different cultures, on a fundamental level, perceived the concept of “teacher” in a traditional sense.

Exploring the use of metaphor to promote understanding of sustainable development concepts could also have positive implications for the DESD. Specifically focusing on the concept of sustainability, Wallace (2000, p. 22) acknowledges that sustainability is often seen as an opaque concept that “just won’t hold still”, leading to the conclusion that “sustainability” is “such a clumsy word”. Cortese (2006, p. 1) reiterates this argument by explaining that, “sustainability is a complicated concept, little understood (and difficult to carry out)”. By investigating the use of “sustainability” through metaphor, however, one could potentially unpack and clarify this term and related concepts for wider understanding to benefit the DESD.

**Using simulations**

To promote a deeper understanding for sustainable development related concepts, innovative teaching and learning practices also need to be explored. As “sustainability” is an ever-changing, evolving, yet important concept, Sterling (2001) creates a contemporary model to highlight educators’ response to this challenge. His model provides a holistic view of ESD, in three forms: Education about Sustainability (EaS); Education for Sustainability (EfS); and Education as

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6 Education about Sustainability (EaS) is content/knowledge focused (e.g. the UK National Curriculum).
7 Education for Sustainability (EfS) builds on EaS by focusing on values, capabilities and critical and reflective thinking.
Sustainability (EasS). According to Wade (2007, p. 107), EasS is the most challenging of these forms to achieve as “it requires a paradigm change within education itself so that teaching and learning model the deeper processes of sustainability.” This view of ESD is also supported by Cortese (2006, p. 4) who argues that “sustainability must be the context and goal of all learning and practice – seamlessly woven throughout the entire educational experience.”

These progressive, thought-provoking arguments provide a rationale for ESD-related curricula and pedagogy. One innovative approach to teaching and learning in support of the “deeper processes of sustainability” is the use of simulations which, according to Oxford (1990, p. 77), can change “the classroom environment to facilitate naturalistic practice.” In the context of sustainability, simulations can also expose students to global values and perspectives within the economic, social, environmental and cultural spheres of sustainable development. With respect to global education, in particular, Hicks (2007b, p. 27) effectively summarizes a deeper rationale for using simulations:

*Global education has long recognised that any understanding of the contemporary world needs to be based on participatory and experiential ways of teaching and learning. It needs to involve both head and heart (the cognitive and affective) and the personal and political (values clarification and political literacy).*

To contribute to the field of ESD and explore suitable pedagogy for engaging a range of learning communities in learning for sustainable development, this research aims to: 1) use metaphor to clarify what “sustainability” means to professionals who engage in sustainable development on a daily basis; and 2) examine the use of simulations for fostering a deeper understanding of “sustainability” in line with professional perceptions of the term. To achieve these objectives, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What common metaphor domains (or paradigms) are used by development professionals to portray the concept of “sustainability”?
- To what extent are simulations effective in promoting understanding of these paradigms among a community of learners in a Japanese university context?

**Kanda University of International Studies**

Using metaphor as a basis for research evolved from the need to promote a deeper understanding of sustainable development concepts in a second language learning context at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) in Japan. Faced with the challenge of presenting advanced terminology to students in the second language, the researchers recognized the potential value of using metaphor to assist in fostering a deeper understanding of complex sustainable development ideas.

KUIS is a private, four-year university with approximately 2,800 students lying on the outskirts of Tokyo. With six departments, the university specializes in language development and international education. Within their studies, students are required to take English language courses within

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8 Education as Sustainability (EasS) subsumes EaS and EfS, emphasizing creativity, reflexivity and participation in the process and quality of learning.
a specialized body of the university called the English Language Institute (ELI). Each student, depending on their academic department, may be required to take up to one-third of their coursework through the ELI.

The ELI at KUIS offers a prime environment to conduct research on ESD-related teaching and learning. ELI courses revolve around content-based language instruction which integrates the four language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking – into content-related themes (Eagle, 1997), many of which relate to international topics. ELI lecturers are encouraged to explore innovative pedagogy related to ESD, such as student-centred teaching and learning, experiential learning and project-based learning. With several classrooms equipped with wireless Internet and individual laptop computers, lecturers also have the ability to integrate information and communication technologies (ICTs) into coursework on a regular basis. Through ELI language courses, students are regularly exposed to a range of international, cultural and social content in a highly interactive learning environment. In relation to Sterling’s (2001) three forms of ESD, it could be argued that students can engage in all three forms of ESD through the KUIS ELI.

Table 1. ESD-related Objective of KUIS Courses Participating in Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESD-related Course Objective: To promote: 1) an understanding of the Big Picture; and 2) the knowledge, skills, values and perspectives associated with change for sustainable development.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. The Big Picture</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A holistic understanding of sustainability, the components of sustainable development, and what practical actions are required at the local and global levels to contribute to change for sustainable development.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Knowledge, Skills, Values and Perspectives Associated with Change for Sustainable Development</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• An understanding of the concept(s) of sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>• An understanding of the inter-linkages between the individual and global levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>• An understanding of the inter-linkages between economy, society, environment and culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>• An understanding of issues that threaten sustainable development (e.g. MDG issues, peace, preservation of indigenous knowledge, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• An understanding that economic values, religious values and societal values compete for importance as people of different interests and backgrounds interact</td>
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<tr>
<td>• An understanding for the need to treat all people with respect and consideration</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The ability to respect and think critically about values (personal values, the values of society in which one lives and the values of others)</td>
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<td>• The ability to work co-operatively with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The ability to think in time – to learn from the past in order to forecast, think ahead and plan for the future (e.g. experiential learning)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The ability to think systemically (i.e. to understand that every action has a positive or negative reaction on something or someone else and what these reactions might be)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The ability to think critically about the need and means for economic development that promotes well-being in an equitable and sustainable manner</td>
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</table>

*Adapted from McKeown (2002)*
The research presented in this chapter centres on two KUIS ELI courses. Both courses revolve around similar pedagogical content and the ESD-related course objective presented in Table 1. Course 1, *International Development*, is taught using the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) as a framework for content. Course 2, *Development and Our Lives in the Global Community*, is based on global education issues and uses experiential learning as a pedagogical framework. Both courses use a sheltered content-based language teaching model, in which the teacher acts as a facilitator and learning guide in a student-centred learning environment (Brinton et al., 2003). Courses are third- and fourth-year electives based on a 13-week, 40-hour curriculum.

### Research Methodology and Analyses

Research was conducted in three stages through an on-line questionnaire and action research in the classroom (see Figure 1). Stage 1 aims to identify different perceptions, or paradigms, of sustainability by administrating an on-line questionnaire to 28 professionals working for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), the private sector or universities in the field of international development. Stage 2, running in parallel with Stage 1, is part of an ongoing and complementary research project investigating the use of simulations in teaching and learning for sustainable development involving students in the two courses outlined above. Finally, Stage 3 aims to evaluate the extent to which simulations foster understanding of the professional perceptions of sustainability among students.

#### Figure 1. Research Methodology

1. **Identify paradigms for “sustainability”**
   - **Guiding question:** What metaphor domains for “sustainability” are used by development professionals?
   - **Notes:** Responses collected from an on-line questionnaire. Metaphor domains identified through analysis of questionnaire responses.

2. **Investigate the use of simulations in teaching and learning for SD (ESD)**
   - **Guiding question:** To what extent do individual simulations contribute to the ESD-related course objective?
   - **Notes:** Assessed by examining students’ written reflections (during and after activities) against criteria based on the knowledge, skills, values and perspectives associated with change for sustainable development.

3. **Investigate student perceptions of sustainability**
   - **Guiding questions:** How do metaphor domains used by students relate to those of development professionals? To what extent do individual simulations promote awareness of sustainability?
   - **Notes:** Assessed by examining students’ written reflections (during and after activities) against metaphor domains identified from professionals.
Stage 1 - Identifying paradigms of “sustainability”

In order to unpack the concept of sustainability, forty development professionals were invited to provide information about their understanding of “sustainability” through an on-line questionnaire (see questionnaire items in Table 2). As the targeted professionals were affiliated with the field of international development, they were assumed to have a concrete understanding of the term “sustainability” in their working environment.

Table 2. Questionnaire Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Questionnaire Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Origins & Development of Sustainability    | • The term “sustainability” is becoming more common in everyday English. Where do you think the term “sustainability”, as it is known in International Development today, originated from?  
• Why do you think the term “sustainability” is becoming more common? |
| Explaining Sustainability                  | • To better inform teaching and learning about the concept of Sustainability, it is important to have a basic understanding of what the term “sustainability” means. To help provide such an understanding, please answer the question in the scenario below: “If you were asked to explain the concept of Sustainability to a group of 15-year-old students, what would you say?” |
| Defining Sustainability                    | • Please complete the following sentence in 10 words or less. Metaphors are ok. “Sustainability is …” |
| Sustainability & Sustainable Development   | • In your opinion, what is the relationship between Sustainability and Sustainable Development? |
| Additional Comments                         | • What additional comments or ideas would you like to share regarding the concept of Sustainability? |

The questionnaire items specifically aimed to elicit metaphors from professionals as they expressed their perception(s) of “sustainability”. The questionnaire was piloted to assess its coherence and usefulness and, following revision, was completed by 28 respondents conducting development-related work in, or from, the following countries: Australia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Ethiopia, France, Japan, Kosovo, Mexico, Russia, Sudan, Thailand and the United States.

The most relevant questionnaire items for eliciting metaphors for “sustainability” were those listed in Table 2 under the topics Explaining Sustainability and Defining Sustainability. The former aimed to elicit metaphors by requiring respondents to give simplified explanations of the term by explaining “the concept of Sustainability to a group of 15-year-old students”. Several respondents depicted their perception of sustainability through metaphorical stories, such as this one about tying your sister’s shoelaces:

In development, ensuring sustainability means ensuring that the benefits of your work last long after you have finished your work. Imagine your little sister who cannot tie shoelaces on her own. As her brother you could help her by tying them once and even every time (brief relief), OR, you could teach her to tie them herself (lasting relief). Teaching her is your sustainable solution because she will be able to put on her shoes on her own, even when you are not around.
The item under the topic, *Defining Sustainability*, was also extremely beneficial for eliciting metaphors. Respondents had to complete the sentence, “Sustainability is …”, using a maximum of ten words. The word limit was intended to force explanations into a few simple thoughts making the use of metaphorical expressions more likely. A few example metaphors expressed include:

*Sustainability is …*

- starting something, nurturing it and letting it grow
- an equilibrium of the forces that produce human well-being
- capacity-building, self-sufficiency, awareness raising, development.

Upon receiving the completed questionnaires, the researchers categorized the language used by respondents into common metaphor domains\(^9\) for sustainability. By identifying specific metaphor domains, the researchers aimed to ascertain the key conceptual paradigms of “sustainability” which could be used to clarify different perceptions of the term.

To identify the metaphor domains the researchers individually examined the metaphorical language from the questionnaire responses under the topics *Explaining Sustainability* and *Defining Sustainability*. After compiling a list of recurring metaphorical themes, they came to a consensus on the emerging thematic domains and established labels representing each underlying concept. In total, six key metaphor domains, or paradigms, relating to sustainability were identified. The paradigms are listed in Table 3 along with a corresponding metaphor example elicited from the questionnaire.

### Table 3. Paradigms of “Sustainability” with Metaphor Examples from Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Paradigm (Sustainability as …)</th>
<th>Metaphor Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>an equilibrium of the forces that produce human well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lasting Impact</td>
<td>what distinguishes work in vain from lasting impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>justice, equity, equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Future Reliability</td>
<td>ensuring that today’s actions do not imperil tomorrow’s choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conserving the Present</td>
<td>making sure the things we value last as long as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Creating Independence (e.g. including capacity-building)</td>
<td>state of development activities where the stakeholders at the grassroots level takeover and manage the activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis of Stage 1**

Some overlap exists among the paradigms, but each has its own underlying set of characteristics. For example, whereas the paradigms *Conserving the Present* and *Future Reliability* both consider action for sustainability in relation to a temporal domain, the former entails maintaining the present condition, while the latter emphasizes consideration of today’s actions on the future, regardless if action involves, for instance, the conservation of resources or responsible consumerism.

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\(^9\) A metaphor domain is the conceptual idea that surrounds the perception of a term. To draw on the research of Cortazzi and Jin (1999), for example, a teacher perceived as a “parent” or a teacher perceived as a “friend” are two different metaphor domains. Each domain corresponds to a specific perception of the term “teacher” which is represented by certain characteristics, or thematic representations, in the metaphorical language. Therefore, the metaphor domain, “teacher as a ‘parent’”, could be represented by saying, “a teacher is someone who takes care of me”, or “a teacher watches over their children”. The metaphorical language, “someone who takes care of me” and “watches over their children”, one could say, represents stereotypical actions carried out by a parent. Hence, from a simplistic point of view, the language used in these metaphors coincides with the actions of a parent, or the metaphor domain, teacher as a “parent”.

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After identifying the six paradigms of sustainability, the researchers revisited the questionnaire responses to examine the frequency in which each paradigm occurred. To conduct this analysis, each response was labelled to coincide with the paradigm it exemplified most. The researchers labelled responses individually then compared their analyses and came to a consensus on any variations. The results of the analysis are found in Table 4.

Table 4. Frequency of Responses Associated with Each Paradigm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paradigm</th>
<th>Explaining Sustainability</th>
<th>Defining Sustainability</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lasting Impact</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Reliability</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conserving the Present</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Independence</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lexical form</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=27 n=26 n=53

Most of the 28 respondents answered the questionnaire items for the topics Explaining Sustainability (n=27) and Defining Sustainability (n=26). Eighty-three percent of the responses fell under one of the identified paradigms for sustainability. Four percent of the responses described “sustainability” in terms of its lexical form and had no metaphorical significance (e.g. Sustainability is the ability to sustain). Another 13% of the responses, labelled “other”, were either indecipherable or represented dictionary definitions.

The paradigms used with the highest frequency were Creating Independence and Future Reliability (28% and 17% respectively). The paradigm Creating Independence relates to action for capacity-building at the individual or community level. Coincidentally, most responses under this paradigm came from respondents affiliated with NGOs who would be highly likely to conduct capacity-building activities in their working environment. Another interesting finding revealed that only 9% of the respondents used the most environmental paradigm, Conserving the Present, which refers most to the conservation of resources. This relatively low frequency may provide evidence that a shift in thinking is occurring, at least in the field of international development, from the more historical perceptions of sustainable development on the environment.

Interesting findings also arose when examining the different types of information elicited as a result of: a) providing an explanation of “sustainability”; and b) defining “sustainability” with a ten-word limit. First, large gaps were found between the paradigms Balance and Creating Independence, which could indicate a general ease in expressing these particular paradigms with explanations. The 4% to 19% jump associated with Balance, however, is significant in practice as this paradigm refers to the equilibrium of economic, environmental and social forces that produce human well-being, the paradigm associated with the UN DESD (UNESCO, 2005). This jump may represent a difficulty in expressing this notion of sustainability, which could potentially be a factor for engaging new partners in the UN DESD.
Stage 2 - Investigating the use of simulations in teaching and learning for sustainable development

Stage 2 is part of a long-term research project investigating the use of simulations in teaching and learning, and their effectiveness in contributing to the ESD-related course objective (Table 1). An outline of the process and preliminary findings are summarized here to provide context for Stage 3.

Prior to initiating Stage 2, the researchers experimented with a number of simulations, which they identified and developed over a four-year period, to raise awareness of global issues in the classroom. Stage 2 aims to identify the extent to which simulations foster the knowledge, skills, values and perspectives associated with change for sustainable development. When conducting simulations with students in the two KUIS ELI courses, students were given a series of reflective questions during and after the simulations to guide reflection on their learning. Students answered the questions by writing their thoughts on paper or in on-line journals. Responses were then collected and analysed by raters for effectiveness in promoting understanding of the ESD-related course objective in Table 1.

Preliminary analysis of Stage 2

Preliminary findings identify four effective simulations for promoting the ESD-related course objective (see Table 5). All four simulations show strengths for ESD, but no one fosters all the knowledge, skills, values and perspectives associated with change for sustainable development. Researchers, therefore, speculate that a combination of simulations may be most beneficial in contributing to the course objective.

Table 5. Simulations Used to Investigate Student Perceptions of Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simulation</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Tennis Ball Simulation</td>
<td>Partnership, Co-operation</td>
<td>Students, acting in five groups (a national government, a community, an IGO, an international NGO and a local NGO) work together across imposed cultural and language barriers to achieve a common goal in helping the community build a health, education and childcare programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fishing Game</td>
<td>Interdependence</td>
<td>An on-line resource in which students must balance their personal needs with the environmental and economic needs of a fishing community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Trading Game</td>
<td>Interdependence, (In) equality, Development</td>
<td>Students work in six countries representing two MEDCs, two NICs and two LEDCs. Countries must wisely utilize, conserve and trade their resources and skills in order to “manufacture” goods and increase their GDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Water Simulation</td>
<td>In(equality), Interdependence</td>
<td>Students work in three groups representing one MEDC, one NIC and one LEDC. Each country must make rational decisions based on the quality and accessibility of their water supply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 See The Fishing Game by The Cloud Institute for Sustainability at http://www.sustainabilityed.org/index.html
11 Adapted from The Trading Game produced by Christian Aid (2003).
12 MEDC/LEDC = More/Less Economically Developed Country; NIC = Newly Industrialized Country.
Stage 3 - Investigating student perceptions of sustainability – Research into classroom practice and learning for ESD

Building on the preliminary findings in Stage 2, the researchers were eager to investigate the extent to which these four simulations, which were found beneficial for fostering the ESD-related course objective, were also effective in promoting understanding of the six paradigms of sustainability. To do so, the researchers undertook a longitudinal study that tracked the evolution of students’ perceptions of sustainability over the course of a semester in the two KUIS ELI courses described above.

The investigation began by conducting an assessment of students’ initial understanding of the term “sustainability”. On the first day of the semester, students were asked to write individual answers to the question “What is sustainability?” Of the 25 students who responded in Course 2, only 20% gave answers that related to the six paradigms elicited from the professionals and all but one of these responses coincided with the most environmental paradigm, Conserving the Present.13

Following this initial baseline assessment, students were given the opportunity to explore the concept of sustainability further. They had one week to find out as much as they could about “sustainability” and given the freedom to conduct their investigation in any way they found suitable (e.g. ask their teachers, classmates, search the Internet, etc.) Afterward, they answered the following questions, items 2 and 3 being similar to those asked in the professional questionnaire (see Table 2):

- What did you do (where did you look, who did you ask) to learn more about the idea of Sustainability?
- If you were asked to explain the concept of Sustainability in English to a group of high school students, what would you say?
- Please complete the following sentence – “Sustainability is ...”

To consolidate students’ conceptual understanding of “sustainability” following the assignment, they were given a small group task for which they had to discuss and develop an explanation for “sustainability” using no more than five words. Responses had a strong environmental focus with groups providing examples such as “Continuance of Saving the Earth”, “Ability to Keep the Condition” and “Go Back to Square One”.

With only personal research and class discussion to guide students in the first week, dramatic change seemed to take place in the majority of the class’ understanding of sustainability, from knowing almost nothing about the concept to relating it to the environment. Initial association of the term with the environment is especially interesting as it seems to indicate that the majority of the resources students used to find information about sustainability were related to environmental discourse. The notion of sustainability, however, goes far beyond the environment, as the professionals indicated in Stage 1. Stage 3, therefore, continued to monitor students’ perceptions of sustainability throughout the semester in an effort to assess the impact of simulations on fostering a deeper understanding of the concept.

13 This research has been repeated with different student groups on three occasions with similar response patterns.
To assess the impact of each simulation on students’ perceptions of sustainability, the four simulations in Table 5 were conducted throughout the course of the semester using the methodology outlined in Stage 2. After each simulation, students were given a set of reflective questions which they completed in class or for homework. Raters then analysed the written responses to investigate how effective each simulation had been in eliciting thoughts in line with the six paradigms of sustainability. Raters used a scale from 3 (maximum effectiveness) to 0 (ineffective). Effectiveness was based on the strength of the metaphorical language and ideas portrayed which coincided with one or more of the six paradigms. The raters coded the responses individually (inter-rater reliability = 89%) then came to a consensus on any discrepancies.

**Analysis of Stage 3**

As shown in Table 6, the Fishing Game seems to be the most effective of the four scenarios in developing students’ deeper understanding of sustainability (Effectiveness: 3), followed by the Water Simulation (Effectiveness: 2) and the Partnership Scenario and the Trading Game (Effectiveness: 1.5). Results also indicate that the paradigms of sustainability fostered by each simulation also vary. The Fishing Game seems to contribute to a deeper understanding of the paradigms *Balance* and *Conserving the Present*; the Water Simulation seems to help foster understanding of the paradigm *Fairness*; the Partnership Scenario, the paradigm *Balance*; and the Trading Game, the paradigms *Balance* and *Fairness*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simulation</th>
<th>Effectiveness in Developing Student Understanding of Sustainability</th>
<th>Fosters Understanding of the Paradigm, Sustainability as …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Fishing Game</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Balance &amp; Conserving the Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Water Simulation</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Partnership Scenario</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Trading Game</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Balance &amp; Fairness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results show a considerable shift in students’ perceptions of sustainability from the beginning of the course. This shift is perhaps seen more clearly in examples of students’ written comments. For example, after the Partnership simulation, in response to the question, “what is the connection between partnerships and sustainability?” responses included, “sustainability needs partnerships” and “if a big number of people cooperate with each other, they can have successful sustainability”. Both responses demonstrate thinking about the processes and inputs necessary for sustainability which entails understanding far beyond students’ initial non-existent or environmental definition.

A core lesson-learned that emerges from the four simulations is that sustainability as *Balance* is elicited from three of the four scenarios. *Fairness* was also found running through student responses after two of the four simulations. However, if we compare this to the frequency of the paradigms found in the professional responses (Table 4), it can be seen that *Fairness* was the least common paradigm used. Moreover, the two most popular paradigms according to the professional responses, *Creating Independence* and *Future Reliability*, were not identified in the students’ written responses at all. This finding indicates that additional simulations or activities are needed to process thinking in relation to these more utilized perceptions of “sustainability” coinciding with capacity-building and consideration for the future in today’s actions.
Overall, Table 6 shows that different simulations have varying levels of effectiveness in developing students’ understanding of sustainability in relation to the six paradigms elicited from development professionals. The results show that, through taking part in these courses, students’ perceptions of sustainability do change and that simulations play at least some role in developing, not only new understandings of the concept, but also a deeper understanding of the inputs and processes that influence sustainability.

**Points for Discussion**

**Examining validity**

Several factors should be taken into consideration which may affect the validity of this study and future research of this kind:

- *Labelling and rating responses*: Although the researchers went through a norming process in order to identify and accurately label the paradigms of sustainability from professional responses, it is possible that some responses may have been misinterpreted due to human error. Such misinterpretations may have led to inaccurate metaphor labelling and miscalculations in the frequency of their use. It is also possible that student responses were misinterpreted during rating and resulted in variations of the perceived effectiveness in which each simulation fosters an understanding of sustainability.

- *Analysing students’ written responses*: As some students, by nature, may not express their thoughts completely in writing, conducting the analysis on students’ written responses may not have captured a full picture of their understanding. In addition, some students may be better at expressing their thoughts orally than in written work. As a result, basing analysis solely on written responses could have led to misrepresentation of the effectiveness in which the simulations foster the different perceptions of sustainability.

- *Reflective questions*: Student responses were inevitably dependent upon the follow-up reflective questions. The choice and wording of questions, therefore, undoubtedly had some impacted on the responses students gave. Questioning was an experiential learning process for the researchers and further studies of this kind may benefit from additional reflection on the questions before and after their use to ensure they remain objective in terms of the scope of the research.

**Implications for ESD teaching and learning at KUIS and in other learning contexts**

In light of the DESD, this study reveals six paradigms of sustainability which could be used for targeting content for ESD teaching and learning and promoting a deeper understanding of sustainability across a variety of learning communities, including students in formal and non-formal learning contexts, teacher educators, policy makers, private sector companies/organizations, youth and the media. Some of the paradigms also reinforce key concepts used for ESD-related policy planning, such as the “needs and rights of future generations” and “equity and justice” (DEFRA, 1999), which were recommended for education policy in the UK by the UK Sustainable Development Education Panel.
In effect, this study utilizes these six paradigms as a basis for targeting pedagogy and learning for sustainable development. Ongoing research in Stage 2 will continue to refine the use of the simulations and reflective questioning which, to date, seem to have a positive impact on students’ understanding of “sustainability”. Research could also begin to create and trial new simulations for other paradigms such as Creating Independence, Future Reliability and Lasting Impact, which the current simulations do not seem to foster as effectively.

Another positive outcome of this study is the identification of a procedure for evaluating ESD teaching and learning activities. This procedure involves collecting reflective responses from students following an activity and examining the language for metaphors that coincide with targeted themes or ideas. Stage 2 continues to mould this procedure more specifically for simulations, but it may also prove useful for other activities such as web quests, group work or activities associated with project-based learning. This procedure could also be an effective evaluation tool for assessing the effectiveness of an activity in fostering the knowledge, skills, values and perspectives associated with change for sustainable development. Further, the general reflection/critical-thinking questions that were used in this research could also act as a generic model to guide reflection for quality teaching and learning.

Overall, this research sets out potential guiding criteria for ESD-related activities. It supports evidence from others as to the need for using interactive and reflective pedagogy to develop understanding for “sustainability” (Hicks, 2007b; Cortese, 2006). Considering that student participants were able to grasp a deeper understanding of sustainability in a second language, the effectiveness of simulations seems all the more remarkable. On the basis of this evidence, there is a strong argument that simulations could even be used as an effective means of promoting ESD outside the formal education setting for other learning communities through ESD seminars, workshops and community gatherings. This includes events taking place in a multicultural, second language context which will often be the case in an increasingly globalized world.

**Conclusion**

*The Corporation* is a DVD about the corporate world which aims to promote sustainability as one of its core messages. In the video, Mr. Ray Anderson, the CEO of Interface, one of America’s largest textile manufacturers, talks about the day on which he realized that, rather than seeing himself as a successful businessman, he was actually, in his eyes, a “plunderer” of the earth’s resources. He describes this moment as an epiphany and, ever since, has been committed to helping himself, his company and others “climb Mount Sustainability” (Abbott and Achbar, 2004).

Parkin (2002) and Cortese (2006) both suggest that current higher education systems are largely failing to help students develop the skills and explore the values, perspectives and knowledge for the deeper learning necessary for sustainable development. Cortese explains that society has granted higher education a unique role as it receives public and private funds in exchange for educating students and producing the knowledge that will lead to a thriving, civil society. However, by not effectively embracing sustainability, higher education has yet to fulfil its duties. Cortese seems to suggest that more education and institutional policy makers need to have a similar kind of mind shift to that of Ray Anderson. In other words, as Wade (2007, p. 110) states, “To truly live sustainably requires nothing less than a complete change in one’s relationship with others and the world – what one might call an ‘ontological epiphany’.”
Parkin (2002, p. 30) reinforces Cortese’s arguments, suggesting that the formal education system is “increasingly at odds with the human and social capital it is supposed to serve”. In the same article, she suggests that it is almost impossible to overstate the importance of universities in sustainable development as what they do in the present is magnified throughout future generations. ESD is thus a catalyst for change. If humanity is to truly create a sustainable future, then we need to place ESD and interactive learning at the heart of the education system, be it formal, non-formal or informal (Wade, 2007; Somphone, 2006).

References


Sustainability, Social Change and the Role of Universities*

The 11th UNESCO-APEID International Conference has set itself the high objective of actually doing something on issues of sustainability, rather than remaining within the more comfortable confines of academic research and debate. That is important, because the time for debate on the issue of sustainability is running out; we are now starting to recognize that, whatever their causes, whether natural or man-made, the problems of environmental degradation and their relation to social sustainability need our urgent attention now, rather than at some undefined point in the future.

Universities have an important role to play in this process. They can model sustainable practices as they engage in research and teaching. They cannot afford to be disinterested, detached observers, but must bring their resources to bear on the search for sustainable development solutions; and that this can indeed be achieved by integrating learning and research with the principles and practices of conservation and sustainability. To illustrate this, I want to draw on the experience of my own university, the University of British Columbia (UBC), where we are attempting to harmonize the traditional goals of higher education with the urgent imperatives of environmental, economic and social sustainability.

I shall commence with a claim that is tantamount to a boast – something that university presidents are prone to do, I know, but I hope you will forgive me. My claim is this: that I live in one of the most beautiful places in the world! Those of you who have been to British Columbia (BC), Canada’s western-most province, will agree with me, I’m sure. The province is enormous – larger than France and Germany combined; 1,500 kilometres from one end to the other, it is bounded by the Pacific Ocean on one side and the Rocky Mountains on the other. Our landscapes are breathtaking; and thanks to the culture and traditions of the people who first inhabited the land, the people of our First Nations, the land is imbued with a beauty that is spiritual as well as physical. Wildlife is abundant in BC, from the grizzlies and wolves in the north to orcas and humpback whales in our coastal straits; our salmon are of such fabled size they attract fishermen from around the world.

And our forests – our forests are huge; in one form or another they cover over half the province’s land surface, constituting some of the richest and oldest areas of prime timber in the world. And despite all the detailed surveys and mapping of the forests that have taken place in BC over the last 150 years, they still contain mysteries and surprises. Only a few weeks ago, a graduate student

* Written by Stephen J. Toope, president of the University of British Columbia, Canada.
in forestry working near Prince George in northern BC wandered a few metres away from the main highway and discovered an area of old growth trees that had not hitherto been noticed – thirty hectares of trees over 75 metres in height, and almost 2,000 years old! Hard to miss, you would think; but in BC there is such a profusion of natural riches that one can hardly see the trees for the forests!

I boast about the glories of this wonderful land to make a point: I must also take note of the fact that it is threatened, that it faces a multitude of dangers, both natural and man-made. One such danger is the annual threat of fire to our forests; on average over the last 10 years BC has annually endured almost 1,700 forest fires, over 40% of which were caused by human carelessness. Over the last 10 years, we have lost over 8,000 square kilometres of forest to fire. Another threat to our forests comes from the mountain pine-beetle, a creature that will have soon destroyed over 80% of BC’s pine forests. The beetle is not a new arrival to BC, and normally its destructive powers are limited by the cold winters usually experienced in our interior; however, the last 10 years have seen a warming trend attributable in all likelihood to climate change, and so the beetle has survived the winters in unusual numbers. To date 9.2 million hectares of BC pine forest have been affected; an area three times the size of Belgium.

To add to these problems, for the past century and more, BC’s forests – like forests everywhere else in the world – have been subjected to harvesting practices that responded primarily to the needs and pressures of the manufacturing and exporting sectors, leaving great swathes of clear-cut mountain slopes on which nothing remains but rocks and rotting stumps. It must have seemed to the earliest European settlers of western Canada that its resources were endless – that the forest could never be depleted. Yet today three-quarters of the old-growth forests in the southern part of BC have been logged, and only concerted action by conservationists has brought a halt to indiscriminate logging practices. You may have heard of the massive protests that took place in Clayoquot Sound, on Vancouver Island, in the early 1990s, culminating in the arrest of over 800 people who were demonstrating against the proposed logging of one of the last big stands of old-growth trees on the west coast of the island. That protest, which received worldwide attention, succeeded in educating the general public about some important conservation issues, and helped to bring about much-needed change in forest legislation and in some of the harvesting practices of the big forestry companies.

Clayoquot Sound was saved; and today, while it would be a mistake to speak of complete harmony on these issues, there is a more positive relationship between conservationists and the forest industry; confrontation has largely been replaced by dialogue – even, on occasion, by collaboration – in the interests of developing a more sustainable approach to the harvesting of the forests. This has been aided by land protection legislation: only a couple of months ago the BC government committed itself to the protection of 2.2 million hectares of old-growth cedar, pine and spruce forests in BC’s inland temperate rainforest, an area that constitutes the habitat of the rare mountain caribou, among other important species. The forest companies themselves have developed a new sensitivity to such matters; thus in the case I mentioned earlier, of the discovery of some giant trees in the northern part of BC, the company that owns the logging rights for this area has agreed not to harvest the trees in question, a corporate response that would have been most unlikely 20 or 30 years ago.
Such changes in policy and outlook have taken a long time to achieve, and are the culmination of a long tradition of conservationist activism in BC. Greenpeace, perhaps the best-known environmental movement in the world, began life in Vancouver in 1971. This organization, along with the Friends of Clayoquot Sound and other BC environmental groups, continue to act as public watchdogs on environmental issues, and draw much of their support and their strength from the young people of our province, especially college and university students, who form a significant proportion of their membership.

Indeed, the students on our campuses in Canada are highly sensitized to environmental issues, and in recent years their voices have been raised in support of such sustainability issues as plastics recycling and “fair trade”; in the latter instance, their campaign was a factor in persuading my own university to change some of its purchasing practices. These students have been in the vanguard in recognizing that the riches of the earth are being squandered by the uncontrolled materialism of industrial societies, and that it is time to call a halt to the uncontrolled exploitation of our natural resources. In so doing, they have joined the growing numbers of those who are making the world aware of the social inequities that such exploitation has encouraged, inequities that we are only now really beginning to admit, if not yet seriously address.

Given the history of environmental activism in BC, and the leading roles played by public intellectuals, many of them members of colleges and universities, it is hardly surprising that issues like social and environmental sustainability have long occupied our attention at UBC. I will use our experience at UBC as an example of opportunities to change how universities work – only because I know it best, not because we are unique. Our students have played an important role in highlighting environmental issues, and in recognizing the close relationship between environmental degradation and social inequity.

UBC’s official policies respecting sustainability have been heavily influenced by student interest and activism in this area. In 2003, we engaged in a lengthy consultation process with faculty, staff and students to help us frame UBC’s strategic planning over the next decade. We asked the campus community to identify the issues and concerns that should determine the direction of our future development. Students formed the largest number of the respondents, and their views were loud and clear: they petitioned the university to prepare its graduates to develop a global perspective; they demanded that it work towards the creation of a civil society based on social justice; and they asked that its resources in learning and research contribute to social, economic and environmental sustainability, on both a local and a global level.

Out of that year-long consultation was born the vision statement that prefaces Trek 2010, the university’s strategic planning document approved by our Board and Senate in 2005. It reads:

The University of British Columbia, aspiring to be one of the world’s best universities, will prepare students to become exceptional global citizens, promote the values of a civil and sustainable society, and conduct outstanding research to serve the people of British Columbia, Canada, and the world.

This is the banner that now represents UBC to the world. Like all such statements, it makes something of a flourish, and to the sceptics amongst us such a declaration might seem little more than empty rhetoric. But I want to show you that in fact we have taken these words to heart, and
that the spirit of this declaration has come to inform many aspects of our work and operations. In other words, I want to demonstrate that there is no conflict between our goals as a research-intensive public university and the application of global citizenship and sustainability as guiding principles in all that we do.

At this point perhaps I should spell out what we mean by the term “sustainability” as we understand and apply it within the university. Clearly it is not an end in itself, but rather a process whereby we can achieve other social and environmental goals. For a definition, I will turn to the words of my UBC colleague Dr. John Robinson, director of our Sustainable Development Research Initiative, who argues that sustainability is

...the reconciliation of three imperatives:

- The ecological imperative is to stay within the biophysical carrying capacity of our planet;
- The economic imperative is to provide an adequate material standard of living for all; and
- The social imperative is to provide systems of governance that propagate the values that we want to live by.

Dr. Robinson presented these definitions at the launching of our Trek 2010 strategic plan, and on that occasion observed that “UBC is deeply involved in all three dimensions of sustainability research, teaching, and practice”.

Let me emphasize that our commitment to a civil and sustainable society is not a matter of sudden conversion. UBC has addressed these issues over an extended period of time. Long before it had an official policy on sustainability, UBC was already introducing its principles into some academic programmes. As early as 1976, we offered a graduate degree in resource management and environmental studies. A growing awareness of the importance of environmental protection and sustainability led us to be signatories to the Talloires and Halifax Declarations, in 1990 and 1991 respectively. You will recall that both declarations – and a number of others – were the outcome of conferences that brought together the presidents of universities from many countries around the world, who saw the impending environmental crisis and agreed to find ways of incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy into the teaching and learning at their institutions. UBC went on to adapt the principles of these declarations to the terms of its own Board policy on sustainability. Approved in 1997, the policy commits the university to “work towards a sustainable future”, and “to instil sustainable development values in its graduates and employees, through research teaching, and operations”.

The process of implementing these ideas has been slow but we have made some real progress. The measures UBC has taken are by no means unique but, as a result of their broad application, they have helped to make sustainability an increasingly central focus of our life, both academic and non-academic. And out of these changes is emerging a new awareness of the university’s role in the community, and a gradual change in its relationship to that community.

At the risk of oversimplifying the picture, I want to outline the major approaches we have implemented in three related but distinct areas: learning and research, campus operations and community outreach.
Learning and Research

To make the issue of sustainability meaningful in a university context, it is essential to develop an appropriate curriculum. UBC now offers some 300 undergraduate and graduate courses across all faculties, courses dealing with issues related to sustainability; not a huge number, given the several thousand courses we provide each year, but nevertheless a good beginning. First-year students at our campus in the south Okanagan region of BC can now register for a course named succinctly “Sustainability 100”. Students majoring in history may register for History 396, “Environmental History of North America”. The Faculty of Land and Food Systems now offers a programme leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Global Resource Systems. Some first-year arts courses are being thematically organized around environmental and sustainability issues, exploring the interrelatedness of environmental and social health. Graduate students in architecture can take a Master of Landscape Architecture, which emphasizes the centrality of sustainability in physical design. These are just a few examples, picked at random across disciplines, of a growing trend in course design at UBC.

It is important to recognize that these are not cosmetic changes: they reflect both the commitment that the university has made to sustainability as a core value in higher education, and a widespread desire on the part of students themselves to come to grips with the social, economic and environmental issues that undoubtedly are going to shape and dominate their lives. What is happening at UBC and at many other institutions is that we are responding to a felt need, and weaving the study of environmental change and its implications into the very fabric of our teaching.

Sustainability research, also, has developed a prominent profile at UBC. A number of our top researchers are based in the Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability, an interdisciplinary body housed in a new aquatic ecosystems research laboratory. The laboratory itself, led by renowned scientist Dr. Daniel Pauly, is designed to study the development and sustainability of fish stocks around the world. Among the faculty who work in the institute are Dr. William Rees, the researcher who pioneered the concept of the “ecological footprint”, and Dr. John Robinson, whom I referred to earlier and who will soon be heading up a new research centre at UBC, the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability. Sustainability research crosses all disciplines, from engineering, where work is being done on clean and renewable energy systems, to architecture, which houses a design centre for sustainability where faculty and graduate students pursue projects in built and natural environments, using leading-edge holistic and synergistic approaches to sustainability, to chemistry, where scientists are working on green materials. In these and other disciplines, we are seeing a much greater emphasis on new concepts of research involving community consultation and partnership, a recognition that the kinds of problems we now face must be approached collectively and collaboratively, through partnerships that engage public and private sectors as well as government and industry.

These are just a few of the programmes and research initiatives that have sprung up at UBC in recent years around the concept of sustainability, and through which our faculty and students are collaborating across faculties and with external agencies to find workable solutions for the challenges that face us all.
Campus Operations

Next, I want to look at another component of change at the university: our attempts to practise what we preach – to make our campus an embodiment of the principles of sustainability by applying those principles to our daily operations and business practices. To accomplish this, in 1998 we established a Sustainability Office, with a mandate to develop an environmentally responsible campus and promote sustainability values across the university. That office oversees a number of programmes on our Vancouver campus, including energy management, “green” buildings, paper reduction and water conservation. Through programmes initiated by our Sustainability Office and implemented by our Plant Operations units, we have been able to save millions of dollars annually by retrofitting buildings with new lighting and plumbing systems, we have cut back significantly on our CO2 emissions, and we have reduced water use by over 30%. On a campus with over 45,000 students and more than 400 buildings, those are significant improvements! Thanks to measures like these, UBC has become the first – and so far only – Canadian university to receive a Green Campus Recognition Award from the US-based National Wildlife Federation, first in 2003, and then again in 2005. Last week, I was at a global conference of university presidents in New York. Former US president Bill Clinton addressed our group and singled out UBC’s building retrofit as a leading example of climate change action.

Other initiatives of the Sustainability Office include the training of “Sustainability Coordinators” who carry the principles of sustainability into over 140 academic and non-academic units across the campus. There is also an aptly named “SEEDS” programme, an educational initiative that brings together students, faculty and staff to address sustainability issues. SEEDS, which stands for social, ecological, economic development studies, offers internships and research opportunities that students may take up in connection with their academic studies. And finally, the Sustainability Office has collaborated with the Office of Campus and Community Planning to produce “Sustainability Street”, a promenade on our Vancouver campus intended to show the principles of urban design and sustainability in actual operation. The street uses such technologies as a closed-loop system of water recycling, waste-water collection and filtration, and a heat-pump system that generates energy out of treated waste water and storm water. I should also mention that our Okanagan campus will soon be employing a similar system when it moves from a gas-heating system to thermal energy derived from a geo-exchange system drawn from groundwater found under the campus. By this means we expect to have our small Okanagan campus virtually emissions-free, and as an added bonus we should save about $100,000 a year in energy costs.

UBC has made efforts to embody the principles of sustainability in its daily operations. We are not unique. My point is a simple one: if we want those principles to mean anything to our students and our community, we need to model them in our own domain; we must move beyond theory and argument to physical demonstration, so that our students come to accept them – and expect them – in every aspect of their university experience: in their dorms, in their cafeterias, in their use of water and heat, as well as in their classrooms and laboratories. By immersing them in a sustainable environment, we hope that students will learn to apply the practices and principles they encounter in their subsequent lives as researchers, working professionals and citizens.
Community Outreach

To this point, I have been considering how universities may adapt themselves to the exigencies of a world facing environmental crisis, first by integrating the teaching of sustainability into their educational programmes and objectives, and then by implementing the principles of sustainability in all aspects of their operations, including their business practices and the management of their physical plant. A third means of contributing to the search for sustainable solutions is community engagement: to involve faculty and students more closely in the fabric of the society they wish to serve, through exchange and consultation, collaborative research and participation in projects that bring the community and the academy into a new and fruitful working relationship. The university, in other words, must be ready to move beyond its walls and apply its research and teaching expertise to the problems faced by our generation.

Now this is not a new idea: at one level or another, universities have always engaged with their communities; for instance, through programmes of continuing education, whereby non-students may have access to campus instructors and facilities. But the kind of engagement I am talking about is of an altogether different nature, because it requires faculty members to descend from their professorial podiums and be ready to learn as well as teach. It sends our students to study in the world, well beyond the groves of academe. The risk attendant upon such an approach is that we lose some of our freedoms: the freedom, for example, to study a problem from all sides without any interference or concern for consequences – the kind of research we sometimes associate with academic freedom. But that is a calculated risk that we must take, because we face a greater risk – the risk of environmental degradation, economic collapse and social chaos, if we choose to hold back and insist at all times upon our traditional stance of academic detachment. If we want to strengthen our communities, if we want to help achieve and maintain social as well as ecological sustainability, universities must become more receptive to notions of partnership and participation in learning and research.

At UBC, as at most other universities these days, we have already begun to act on this new understanding of our broader role. I spoke earlier of the creation of our Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability. Its director, John Robinson, sees such research centres as opening the university to new possibilities by drawing on the critical information that is to be found in government, industry and civil society. The centre will be a “globally unique state-of-the-art living laboratory” in which researchers and community partners can work together to learn about sustainability and how to bring it about.

The Sustainability Centre is just one step we are taking in our efforts to help society make the right choices in the search for social as well as environmental health. Another step, one that we took seven years ago, was to open an educational office in the middle of Vancouver’s downtown East Side, an area deeply affected by poverty, violence and drug addiction. The Learning Exchange, as this office is known, has opened its doors to any and all members of this marginalized community, offering them educational programmes, access to computers and a quiet place to sit and read. It is staffed by students who have volunteered under a programme of service learning which takes them out of the classroom and into the community.

The Trek Program, as it is known, sends approximately a thousand students each year to work with the local community in schools, NGOs and clinics in the downtown East Side and other parts of the
inner city. The role of the Learning Exchange and Trek volunteers is to help the community to restore itself by providing opportunities that it lacked before – opportunities to gain an education, develop marketable skills and enter on the path to social and economic recovery and sustainability.

For many of the students in these programmes, the experience brings them face to face for the first time with the decline of social sustainability, when a community lacks the means and resources to sustain or renew itself and begins to die from within. This kind of learning is not to be duplicated in the classroom; it must be felt on the pulse, it must be absorbed through the pores by direct contact. Universities must help their students negotiate the path between the theoretical aspects of sustainability and the harsh realities of a world that seems increasingly at risk of collapse, socially as well as environmentally.

**Conclusion**

This chapter began with the description of the ageless beauty of BC’s mountains and forests, and I am ending, it seems, on a much less hopeful note in the drug-ridden streets of a modern cosmopolitan city. There is a close relationship between these seemingly discrete topics, a connection rooted in our society’s inability to look beyond its immediate material needs and plan responsibly for a sustainable future. But there is reason too for hope.

I have argued that universities must engage more directly with their communities if the dangers we face are to be averted. In some respects our students are already ahead of us in these matters. UBC engineers, for example, have formed a branch of Engineers Without Borders, an organization which over the last several years has funded a variety of overseas projects in developing countries. Over this past year the UBC chapter of this organization has worked on three projects: 1) to pay for delegates to attend the organization’s annual conference to learn about its poverty alleviation programmes and overseas projects; 2) to fund a one-day conference with members of the local community in Vancouver to discuss issues of sustainable development; and 3) to subsidize two current engineering students in a junior fellowship programme in Africa, where one is helping women and youth in rural Ghana to develop their own business enterprises, and the other is teaching farmers in Zambia how to conserve water for irrigation.

Engineers Without Borders is helping students to become agents for positive change; in the words of the UBC mission statement, they are “acknowledging their obligations as global citizens, and striving to secure a sustainable and equitable future for all”. In the process they are realizing our goal of turning the university into a knowledge agent for society at every level, lending expertise to and partnering with communities that are working towards new levels of social and economic sustainability.

There are many other student-driven projects like these at UBC, like our international student refugee programme sponsored by the World University Service of Canada, and when I hear about them I feel a renewed optimism. University faculty and administrations may provide the means and the expertise to help find solutions; but our students are not waiting for directions from above – they have understood the necessity of working collaboratively towards the goal of sustainability, and they are taking what they have learned in the classroom into the field, sharing their knowledge and energy, serving the community with selflessness and dedication, and demonstrating the values of global citizenship.
The road ahead is full of bumps and holes and unknown hazards. The outcome of our journey is, as always in human life, uncertain. But that should not hold us back: our students are showing us the way to go. I hope we have enough wisdom to follow them.
This chapter presents my perspectives and analysis on how principles and methodologies of participatory research could be applied to promote a greater contribution by higher education and institutions of higher education towards participatory and sustainable development in our region.

We need to be reminded of the new realities in Asia and the Pacific today. This is the region of the world where the only conversation these days is about rates of economic growth and the disagreement is only around whether it is 9% or 9½%. However, along with this very high rate of economic growth, we are also witnessing within the region widening disparities – disparities across countries, across regions within a country, and even within a district in a region. These disparities are not merely economic, they are also social and political. But these disparities are associated with what I have termed here as a “deepening developmental crisis”. And that crisis has various manifestations. The most visible of those manifestations is increasing protests from the citizens around our region. And these protests are not only increasing in number but they are intensifying. There is a sense of disaffection, of despair, of exclusion, in a growing number of our people be they in the country I come from, India, or in South Asia or in many parts of the Asia-Pacific region. And these protests are taking the form of resistance, sometimes resistance which is on the streets and is noted by the media but many times resistance which is in the form of apathy, disengagement and what is called passive hostility. There is an attempt to increasingly categorize this resistance, after 9/11, under a rather broad rubric of war on terror. That war on terror is being fought by authorities concerned with security, naturally, in many of our countries in the region. And this security concern, this concern for linking resistance of protests to issues of security and then supplying them under the umbrella of war on terror, tends to mask the growing and deepening developmental crisis in our region.

The essence of that crisis, in my view, is a model of development which is attempting to homogenize the world, under the rubric of globalization and many other issues. We are now witnessing a uniform, universally mandated approach to economic development, political organization and
social behaviour. This has led to a divide in our societies, in our countries, in our region, where globalization is commencing. My children may find it easier to relate to other children in Europe or North America, but they may not find any similarity of conversation with the kids in rural and tribal areas in my own country. This disconnect is reflected in the homogenization of culture and behaviour – blue jeans, hamburgers, Spice Girls, that’s about it.

Associated with this concern for security and the larger rubric of war on terror is also, in my judgement, declining space for democratic governance – space which is necessary for the expression of disagreements, dissent and critique because that is the essence of democratic behaviour. There is declining space for questioning, for arguing, as the World Social Forum has begun to argue, that “another world is possible”, that there could be multiple models of development, relevant to multiple communities, diverse societies and aspirations, but that declining space and the exclusion of large numbers of people from this model of development reflected in their resistance and protests are further deepening the crises in the Asia-Pacific region.

I find that there is a paradox in the field of higher education, in this context, in Asia and the Pacific. As economic growth moves forward, there is increasing demand for higher education in all our countries, which is unparalleled in many of our societies in recent history. But that demand is exclusively linked to labour market requirements of trained manpower to fuel the economic growth that is taking place. As a result, there is increasing commercialization of higher education and increasing vocationalization of higher education. Higher education is linked to producing trained, ready-made, quickly adaptable manpower for the labour market. And this growing commercialization and growing link between higher education and labour market requirements have also marketized, in my view, both the contents and pedagogy of higher education. Content has become vocationalized, skill-oriented; pedagogy has become short term, rote learning, mastery of a few skills; the pedagogy has become ahistorical, it does not situate education and learning in a historical perspective; and pedagogy has become de-contextualized, where you can train call centre staff in Manila, Bangkok and Mumbai without reference to their different contexts. They can all be called Maria and taught to speak a slang which is appropriate to the job.

I want to raise, therefore, a discourse about what the nature and meaning of higher education is in today’s context. Is higher education a public social good or is it a private good? This discourse needs to be made a central part of our conversation. Can the “private good” approach of higher education – that is, higher education left entirely to market forces and to its commercial nexus – be expected to focus on sustainability? My view is that this is a contradiction; that higher education viewed exclusively and largely as a “private good” and not as a “public social good” is likely to contribute to non-sustainability. If you look at the higher education participation rates around the world and in our region and you look at the emissions – carbon dioxide emissions – you will find a close co-relation. In the country I come from, those who are illiterate, semi-illiterate, only high school educated, do not contribute that much to the problem of climate change or carbon emissions. It is those of us who have had access to higher education who are contributing to that.

Therefore, we find that access to higher education is very skewed, and certain strata of society do not have the means and capacity to participate in higher education for personal and professional development.
The global terrain in this first decade of the twenty-first century is full of promises, as well as expectations. Economic and technical resources are now available to address problems of poverty, disease and malnutrition. Yet, as the mid-term reviews clearly show, Millennium Development Goals are nowhere near being achieved (Social Watch, 2007). There has been a widespread acceptance of democracy as a form of governance across the globe; yet, most citizens in these countries feel disaffected by the system of decision-making. Citizens across the world now demand a voice in decision-making, even when their elected representatives are engaged in governance (Commonwealth Foundation, 1999).

This growing paradox of the twenty-first century is further complicated by the widespread recognition of problems of climate change and challenges of sustainable development. Within this scenario, the questions about the roles and contributions of higher education need to be posed. Does higher education have any contribution to make? What do higher education institutions have to contribute towards these challenges facing humanity?

**Functions**

Historically, higher education has served the twin purposes of research and teaching. In its knowledge production function, higher education institutions have been the centres of innovation and creators of new knowledge in diverse fields of human activity. The knowledge production function is based on academic rigour and the intellectual apparatus within higher education institutions. Over decades, such an intellectual apparatus has contributed to the establishment of an orthodoxy around the meaning and epistemology of knowledge. This orthodoxy has been associated with the privileging of intellectual activity within higher education institutions over any such activity in society itself. As a result, it has been assumed that knowledge production is taking place only in higher education institutions; people's experiences and daily struggles in communities produce experiences, not knowledge. This elitist view of knowledge has been challenged over human history.

Thirty years ago, participatory research began in the context of such an orthodoxy. It challenged the hegemonic nature of knowledge and its underlying epistemology, as well as its superstructure of higher education institutions, by espousing the relevance and contribution of popular knowledge and innovations in practice. The movement of participatory research also highlighted the negative human and societal consequences of monopolistic approaches to knowledge production. It thus began to be acknowledged that knowledge-in-action and knowledge-for-action were important for finding solutions to the problems of societies and communities. Numerous studies and reports highlighted this world view of research for, with, and by, the people themselves, with the support and partnership of “experts” (Tandon, 2002).

In their teaching function, higher education institutions have focused largely on the learning of theories in the classrooms. Students are discouraged from “engaged” learning in real settings, and much of that arises from the orthodox meaning of teaching and education. Alternative approaches to learning are being attempted, largely at the margins of academia. The perspective of participatory research can thus be utilized not merely in the research function but also in the teaching function of higher education institutions (see Taylor, Chapter 5).
In order to reinvent higher education to make its contemporary relevance more meaningful, it is important to explore how the principles and perspectives of participatory research can be applied in higher education institutions to address the challenges of participatory and sustainable development.

**Participatory Research**

How does participatory research come into play? The origins of participatory research 30 years ago came from the world of practice – practice in adult education, practice in community development, in social change, in many parts of the world. The tradition of participatory research has benefited from the work of Paulo Freire, Myles Horton and Julius Nyerere, as well as the kind of work that has happened in self-help groups and community self-reliance in Korea, indigenous knowledge with communities around Chiang Mai in Thailand, in the Maori communities in New Zealand and in the Pacific as well as among the indigenous peoples of my own country, India. The essential premise of participatory research is recognition and utilization of knowledge for purposes of transforming the relations of power in social systems. This perspective allows the knowledge production function to be carried out in “engaged” stances – where learning about the dynamics of a social-political system (be it a community, an organization, programme or region) is closely linked to bringing about changes in that system to achieve certain desirable public values of equity, justice and peace. Participatory research methodologies are thus used to both learn about realities and transform the same towards such desirable public values (Horton and Freire, 1990).

Thirty years ago, I embarked on a journey where I was more or less well prepared as a product of higher education. With my techno-managerial professional background – electronics engineer with a management degree about to complete my Ph.D. in management – I caught the bug of citizen empowerment, and that bug is still infecting me, but my background and my higher education training at times was a handicap.

When I went to the field with that kind of professional education, I was full of confidence and arrogance – arrogance about knowledge, methodologies and tools that were at my disposal. It did not take very long to discover in the rural areas where I spent a year that my education had not prepared me for many things about life, living and development. I discovered very quickly that my training was a training in a rational-technical approach to understanding reality. I was equipped with the questionnaire. And, given my electronics engineering background, I could manipulate numbers as well. But very soon I realized that there was a world of knowledge which was linked to the struggles of people over generations. There was a world of knowledge which was linked to action. Only later I began to understand approaches linked to action research, unable to grasp that historically it came from a different context. It was very difficult to understand that it is possible that there could be multiple epistemologies. There could be multiple ways of knowing; and cognition-rationality is only one of them. Experience is another powerful mode of knowing and so is action. We learn from action, “learning from doing” is a concept that has been around but it is not linked to the question of epistemology, it is not linked to modes of knowing. And this realization was difficult for me in those days, as it is now, because I had to unlearn, and, as many of us know from our experience, unlearning is a bit more painful than learning.
The second aspect of participatory research throughout these three decades has been linking knowledge production with mobilization. Mobilization does not only mean mobilization in the streets – that is only one manifestation – mobilization is meant also in terms of conscientization, awareness raising, collectivization, getting together to address a problem, with or without external help. We see that in our own context, in our own villages and slums and communities, we see it in our households. There is a very close link between knowledge, learning and mobilization to act – to act to solve a problem. We also discovered in the process that participatory research methodology and perspective tend to integrate what are called research and teaching functions – the twin key functions in any institution of higher education. But this is unlike what occurs in institutions of higher education where research functions are seen as separate from teaching; some days of the year you do research, other days of the year you do teaching. Some experts, senior professors, research universities do research; some “lower order”, not so eloquent ones are teachers, tutors who do teaching. This disconnect between research and teaching has become a part of many higher education institutions. This is what participatory research tries to challenge. It challenges by changing the concept. Research is about knowing and teaching is about learning. The moment you change the concept, the moment you treat research as an act of knowing and make teaching a process of learning, then you see very close connections between the act of knowing and the act of learning, because in a sense they are similar acts. Unfortunately, learning is something that has lost its significance in much of teaching that goes on in higher education institutions. And knowing has lost its credibility in much of research that is going on. These days, a lot of research has become what I call “measuring the inconsequential precisely”.

So, participatory research tries to suggest that it is possible to look at engagement in the act of knowing as a process of learning, that one could approach knowing not only from the head, from cognition, but also from experience, from the heart, and from action. And that knowledge so generated in itself would contribute to a mobilization of individuals and collectives to address a concern that they share. This is the holistic perspective with which participatory research philosophy and methodology evolved over the last three decades and they evolved in the work of many of you and many of us in this region as well.

It took 20 years after that, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) to come around, before respect for indigenous knowledge was brought back to the table. Indigenous knowledge related to ecology, to the protection of forests, to living with species other than human, to conservation of water, to ensuring fertility of land – that indigenous knowledge was dismissed earlier as “voodoo” science. And those who stood with that knowledge, who tried to systematize and validate popular knowledge, were labelled “unscientific” at best, and “crazies” at worst. Now we see the respect for indigenous knowledge coming back in the large field of health care. That health care could be a treatment of the whole was known to many of our people in many of our societies, particularly Asian societies. That maintaining health was an act of self-action, preventive action and education and it was linked to a spiritual, emotional dimension. When somebody in Europe said it was psychosomatic then we understood it as a mental case and sent the person to a mental hospital. But every aspect of health, as well as disease, is psychosomatic. That is what holistic medicine today has taught us. It is a revalidation of the same indigenous knowledge that has existed in our societies through an oral and practical tradition. Volumes were not written about it, synthetic names were not given, but indigenous knowledge, popular knowledge – knowledge learned through the act of life and living – had validity then and we are rediscovering its validity now. So,
participatory research as a perspective, as a methodology, over the last three decades, attempted to validate, systematize and promote indigenous knowledge, while not negating knowledge derived from other forms, nor negating cognitive-rational modes of learning and knowing, but equating emotional-experiential and action-oriented modes of knowing as equally valid.

**Practice**

It has been 26 years since the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), where I work in Delhi, was founded. This society came about through a small network of people in 1976–1977 sharing stories via a cyclostyle newsletter. And then it became obvious to a group of us working in India that we needed an institutional framework which would allow us to use this perspective. But PRIA over 26 years spent the first half of its journey distancing itself from institutions of higher education. Not by choice, but by force; because, in those days, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, this was dismissed as community development. Organizing actions has nothing to do with knowledge. It took some profound writers like Orlando Fals Borda and Robert Chambers and others to come back and write volumes about this, and that gave it academic credibility.

In the last 15 years, we have tried to engage with academic institutions in India, where we have attempted to link participatory research methodology to teaching as well as to research. Students and faculty or departments of social work, sociology, political science, public administration, law, engineering, management, geography, planners, etc., go out and work with local communities, local community-based organizations, civil society groups, local governing institutions like Panchayats and municipalities to contribute to their development through micro-planning, resource mapping, studies on the status of malnutrition of kids, issues relating to the dropout of girls from schools; as well as gain knowledge from such an engagement. Most of these faculty members and students have come back saying it was a powerful learning experience. Most of the community people were heard to say, “Really, if you do study higher education it could be useful to us” about which there was great suspicion earlier, because they saw those who went away to study higher education never came back, except to conduct some survey or to complete a report, which they never heard about again. This approach is now being tried in higher education in Canada, Thailand, Samoa, for example.

I have a dear friend in East Africa who is trying to create what he calls “multiversity”. He says multiversity is the only concept which can accept multiple epistemologies, because university as a concept talks only about uni – a similar epistemology. Paul Wangoola is his name – a great practitioner. He has a network of people that practises herbal science and he is trying to get those professors of herbal science from the grassroots to teach in a university in Kampala. I wish him luck.

In Europe there is also a vast network called the “living knowledge network” that operates through a network of science shops. What is most interesting about this network is that it brings chemists, metallurgists, environmental scientists, structural engineers – those kinds of folks – together, not just softer sociology and social work types. A science shop is actually an interface between the community and those who have technical, research and professional expertise and they address community problems. I am closely associated with another initiative at the University of Victoria in Canada, where the university, known for its specialization in such fields as earth and ocean
sciences, made a decision to do, university-wide, what they call “community-based participatory research”. And one of the early champions of participatory research, Dr. Budd Hall, has been made the director of this initiative by the university. I mention these examples because when I mention them in the Indian context, I find that my colleagues from higher education institutions say, “Which university?”, “What research?” The point I am making is – this is a growing movement; there are positive examples from different regions of the world and perhaps we need to find a way to link ourselves into an alliance which supports the work that we all do.

**Challenges**

I believe that higher education institutions face several challenges if we are going to talk about participatory and sustainable development as an arena where institutions of higher education can make a contribution. The first challenge which starts from the perspective of multiple epistemologies is what I call the “power equalization” challenge. Higher education institutions are sites of expertise, of domain knowledge. With a high density of Ph.D in such institutions, power is derived from the exclusive process of certification of knowledge and resources applied to disseminate that knowledge. When you posit this high density, high power expertise in an institution of higher education with a group of indigenous people in either Samoa or India – a group that talks about the need for leaving land fallow for a few years in order to refertilize it – it is a very big one-sided story. It is difficult for them to stand up and say that there is another epistemology. And I believe that if you want to talk about inclusive epistemologies, if you want to talk about a world view which is inclusive, then those who today have power must reach out to those who do not. Because otherwise those who are disempowered know only one way – resist, shout, protest.

The second issue I want to bring to you is that of “authentic participation”, as I call it, within institutions of higher education. There is no incentive in such institutions to do participatory research and to link our work to participatory and sustainable development. There is incentive to have short-term field engagements, quickly produce a dissertation and a refereed journal article and see promotion or admission to the next conference. But I know that there are students, researchers, academics and faculty members in all institutions of higher education, who would like to be engaged, who are engaging sometimes without telling authorities that they are engaging. So this work needs to be incentivized and mainstreamed in institutions of higher education. But in many of our funding agencies, unless you have a questionnaire prepared in advance, the table set, and heavy duty biodata of those people who will never do research attached, you will never attract research funding. These practices must change. If they do not, participatory research methodologies and engagements on participatory sustainable development by our students, faculty, researchers and academics will remain hidden and marginalized.

The third point I make is the challenge of “democratic citizenship”. Universities and institutions of higher education are known to be places of independent, autonomous thinking, of questioning, of critiquing – in a way, preparing future active citizens of our society, who know how to respect democratic practices. But I am afraid that role is fast disappearing. It has to do with questions of political economy, of knowledge and enterprise. The question about multinationals funding research is a legitimate one. What about states funding research? In many instances, there is research funded by government agencies that could not be published in the public domain because its conclusions went against the relevant mainstream state policy. We are finding in our
societies that the nature of education in higher education institutions is such that today in society the most passive citizens are those who have higher education. They are becoming disengaged from the public sphere and democratic questions – questions of justice and equity. They are only concerned with meeting private goals. To promote participatory and sustainable development, higher education and higher education institutions need to re-dedicate themselves to deepening democracy through active citizenship.

The sort of question we have to put to higher education institutions is: If we want to support participatory and sustainable development, are they producing consumers or are they creating citizens? Consumers are in high supply, active citizenship is declining.

**Questions**

The first question I have been struggling with for these three decades of my own practice is: What is this participation? And we get lost in the current vocabulary of means and ends: Is it a right? Is it an obligation? I have begun to feel that participation may be a natural human aspiration and activity; that, left to ourselves, all human beings at all times in all situations around the world would engage with their context in order to have a better life. The difficulty comes when this natural stream of participation is blocked by a variety of rocks – rocks of information control, of procedural control, of institutional design, and this to my mind is the core principle of democracy. Without participation, there is no democracy. The practice of democracy starts with the family, in the community, in our neighbourhoods, in our institutions – not just in government institutions; it is in our institutions of higher education that the practice of democracy is about authentic participation, about the ability to disagree with dignity, to question honestly, and work together, even if we disagree. I am trying to understand, therefore, how participatory development and deepening democracy are linked together and how they can be encouraged and promoted as natural human phenomena.

The second question for myself is: What is going on in the name of GATS and WTO by the commercialization and monopolization of indigenous knowledge? My children would not use turmeric in their milk, which I used to use because my grandmother said it was good for me, but if I gave them a pill, which was properly packaged, they may swallow it in the same way they eat bananas. This is commercialization of indigenous knowledge, packaged programmes available now for holistic health. This kind of monopolization of indigenous knowledge is systematically going to result in market forces and, therefore, create competition. If knowledge is a commodity, and is going to be traded for dollars and euros, then you and I would like to maintain our knowledge close to our hearts, and not share it. The basis of the knowledge society – knowledge – becomes the basis of the knowledge economy and, therefore, knowledge may become difficult to access by many who do not have the money to buy knowledge. And, in fact, knowledge may leave their villages and communities and enter labs and factories very soon.

The third question is related to instrumental rationality. I have been thinking about this for many years because I had the privilege to understand science and technology as a student of engineering. And I kept on asking myself, what is the purpose of knowledge? And the answer I used to get in my science and technology training was to control nature, to control other species, to control possibly other human beings. If the purpose of instrumental rationality is control, may I submit to you that knowledge will cause unsustainability. Unless that very purpose of knowledge is challenged,
unless that very modality of knowing through instrumental rationality is questioned, we may never see the possibilities of sustainability in our communities or in our larger ecosystems. How do we legitimize multiple epistemologies and how do we question the purpose of knowledge?

And, finally, there is the question of ethics and values. This is a larger question, linked to the purpose of knowledge and the meaning of life. If purpose of knowledge is emancipatory, then it should link to the meaning of life. If meaning of life is material acquisition then, as Mahatma Gandhi said, “there is enough on this earth for everybody’s need but not enough for anybody’s greed”. The model of development, the lifestyle, the values of control, acquisition and consumption – unless questioned by practitioners and academics in institutions of higher education, and an alternative ethical, normative and value framework is re-positioned as part of the human development discourse – will foil our attempts to invent “green” technologies, through instrumental rationality, and create future generations of climate change and devastation.

References


Chapter 4

Innovation of Higher Education for Sustainable Development*

Role and Responsibility of Higher Education for Sustainable Development

It is a historical fact that education plays a necessary and decisive role in the economic, social and political development of a country and impacts each area to a significant degree. This common understanding and truth has been shared by advanced and least developed countries alike. Especially various reports by the United Nations have proved the inevitable links and nexus between the role of educational development and economic growth through many statistical and analytical surveys. UNCTAD (2007, p. 185) stated in *The Least Developed Countries Report 2007*:

*One of the most important insights regarding development in the last 25 years is that knowledge and learning are at the centre of the process of economic growth.*

Looking back over my youth, more than 40 years ago – how the memories of dreadful poverty, terrible political oppression and serious social conflicts compare with the changed situation of Korea’s modern day economic and social development and political democracy – I cannot but realize once again the lesson that the driving force has come from the development of knowledge and technologies and the transformation of social consciousness and value systems through education.

Similar to the case for development, education plays a crucial role in sustainable development because intelligent and technical development and behavioural changes through education are recognized as necessary means and ways for sustainable development. However, we will have to question the type of education that can bring about such changes that are needed for sustainable development and also the agenda and means by which to teach sustainability.

Education may contribute to development, but it does not mean that the expansion of school attainment necessarily guarantees the improvement of economic and social conditions. The important thing is the quality of education and schooling – whether students are really learning what truly matters.

*Written by Samuel Lee, the Secretary-General of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO.*
As one of the Millennium Development Goals proposes, the universal access of children to primary school education is the basic condition of development. It is still a target, which cannot be easily reached within this decade.

However, in order to drive our education more towards sustainable development, we have to provide quality education that is oriented towards the values and skills of sustainability at the various levels of education.

For these reasons, the role and responsibility of higher education can never be overemphasized or overestimated. Consequently, the crucial role of higher education for sustainable development can be observed in three major areas:

1. Higher education institutions, especially universities, are responsible for research on sustainable development, as well as the necessary knowledge and skills and also norms of behaviour. Scientific and technological improvement for sustainable production and consumption should be carried out by researchers in universities. The crucial role of higher education as the highly advanced and comprehensive knowledge provider is to find the best way to bring about harmony and synthesis among the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, environmental, and social tasks and issues, which are often in conflict with each other. Institutions of higher education are not just simply providers of advanced knowledge and technology; they should be deliberating and searching for the holistic view and concept of sustainable development and the necessary strategy and action plan for implementation.

2. Higher education incorporates institutions that train and produce teachers for primary and secondary education, and also for the vocational, technical schools. Quality education completely depends on qualified teachers, and education for sustainable development can be practised only through teachers who have been trained and conscientized of the values and perspectives of sustainability. The UNESCO’s position paper (2002) presented at the third session of the Preparatory Committee of WSSD emphasized that education for sustainable development should provide learners with skills, perspectives, values and knowledge to live sustainably in their communities. Education for sustainable development is not a simple subject that can be learned only through knowledge transfer or textbooks, but rather through a course of interdisciplinary approaches to help familiarize learners with the complex problems of society and convince them of the necessary actions and involvement. Teachers of education for sustainable development must be trained to carry out this kind of teaching, and universities are responsible for training these kinds of teaching personnel.

3. Higher education also produces leaders and elites of the country and society who direct and manage political parties, governmental bureaucracies, economic institutes and private industries – all the stakeholders of sustainable development. If higher education fails to educate students for sustainability, future leaders of various sectors and areas cannot be qualified agents for sustainable development. Sustainable development cannot be achieved

14 Regarding the role of institutions of higher education (IHEs), the authors of Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability emphasize that, “The academic freedom of IHEs allows critical discourse of current knowledge and practices … This freedom of discourse enables the changes necessary to reorient education to address sustainability” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 29).
or realized by the successful efforts of just some individuals or some groups in a sector. Stakeholders of sustainable development are from the broad areas of a country and society: scientists, business people, politicians, local government officers, engineers, agricultural producers, journalists, students, teachers, etc. So, it is crucial to educate and build a vanguard group of leaders in each sector of society, public or private, who will take a leading role in promoting the values of sustainable development and in transforming the unsustainable sector towards the more sustainable society.

On the basis of this perception and orientation, the present situation of higher education should be reviewed and critically questioned as to how much our universities are responsible and responding to the education for all and sustainable development goals and how higher education can be reformed and innovated in order to meet the needs for participatory and sustainable development.

**Critical Review of University Education Responding to Education for All and Education for Sustainable Development**

Regarding the present roles and functions of higher education for sustainable development, we will have to question frankly the structural and programmatic situations of universities and colleges, as they are the representative and most influential institutes of higher education in every country.

If universities are concerned about their responsibility of education for sustainable development, they should think about ways to respond so that future graduates can deal with sustainability issues in their careers and lives. Universities play a vital role not only in shaping the future by educating the professionals of tomorrow, but also by creating a research base for sustainability efforts, and providing outreach and service to communities and nations especially related to difficult sustainability issues (McKeown, 2006, p. 95).

Now, let us think about and reflect critically on the situation of universities in our countries. How many universities have research projects on these issues and provide educational programmes in their curriculum related to sustainability questions? Does my university have a special institute or department for research and training for sustainable development or for particular issues of sustainability in my region or community?

How much are our universities concerned and involved in community development activities, whether economic, environmental or socio-cultural problems? Are they preparing and encouraging students to devote and contribute to global issues like poverty, health, education and ecological crisis?

Among the more than 200 universities and colleges in Korea, I can count just a few that have established special institutes or programmes for education for sustainable development. Of course, all the universities are equipped with many research institutes and projects. But most of them are doing some academic research and dealing with micro, and fragmental, issues of science, technology, law, management and arts.
Our universities are still very isolated from society and social reality. They need to be more open to the needs of society and more connected with social innovation through partnerships with civil society (Brito, 2006, p. 46). But universities in many countries remain in the ivory tower isolated from the challenges of rapid social change through globalization and technological revolution.

Equally or more serious than the problem of isolation and indifference to societal needs is the tendency towards unsustainable, or anti-sustainable, research and teaching by the universities and colleges. When researchers and educators of the universities do not possess a strong awareness and sensitivity about what sustainability is, and how it is different from conventional philosophy and directions of development, they can easily produce unsustainable results in their academic activities. Especially many scholars in science and technology institutes and management and policy institutes are inspired too deeply by development ideology, and neglect the principle of sustainability.

We have to remember that many kinds of industrial products and chemical goods with academic certificates have proved to be unsustainable and harmful for ecological and human sustainability.

Even in our class of science education, the perspective of environmental sustainability is neglected or lost. Mayer (2005) criticized the vast majority of science programmes taught today as being based on the outdated concept of a mechanistic universe and representing a distorted methodology and ineffective environmental education.

Education for sustainable development should neither neglect nor forget the global dimension of the sustainable future, and the interconnectedness of local and global development. However, many research and teaching programmes of the universities are oriented at national developmental goals only and ignore the global issues of a sustainable world such as poverty, illiteracy, war and cultural diversity.

In this regard, reorienting universities to address sustainability is an urgent task as much as reorienting teacher education.

**Towards Innovative Higher Education for Participatory and Sustainable Development**

Reorienting existing education at all levels to address sustainable development is very urgent and necessary, so that all citizens, young or adult, can gain knowledge, skills, perspectives and values of sustainability so as to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future and lifestyle.

In this regard, sensitizing children and youth in basic and secondary education is most efficient and powerful, because their value systems and behaviour can be changed through reoriented education. However, the crucial point is to have qualified and committed teachers who can deliver the reoriented lessons and convince children of sustainable awareness and behaviour.

So, the implementation of effective education for sustainable development in schools is not possible without the institutes of higher education – universities – being innovated and restructured. Universities should play the role of capacity builder, in terms of training teachers and formulating the conceptual framework of appropriate education for sustainable development. In
order to meet this role and responsibility of higher education, what should be innovated in the university programme and structure? I would like to mention only some categories of university programmes to be innovated and transformed.

1. First of all, the research institutes and programmes of universities should be innovated and changed to meet the needs of sustainable development. Since the concept of sustainable development is very broad and comprehensive, and also evolving and expanding, the establishment of a specialized institute of sustainable development is to be recommended in order to study the holistic philosophy and contextualized methods of education for sustainable development and to maintain access to information and global co-operative networks. It can be a powerful knowledge centre for education for sustainable development to understand the plethora of issues in sustainable development (Sarabhai, 2006, p. 108).

Other research institutes in science, technology, economy, law and management can be related to the themes of sustainable development, such as environment, climate change, poverty eradication, health, human rights, peace and conflict, sustainable production and consumption.

As the themes of sustainable development are multifaceted and multidimensional, the research approach on education for sustainable development should be interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary through the formation of research clusters.

2. Educational programmes of universities in terms of curriculum of general and professional education should be innovated and improved upon in order to conscientize and sensitize students of sustainable development. University courses and subjects are in general compartmentalized according to the diversification of academic principles and perspectives. But the goals and mission of education for sustainable development are to bring learners to the comprehensive understanding and awareness of the needs of structural change to achieve sustainability.

So, a special curriculum for separate space and time to deal with the challenges of sustainable development is both sensible and recommendable, because this kind of foundational course is relevant in evoking responsibility to care for the earth’s limited resources and the lives of its peoples (Sarabhai, 2006, p. 109). Educational programmes for the environment, development and cultural heritage, and peace and human rights can be integrated into the special course on education for sustainable development.

3. University programmes, whether research, education or outreach, should be innovated to develop partnerships with their communities, governments, industries and cultural institutes, so that the knowledge, skills and results can flow into society and also be challenged by the needs of society. Also, institutes of higher education have to strengthen the networks of co-operation and exchange with other centres of excellence at the national, regional and global levels in order to create synergies and mobilize greater resources and capacity to ensure sustainable development. In this regard, universities and higher education should be more globalized, and also localized.
References


Chapter 5

A Time for Transformation
Opportunities and Challenges from Participatory Development for Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century*

We must become the change we want to see in the world.
Mohandas Gandhi (1869–1948)

If there must be trouble let it be in my day, that my child may have peace.
Thomas Paine, The American Crisis, 1780

Bridging the Past and the Present

I have been fortunate to travel, to work with colleagues and friends in a number of different countries, and still today am able to interact with people who constantly inspire me, including my colleagues Robert Chambers, John Gaventa and Andrea Cornwall at the Institute of Development Studies, but also the many amazing individuals in countries around the world who not only write about participation and development, but also practise it. I am also inspired by the two quotations by Mohandas Gandhi and Thomas Paine, at the beginning of this chapter, which remind me about two things.

Firstly, that we should not leave the burden of development to others. We should wholeheartedly embrace it ourselves and join with others to work towards a change that is good for all those with whom we share this world. Second, that time is pressing. We are reminded daily of the reasons for moving towards a different kind of world. We see that millions of people still experience poverty and social injustice. We see the ongoing conflict in so many countries, where adults and children alike are unable to experience even the most basic level of personal security. We see the continued spread of endemic disease. We are becoming aware, increasingly, of the threat of climate change, which may change the lives not just of the world’s population but perhaps even threaten the very existence of the planet as we know it. I believe, absolutely, that if my own children, and the generations beyond theirs, are to experience an existence that is in harmony with all the world’s inhabitants, then we need to act now. This action may be difficult and filled with obstacles and trouble, but I believe that the time to act is already upon us.

* Written by Peter Taylor, a research fellow and team leader of the Participation, Power and Social Change Team at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Brighton, UK.
The Role of Higher Education Institutions

The role of higher education institutions in today’s world is immense, complex and vital. A wide range of challenges and possibilities are emerging, with political, economic and social implications. Perhaps most significant are the challenges associated with shifting perspectives on knowledge itself, which are strongly influencing the role and responsibility of the university in society. Higher education institutions have a long history of engagement with the world outside their institutional walls. As centres of training and knowledge production as well as transmission, they are well positioned to link the local (through their proximity to neighbouring communities and socio-cultural particularities) and the global (through their association with transnational learning networks and research systems). This gives them considerable access to, and influence over, change processes in many societies. It enhances their potential to contribute to human development and social change by promoting and facilitating citizen participation and involvement within these processes.

The role of higher education institutions has been seen to change over time from preservers of culturally revered forms of knowledge, through producers of skilled labour associated with a manpower planning approach, to a more recent perception as agents of social change and development:

*Universities have frequently been regarded as key institutions in processes of social change and development. The most explicit role they have been allocated is the production of highly skilled labour and research output to meet perceived economic needs. But during periods of social transformation – which may certainly have at their heart far-reaching changes in the economy – universities may play no less an important role in helping to build new institutions of civil society, in encouraging and facilitating new cultural values, and in training and socialising members of new social elites. (Brennan and Lebeau, 2002, p. 2)*

I believe that universities in different parts of the world are now in a position to contribute to the transformation of the economy, the polity and the social structure (Brennan and Naidoo, 2004). But we see also that external influences exert pressures on higher education, as well as creating opportunities. Many of these present obstacles to the institutionalization of innovations. Although higher education institutions are often assumed to ignite change by providing safe spaces for political debate and even the emergence of new political movements, they may also block it. Brennan and Lebeau, (2002, p. 3) comment:

*One way of resolving these apparent contradictions is to acknowledge that universities play multiple roles, both reproductive and transformative. Within individual institutions, even within individual academic departments, roles played may be multiple and contradictory. At system levels, differentiation has become a key characteristic: non-university sectors, distance universities and private universities exist alongside traditional state universities in many countries, each type playing distinctive roles … All of this points to the importance of an empirical approach to the question of the roles played by universities in the transformation of societies. An approach is required which can accommodate complexities and ambiguities and, above all, can acknowledge differences, both between countries and between individual institutions.*
Global Trends, Influences and Challenges

If we are to re-imagine a vision of higher education in the future we need firstly to consider the key emerging challenges and influences to which it will have to respond. The overarching trend of globalization and the move towards a global economy are being accompanied by a political transition from national to transnational organizations. This movement is leading to an increasing debate on the notion of development. Hotly debated over decades, and with origins in the field of biology, development has been equated by many with global economic growth which would result in all peoples of the world achieving economic parity with those living in the “developed” nations. Over time, “human development” has, however, acquired more complex meanings. The UNDP website (2006) states:

*Human development is about much more than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. People are the real wealth of nations. Development is thus about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value. And it is thus about much more than economic growth, which is only a means – if a very important one – of enlarging people’s choices … Fundamental to enlarging these choices is building human capabilities – the range of things that people can do or be in life. The most basic capabilities for human development are to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community. Without these, many choices are simply not available, and many opportunities in life remain inaccessible.*

The UNDP statement (2006) goes on to note that human development is also a right, and that

*the goal is human freedom. And in pursuing capabilities and realizing rights, this freedom is vital. People must be free to exercise their choices and to participate in decision-making that affects their lives. Human development and human rights are mutually reinforcing, helping to secure the well-being and dignity of all people, building self-respect and the respect of others.*

This goal is laudable, and a number of well-known global frameworks and initiatives aim to support its achievement, including the Millennium Development Goals, the Kyoto Protocol, Education for All, Food for All and the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. These frameworks do not provide a guarantee of positive change, however, as we see from the slow or absent progress towards some of the targets enshrined within them. Progress is complicated by a wide range of variables that influence the process of human development, regardless of the goals and targets that are set. These include economic, social, political and environmental factors. Demographic and climate change; the emphasis on the need for sustainable development; the desire for peace-building and mutual understanding between peoples to alleviate conflict and violence; equality based on gender, ethnicity and religious belief; and even the striving for “happiness” (e.g. the “Gross National Happiness Index” of Bhutan, or the idea of a “Sufficiency Economy” now emerging in Thailand), all play a part in determining global development pathways. But these factors are located within a prevailing framework of belief in material acquisition shaped by a dominant neo-liberal economic agenda.
The idea of rights is hugely important. Melo (2006) speaks of four generations of rights. The first three – civil, political and social – are well known. The fourth is perhaps less familiar – equating human development with the idea of citizenship, within which is enshrined a series of freedoms as rights.

More recently, there are hints of a fourth generation of rights that would empower every person to play a gradually active role as citizen, within a legal framework of participatory or deliberative democracy. (Melo, 2006)

This concept of human development as embedded within sets of freedoms and rights fits well with the stated ideals of many international development organizations, but Melo notes also that the evolution of the state in many societies has been such that its willingness and ability in many contexts to support social or citizenship rights are severely limited. This has implications for forms of social change that support and enable human development as understood as a series of rights and, crucially, as citizenship.

Ideas of societal change relate to long-term processes that shape societies and within which social actors strive to bring about social change; but implicit in such ideas are notions of social change that are purposeful and intentional. Elsewhere, I have written (Taylor et al., 2006a, p. 13) that social change comprises several key elements:

- A process of dialogue, debate and action resulting in major shifts in social norms.
- Characterised by the highlighting and legitimation of discordant voices, especially those marginalised in society leading to improvements in their rights, entitlements and living conditions.
- Determined by the choices that social actors make, and these choices being determined themselves through dialogue and access to information.

Such a vision of social change would be shared by many. But those who let a vision of “good” change (Chambers, 2005) guide their actions and the way they live their lives are now faced by challenges and opportunities of an unprecedented nature. Globalizing forces are channelling the voices of the world’s citizens into ever narrower spaces; many feel that the influence of increasingly powerful economic, cultural, social and political ideologies is becoming the mainstream. Those who think and see the world differently find it harder to make their voices heard. There is a danger that knowledge becomes the currency of the powerful, as a means of legitimating and communicating the acceptable, and relegating knowledge that is seen of less worth to the sidelines. The potential for positive social change is becoming evermore distant on the horizon, as knowledge which may fuel it becomes harder to find, and the voices of those who have so much to share and contribute become even harder to hear. In order to look towards the future roles of higher education, the importance of the role of knowledge itself thus becomes inescapable.

The Role of Knowledge

With the advent of globalization and the intensifying of international competition, knowledge has become an increasingly important determinant of the wealth of nations and, consequently, access to knowledge and the ability to disseminate it have become a major source of competitive
advantage. In some quarters, knowledge itself is being seen as the most powerful driver of social and economic progress in the world today (World Bank, 2002), and that tertiary education “is necessary for the effective creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge and for building technical and professional capacity”. Universities, it is stated, should become more innovative and responsive “to the needs of a globally competitive knowledge economy and to the changing labour market requirements for advanced human capital” (p. xix). Knowledge itself becomes critical to the idea of development as achievement of “good change”, not just in terms of availability, but also in terms of how we use knowledge to understand knowledge. Knowledge is at times conflated, dangerously perhaps, with information. We are faced today with an explosion of information in an ever-increasing range of forms, but we often receive little guidance on how to interpret, use and value different kinds of information in a critical way. This heightened availability of information (recognizing that there are great disparities in access in different regions of the world) has given rise to the notion of the post-industrial “information society”, with a heavy emphasis on the power of new and evolving information and communication technologies.

More recently, we have seen the emergence of the idea of the “knowledge society” (Stehr, 1994; Castells, 1996; Delanty, 2001) which seeks to engage with a broader view of knowledge and information production, sharing and use, and, in doing so, offers opportunities to build bridges between the global and the local. The nature of a knowledge society is one in which, according to Bubtana (2005), all people have:

- open and timely access to information and knowledge
- the capacity to absorb and interpret information
- avenues and opportunities to use knowledge for informed decision making and for transformation to high quality of life.

This is just one perspective on the emergence of a knowledge society but, from this framework alone, we can imagine knowledge becoming an essential ingredient in every part of our lives: for economic production; for the activities, structures and systems of the state and major institutions; and for most of our daily needs as citizens. In effect, we are becoming dependent on knowledge. The implications for education of these trends in information and knowledge are enormous. From a knowledge society perspective, education will play a vital role in the sharing, application and creation of knowledge in a globalizing world (UNESCO, 2005). Higher education and universities in particular will, it is claimed, “fuel the driving forces of the transformation towards a global knowledge society” and have “a certain capacity to steer and eventually to correct the direction of trends within globalisation” (Van Damme, 2002, p. 4).

But there are other ways of looking at the relationship between higher education, knowledge and society. Higher education institutions may be perceived as purveyors of information and propagators of knowledge that fit within existing paradigms – these paradigms themselves having become unreliable and open to question. Universities, whose existence is justified in terms of their contribution to learning, may become weighed down by inertia, unable to learn, themselves, or to support the learning of others. This global knowledge economy has also served to exacerbate concern that some academic institutions may be contributing to an undemocratization of society, by discouraging the questioning of meanings and building up
ontological/epistemological assumptions which constrain or block open and reflective dialogue between individuals. Additionally, as higher education institutions play a particular role in training teachers and developing and updating school curricula, their increasing orientation towards the global knowledge market may influence the value system of basic education, having a much greater impact on development and society in the longer term.

So, at this early stage of the twenty-first century, to what extent do, and should, the institutional goals of higher education institutions go beyond the generation of wealth and the advancement of self-recognition? How can they narrow the gap between what they “know” and what they “do” through closer engagement with the wider community, for example through participatory research and co-construction of knowledge, or through participatory mechanisms that promote collaborative learning and sustainable development? We share a world in which poverty remains endemic, social injustice is widespread and the voices of millions of disadvantaged people remain unheard. Are higher education institutions equipped and ready to transform themselves if they are to meet the challenge of contributing to “good change” that spans the local and the global? I believe that there are no simple answers, blueprints or recipes that will resolve all of these challenges and tensions. But I am convinced that we are approaching, or have perhaps already arrived at, a time when we can no longer afford to continue with business as usual. Goals and targets are not only being missed; some of them may have been put in the wrong place to begin with, as a result of top-down processes that have failed to support meaningful dialogue as an essential contributor to change.

So, what alternatives do we have? In the remainder of this chapter, I will attempt to make a case for universities to engage more effectively in participatory development.

Higher Education and Participatory Development – What Needs to be Done?

For decades, participatory approaches have become associated increasingly with community development, to the extent they have been afforded a central position. In communities in many parts of the world, participation has been seen both as a means in achieving community development processes that are dynamic, inclusive and socially just, and as an end in itself, whereby all community members, including poor and marginalized people, should take part in, and indeed drive, the decision-making processes that shape their lives. From grassroots projects to voluntary organizations, from governments to large funding agencies, and increasingly within the corporate sector, for example in relation to housing and water, participation has been embraced as a way to build greater voice, accountability and trust into relationships between people and institutions. With much learning taking place from the south to the north, and indeed a growing emphasis in many northern contexts, participation has been seen to have the potential to reduce poverty and social injustice by strengthening citizen rights and voice, influencing policy-making, enhancing local governance, and improving the accountability and responsiveness of institutions.

15 In doing this, I am fortunate to be able to draw on a document (Taylor et al., 2006b) that was produced itself through participatory dialogue.
Participatory development advocates believe in the need for participatory approaches in action and research, and bottom-up planning decision-making processes at the grassroots level. Participatory development is a bottom-up, people-centred approach aimed at developing the full potentials of people at the grassroots level, especially the poor and marginal social groups, through their full participation in development efforts that directly affect their lives. Participatory action research (PAR), or the process of collective data collection and analysis that leads to the identification, design, implementation and evaluation of projects or programs that address local problems, plays an important role in participatory development efforts. In collaborative or participatory research processes that link theory with practice, action with reflection, project participants and community members are recognised for their capabilities and skills in producing unique and diverse knowledge of local conditions and promising project results. (Taylor and Angeles, 2006)

Universities and other higher education institutions already make significant contributions to, and benefit from engaging with, participatory development. They could do much more. Engagement helps universities to improve the quality, relevance and effectiveness of their teaching and research missions. It encourages them to reflect on their role in reproducing inequalities, and to put more energy into finding solutions to challenging social problems. However, many of us whose working context is in higher education, but also who believe that participatory development is a vital element needed to bring about “good change” at both the local and the global levels, feel that we need a collective vision, purpose and goals for higher education and participatory development.

What might our vision, purpose and goals be, if we are to engage more proactively in the shaping and development of universities and higher education institutions in order to promote good change for all? This question was addressed at the conference organized by the University of British Columbia in 2006. Following the Vancouver conference, a group of us attempted to articulate our vision, goals, purpose and principles for higher education and participatory development, as follows (Taylor et al., 2007):

Our vision is that another world is possible, in which all individuals are recognized both as productive, educated citizens and as potential agents of change. We see universities embodying democratic values, making strong connections between head, heart and hands, and recognizing that their institutional goals go beyond the generation of wealth and advancement of self-recognition.

Our purpose is to advocate and support the role of universities, colleges and other institutions of higher learning in:

- training educators, developing pedagogical strategies and teaching and learning processes that contribute to collaborative social learning, for goals of participatory development and social change
- becoming sites of resistance to unequal power relations
- strengthening their own democratic planning and governance as other social institutions and development actors confront issues of representation and democratization in the field
• finding appropriate ways to demystify and make concrete the practice of participation, producing social change which removes economic marginalisation
• influencing wider structural, institutional and political forces as they educate individuals and local communities.

Our goals for universities and higher education institutions throughout the world are:

• a policy environment that facilitates direct and active engagement in participatory development processes
• a community of learners, drawn from social, cultural, political and education institutions and civil society, sharing their experience, knowledge, skills and wisdom through an integration of research and practice
• a curriculum that supports excellence, scholarship, rigour and validity of learning and teaching whilst assuring the rights, inclusion and voice of all
• a strong and vigorous institutional base that values and encourages the continued well-being and development of all its members.

Our guiding principles:

• Respecting diverse interpretations of knowledge and beliefs
• Achieving common understanding, trust, humility and ownership of our actions
• Recognising the importance of commitment and political will to make change happen
• Responding to critical problems whilst managing risks responsibly
• Listening to and hearing the voices of others
• Sharing control over and access to resources
• Being accountable for our actions to all those with whom we engage
• Moving beyond rhetoric to practice
• Maintaining a reflexive and continuous learning approach to our collective efforts
• Ensuring that our engagement as outsiders in other contexts is informed by an understanding of our identity, and the potential impact of our own assumptions, beliefs and myths on processes of development and change
• Involving all interested parties in all stages of the process
• Reporting results to all parties in understandable language/terms

Having a vision is vital, but it is not enough in itself. Action is needed; action that is grounded in this vision, our sense of common purpose, and the principles that guide us in our work. Through our continuing dialogue on these issues, we have identified the following actions that we believe are needed at the level of our institutions; unless these are addressed practically and concretely,
I believe that higher education institutions will lack the capacity to support processes of societal change:

- Advocate for approval by University Governing Bodies that outreach from universities to local communities in both North and South is a high priority; outreach projects or programmes, and any support that facilitates these, should conform to the principles of participatory development.

- Make an inventory of existing university-based participatory development projects and programmes, highlighting innovations and good practice.

- Support and engage in processes whereby priorities of participatory development are generated by communities, are informed by local voices and knowledge, and where research protocols are developed by indigenous communities for people, especially outsiders, who want to work with them.

- Promote active engagement of administration, faculty and students in systemic participatory development, for example by:
  - decentralizing education and learning processes to communities
  - establishing inter-professional education teams taught by faculty from different disciplines
  - using a range of viable communication tools, including the Internet, for remote discussion
  - exchanging faculty
  - seconding students to other (North/South) universities for specific projects
  - Exchanging Library Privileges especially through Internet access to northern university library sites.

- Work on both outcomes and processes of specific institutional change within the HE sector, including:
  - curriculum change
  - hiring/recruitment of persons with participatory development experience
  - fund-raising and resource identification
  - participatory research programme development
  - advocacy with decision-makers and accreditation bodies
  - creating participatory processes inside university decision-making itself, including community representation.

- Taking a strategic view of the growth and evolution of participatory development processes by establishing realistic, yet challenging planning and implementation cycles for institutional strengthening.
• Engaging proactively in policy dialogues around development and change processes, at both the local and the global level.

• Produce publicity for participatory development, including:
  - Campus – news articles, websites, lectures, meetings
  - Academic production – papers, conferences
  - Popular communication – press articles, popular magazines, TV, Radio, web-based media, e.g. Wikipedia.

• Work with funding agencies to have participatory principles included in the requirements for funding.

**Why Do Higher Education Institutions Have a Unique Role in Undertaking These Actions?**

Higher education institutions are, by nature, international in their outlook. Their role as producers as well as transmitters of knowledge is important in a globalizing world, as well as in the national contexts in which they operate. Universities must also be willing to be “receivers” of knowledge. But we are at a critical moment in our planet’s history, when moral and ethical, and global and communitarian, efforts are needed urgently. Knowledge and the processes of learning are shaped by power relations, and the institutions and forums where teaching and research take place tend to reinforce the relationship between power and learning – a relationship that often is unequal and defined by those who can gain economically from it.

I believe that higher education institutions can be natural defenders of diversity and strong opponents of bland cultural uniformity. But they will not find it easy. They need constantly to be challenged to take up these roles more actively, to foster critical analysis of social issues and avoid an ivory tower approach which excludes the voices of other community members. They are in a strong position to provide and receive opportunities for dialogue on how to counteract the increasing negative power of globalization over education. Some of our greatest challenges, therefore, are to help higher education institutions become spaces where critical analysis of social issues is fostered; and to help them achieve and promote inclusion of the voices of all community members in democratic and policy processes.

**Conclusion**

Although benefits of participatory development have been seen throughout the world and are becoming more widespread, it is still the case that many people are not involved in such processes. And, most relevant is the perception that many universities do not yet engage in ways that are in harmony with the vision I have expressed in this chapter. Part of the reason for this is that there are still many questions which warrant further dialogue, and we need to continue and nurture a strong and active debate.

I would like to suggest some further questions. How should we strengthen networks of people both inside and outside the university context, to link and develop relationships between
institutions in the north and the south? To what extent can greater political will help to create more opportunities for engagement and collective learning? Should universities and higher education institutions help more in the systematic documentation and demonstration of change? How can they provide training and education for activists and community organizers, especially helping young people to develop and sustain their energy and idealism for positive change? Can they support research processes by facilitating the sharing of roles by students, staff and members of different communities? And should they also allow people to access new technologies and other forms of capital usually confined to powerful enterprises, a process in which they can influence the priorities of the system of production itself?

We need to look at and reflect critically on ourselves as individual actors for change; on our roles and responsibilities within the communities in which we are situated; on our institutions as key actors in change processes; and on national, regional and global players and ways that we may work with them, debate with them and challenge them so they are no longer content with their work, or believe that they have found the solution to development. Drawing on the inspiring words of Gandhi, we need, at each of these levels, to be the change that we want to see in others. And, drawing on the words of Thomas Paine, we need to do this in our own day, and not ask those who come after us to carry the burden we leave for them. Collectively, let us aspire to finding ways to achieve this lofty goal.

References


Roles of Universities in Sufficiency Economy*

Introduction

The world is now going through a period of change, great in magnitude and rapidity. Economic and social developments are being transformed by many forces. The explosive expansion of scientific knowledge and technologies has led to the so-called “knowledge-driven economy” and “knowledge society” because it has become the most influential element in development. On another front, capitalism, consumerism, materialism and market mechanisms have been the operating system that perpetuates economic progress. Competition is the name of the game. Commercialization of science brings science and technologies as well as higher education into the competitive arena. Innovations, based on science and technologies, serve to form competitiveness. The notions of “survival of the fittest” and “winner takes all” then operate in many human endeavours. Information and communication technologies link and open up divergent parts of the world with free access, free opportunities and free expansion, while free trade policy as well as cross-country free trade agreement, regional trade blocks and global General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) join together to make globalization. The resulting expansion of the market serves to enhance competitiveness. Internationalization and cross-border services further expand the strength of the knowledge economy.

Like the Saturn rockets, which bind three rockets together to increase propulsion power, the knowledge-driven economy, competition and globalization join together to create prosperity.

Prosperity brings wealth, better livelihood, more conveniences, better health and longer life. While prosperity brings many benefits, the other side of the same coin shows devolution with its undesirable consequences, namely environmental degradation, depletion of natural resources, inequity, social injustice, exploitation, domination, conflict and violence. Developing countries are less competitive and disadvantaged in many aspects, and at the same time do not have the coping ability for change.

In the knowledge society, science and technologies together with capitalism, materialism, consumerism, commercialization and competition emphasize individualism. Excellence, based upon scientifically proven explicit knowledge, is the basis for evidence-based practices and provides the driving force for growth. As mentioned earlier, inequity, injustice, domination, exploitation and conflict are undesirable consequences.

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It is now recognized that humanity and human rights must be given more emphasis. His Majesty the King of Thailand introduced a philosophy called “Sufficiency Economy” as a better alternative. Moderation and the middle path as well as wisdom and empathy are suggested. Tacit, holistic and humanistic knowledge are to be integrated with the explicit one. Social responsibility as a benevolent counteraction is now increasingly recognized. Hopefully, equity, access to knowledge, social justice and sharing will lead to peace and harmony. This emerging picture has been called Knowledge Society 2.

The economic crisis and its social impact following the economic collapse in 1996 created a lot of suffering for most Thai. It was the result of development policy in the past several years based upon wealth creation as measured by the Gross National Product. Distribution of wealth was very limited, and the poor were not much better off. As early as 1973, His Majesty the King, who has travelled extensively to visit people in all remote areas throughout Thailand, questioned the direction of development of the country at that time. He suggested a more modest line with emphasis on the real well-being of all people. Even when Thailand was boasting to be the next Asian tiger of the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) during the early 1990s, he warned against too hasty changes. In 1997, His Majesty introduced the philosophy of “Sufficiency Economy” and in the following years he further elaborated upon the concept. The National Economic and Social Development Board then, with the consent of His Majesty, produced a document to crystallize the concept.

Sufficiency Economy philosophy entails three principles and two underlying conditions: (1) moderation or the middle path; (2) rational and reasonable decision-making based on knowledge; (3) immunity against harm from uncertainty and changes; (4) knowledge and wisdom – broad and holistic knowledge, theoretical as well as practical; and (5) morality and ethics.

**Examples**

“Do you wish to see the face of your baby in-utero before birth?” is an advertisement by a hospital which had installed a costly high-technology ultrasound imaging machine. The technology can indeed provide a fairly good picture, but the question is whether it is appropriate to induce such desire.

On 14 July 2007, a full-page “advertorial” appeared in the *Bangkok Post* newspaper. It subtly said, “Do you want to know whether you have a hidden cancer?” After an investment in costly equipment for PET scanning, the public was given information, masquerading as public education, which can be understood as advising on the use of this very powerful technology to screen for any presence of cancer in asymptomatic people. Desire was induced, based on fear. Besides the high cost and radiation exposure, scientific evidence at present indicates against such use because false positive findings can lead to unavoidable and risky action as well as unnecessary psychological stress.

Desire-based trades are increasing very rapidly. Beauty, ageing, enjoyment, entertainment, recreation, gambling and excitement are worldly human desires which have created businesses. Some, such as exercise and sports, are of definite benefit, but the real benefit of many is doubtful. Even the possibility of immortality and the promise of future use of stored stem cells have become business. Unstable molecules known as free radicals can start chain reactions that damage animal and human cells and lead to ageing and the development of cancer. Antioxidants are compounds...
which protect cells from these free radicals. Theoretically, these antioxidant compounds would be useful in delaying ageing and preventing cancer. They are present in many natural products from plants and animals. Many preparations known as dietary supplements are on the market claiming to benefit users because they contain antioxidants. Advertisements have been based on such theoretical claims, even though large clinical trials have not detected any benefit for the formulations tested, and excess supplementation may even be harmful. For example, red wine was found to contain a chemical called resveratrol which is an antioxidant. The amount of the chemical present in wine would require the consumption of twelve bottles of red wine a day for years in order to reach the presumably effective level of resveratrol.

Vitamin E is an antioxidant and is now available freely on the market in creams and pills and in many other forms. It is used to beautify the skin and as an anti-ageing preparation. A WHO’s guideline stated that daily use of over 400 international units of vitamin E can increase the risk of heart disease. Since vitamin E is also present in cereal foodstuffs, the possibility of over-consumption is real, but the public and practitioners alike are unaware of the danger. Similarly, high dose vitamin A is used to treat acne, even though it can cause headaches and harmful brain swelling.

Change of values from excessive desires beyond sound judgement and the expenses above one’s means is essential; moderation considering one’s status is undoubtedly the answer. Education of professionals and public information for the control of unnecessary desires as well as reliable norms and guidelines should be provided. University education, besides including knowledge, skills, generic and professional competencies, and wisdom including critical, rational and holistic thinking, must be coupled with ethics and morality, which may include moderation, social justice, self-restraint and professional ethics.

Public contribution may include knowledge and information based on sound evidence and reasoning, as well as neutral, non-partisan and trustworthy research results on controversial issues. Universities have undertaken the function of advocacy for righteousness to safeguard against undesirable behaviour.

Sufficiency Economy does not mean a denial of technological advances, but emphasizes rational and intelligent selection. For instance, the rapid advances and changes in health technologies especially the emergence of personalized and regenerative medicine require sophisticated coping mechanisms. The escalation of the cost of health care necessitates proper screening and selection. While access to the global knowledge pool is important, validation would sort out the fakes. Knowledge valuation and optimization would sort out the useful ones and adapt them to suit local realities. It requires critical scrutiny of technologies as well as an understanding of the local conditions for the transfer and use of knowledge and technologies.

The formulation of national essential drug lists can provide an example. The lists aim at improving the quality of care and better management of services. Only those drugs considered to be essential to the real health of the people are included. Each drug is reviewed through the collection of scientific information from all up-to-date sources, and evidence for its efficacy and safety is assessed. Cost-benefit and affordability are considered in the selection. If there is more than one drug for an indication, availability, ease of use and prices are compared. Due to the dynamics of the information, the lists are subjected to revision every three months. The lists are the result of knowledge optimization to serve as a tool for the rational use of drugs.
Rational use of drugs is a complex matter. Tools such as the essential drug lists, registration of new drugs and surveillance of market drug quality are important. Education and information for the professionals and for the public alike are the pivoting element. Information and communication technologies, which are broadly available, can serve the purpose, but at the same time can be problematic. Ethics and morality with proper philosophical underpinnings are the basis for proper rules, regulations and practices.

Interferon is a good example. It is a miracle drug which can provide exceptionally spectacular remission for a fairly uncommon blood cancer called chronic myeloid leukemia. There is evidence of some benefit for patients with chronic hepatitis, but no proven benefit for other viral diseases, even though it should theoretically be efficacious. Its use costs up to one million baht per course per person. The question is whether a Thai patient and the Thai public can afford it; perhaps it is justified for some wealthy patients and some specific cases. The record shows that, in 1997, Thailand imported 46 million baht worth of the drug.

Vaccines for the prevention of influenza and cervical cancer are currently promoted and used with only indirect evidence of their potential benefit. They are very costly to the people, individually, and to the economy, in general. Their cost-benefit reviews must be scientifically and socially considered as well as be trustworthy. The influence of international propaganda is immense.

Changes in the knowledge system can result in a knowledge divide which separates people further and further. The high cost of technologies creates inequity among countries and among groups of people. The knowledge-generating countries that own discoveries and innovations have the right to patents, monopoly and pricing of the technologies, that is, products or processes. The knowledge-importing countries, which have needs for the technologies, must use their limited resources to buy, and thus they become poorer. Intellectual property management is the process that, on the one hand, motivates the scientific discoveries and innovations but, on the other hand, limits their access. Competitive research can serve as immunity for the future.

Avian influenza and emerging viral diseases are indeed a global threat, but frontline actions are most valuable. In the first occurrence of avian influenza in Thailand in late 2003, veterinarians at Chulalongkorn University were the first to call attention to the problem due to clinical manifestation in chickens. Scientists at the Faculty of Medicine, who were working on the hepatitis B virus at the time, were the first to decode the virus in that epidemic as H5N1. The facilities were, however, limited to cope with the magnitude of the problem by which three million chickens were culled and there were serious health and economic losses. The avian influenza research programme was initiated as a collaboration among the College of Public Health Sciences, the Faculty of Veterinary Science and the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University and with the Department of Livestock Development, Ministry of Agriculture, as well as a collaboration with the University of Minnesota with the support of the Thai Government, the U.S. National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The objectives of the programme were to upgrade virus laboratories to P3 bio-safety level; develop training activities for medical doctors, veterinarians, scientists and researchers as well as officers at the Department of Livestock Development and the district officers in areas of repeated outbreaks; undertake studies – surveillance in Thailand and South-East Asia, natural history of disease in ecosystems, animal and human genetic transformations, etc.; and develop coping measures. Self-reliance on knowledge is a national immunity.
There are new dangers from new research initiatives such as genetically modified organisms, embryonic stem cells, brain death and weapons which may create threats to human values and humanity. Old systems of ethics and morality may not be able to cope, and new ones are needed. This is an immunity against future risks.

While competition serves to motivate the pursuit of excellence and investment, collaboration encourages sharing, combination of strength and goodwill. Collaboration also dampens the undesirable consequences of competition. Complementarity of the two should be sought.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, Sufficiency Economy is an alternative to the present trend of social and economic development. Hopefully, it can dampen the undesirable consequences of competition and promote collaboration for participatory and sustainable development. Sufficiency Economy calls for the social responsibility of universities in discharging their duties, namely education, research and social services. Participation in societal affairs as well as advocacy for righteousness, social justice, human rights and moderation is essential.
Chapter 7

Community Service Programmes in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*

Introduction

It is very often said that the core functions of a university are to create new knowledge through research and to disseminate knowledge by imparting it through student learning, presentation at conferences and meetings as well as publications in scientific journals. The university is well organized to serve the stakeholders involved in these activities, mainly the students, academic faculty and administrators.

A third function, service to the community, is often cited but appears to be less well organized at the university level. In recent years, calls for greater involvement of other significant stakeholders, such as industry, the professions and government in the activities of the university, have spurred the university to reorganize the way it interacts with its constituents. This includes the manner in which the university interacts with interest groups in the community and society at large.

This chapter attempts to describe the rationale for community partnerships, the way Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) has reorganized itself in order to mutually benefit from its interactions with, and service to, the community and to illustrate some university-community partnership initiatives.

Rationale for University-community Partnerships

Service to the community is part of the social contract whereby the university has a moral obligation to be accountable and socially responsible in return for the public funding spent on its upkeep. The social contract is fulfilled in two mutually beneficial ways: the university gains by enhancing the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the educational and research programmes through links to the “real” society/world. The community gains through the direct engagement of the university’s expertise, resources and research outputs in participatory, bottom-up, people-centred development. Partnerships with the community also serve to cement “good neighbour” relationships where the community is also host to hundreds of the university’s students including international students.

* Written by Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin, the Vice-Chancellor of UKM, Malaysia, and a professor of medical education.
In partnerships for educational purposes, the community becomes the living classroom for students to learn in a holistic manner and where their learning experience will result in a wholesome individual and responsible citizenry. The community offers a fertile environment for the development of learning outcomes envisaged in the Malaysian Qualifications Framework: application of knowledge and practical skills; social skills and responsibility; ethics, values and professionalism; communication, leadership and team skills; problem-solving and decision-making; and managerial and entrepreneurial skills.

In research, partnerships with the community can result in better policy formulation and programmes for community development as well as the application of scientific inventions in areas such as poverty eradication, health promotion, environmental conservation and disease prevention. Partnerships are fundamental in integrating research with the national innovation system which results in better capabilities for firms and enterprises, regional development and enhancement of the quality of life of the people.

One example is the partnership between researchers from the Solar Energy Research Institute (SERI) of UKM and a non-governmental organization to install solar panels for the semi-nomadic Orang Asli (indigenous people) who live in remote villages. The solar panels are used to light streets, dry food stuff and provide power for telecommunications.

Types of Partnerships

There are two major types of partnerships. The first is student initiatives conducted through student associations and co-curricular activities. Activities conducted together with the UKM Student Union are usually university initiatives which are more widespread and multidisciplinary in terms of faculty and student participation. In addition, more than 80 student associations under the auspices of the Student Union may conduct activities for specific constituents. Examples are the religious-based student associations (e.g. Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Muslim), regional-based associations (e.g. Kedah, Kelantan, Sarawak, etc.), sports- and cultural-based associations, academic-based associations according to the discipline of study (medicine, law, etc.) and special themes associations (e.g. entrepreneurship, United Nations, environment, Caring Society, HIV/AIDS, anti-drugs, etc.).

The second type of partnership is those conducted by the faculties. They are often related to the nature of the disciplines and may or may not involve students. In initiatives which involve undergraduates, there is a deliberate attempt to make the community a classroom for learning the lessons of life. In research projects, postgraduate students are usually involved. Community service is given 5% in the annual staff appraisal system.

Organization of the University-community Partnership Programmes

Since the programmes involve research, educational or student activities they may involve separate parts of the university’s organization. Realizing that the community development aspects may not be well documented or followed up for impact and effectiveness, UKM has taken the step of establishing a University-Community Partnerships Office under the Deputy Vice-Chancellor
in charge of Industry and Community Partnerships.\textsuperscript{16} The office is responsible for planning and implementing multidisciplinary, university-level community initiatives and acts as a one-stop centre for community outreach. In addition, the office serves as a co-ordinating and documentation centre for community-related initiatives conducted by the faculties, research institutes and Centre for Student Development.

**Examples of University-Community Partnership Initiatives**

**Student-community service programmes (OPKIM)**

With a volunteer base of over 25,000 students and 80 student associations, these programmes contribute services to communities in various areas, especially rural areas, all over the country. The activities are co-ordinated by the Student Affairs Division and are usually co-sponsored by the relevant government agencies, corporate sector organizations and non-governmental civic organizations. UKM allocates about RM 2,000 per community service programme.\textsuperscript{17}

**Activities**

Student volunteers travel to remote/rural villages during the semester break and stay with the villages for about a week. In this programme, volunteers work with villagers to repair and maintain homes, to clean the environment and to give motivational talks to children. Numerous programmes are organized annually with the Community Development Department, each involving about 40,120 students.

**Healthy community programme**

Organized by the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences and the Medical Students Society in conjunction with local authorities, student volunteers travel to selected areas during weekends to conduct health screening; to put up health exhibitions promoting better awareness of health issues; and to provide simple counselling, health advice, physiotherapy and work environment therapy. The health screening includes tests of blood pressure, cholesterol, sugar and body fat; breast examination; ear checks; speech and hearing tests; optometry; BMI measurements; dietary and eating habits; supplement intake; and mental and psychological screening. About 600 visitors turn up at each community service session. Two programmes are conducted every year run by about 200 students in Allied Health (about 1,600 hours of community service).

**Youth companion programmes**

These programmes involve students in youth development programmes in various parts of the country. The programme is co-sponsored by the Youths and Sports Ministry with the aim of promoting youth activities under the national Rakan Muda programme (e.g. Say No to Drugs). Groups of 40 students spend about a week on these programmes.

\textsuperscript{16} A deputy vice-chancellor responsible for Industry and Community Partnerships was appointed on 1 September 2007.

\textsuperscript{17} RM 1 = USD 0.31 (July 2008 rate)
Co-curricular activities

The Co-curriculum Centre conducts a course on community service where one credit out of two is given for practical work in the community. It was first introduced in 2005 to encourage volunteerism among university students. The average enrolment per semester is 900 students. The activities are conducted on selected sites.

Faculty initiatives

The Menara Gading or “Ivory Tower” Project conducted by the Faculty of Education is aimed at motivating low income, marginalized, rural high school children in the state of Pahang to aspire to higher education. It is sponsored by the Raja Abdul Aziz Palace Foundation. In this project, students are brought to study camps where they participate in sessions aimed at improving their attitudes and motivation towards learning, and at enhancing their time management skills and self-concept. The project also provides students with the opportunity to learn how to concentrate, reduce anxiety, improve their information processing techniques and to self-evaluate in preparation for examinations. To date, the project has had a 98% success rate in placing students in higher education.

The health services project at Hospital Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia provides many opportunities for university-community partnership. Two examples are the partnership with the Malaysian National Cancer Council (MAKNA) to provide free/low-cost treatment to children with leukemia and the Cochlear Implant Programme with Yayasan Budi Penyayang (Caring Society) which has enabled more than 160 children who were born deaf to hear and develop speech. These children are now attending normal schools and some are in colleges and universities.

University initiatives: Village adoption project

Kundang Hulu is a village in Pagoh, Johor, which was badly damaged by the floods in early 1997. More than 1,000 UKM students volunteered to help in the clean up of the Pagoh area. They travelled over several weekends, staying overnight to clean up schools, places of worship, community centres and homes. Impressed and grateful for the spirit of volunteerism, the head of the village of Kundang Hulu asked to be adopted by UKM so that they could benefit from a comprehensive development plan. Several faculties have gone to survey the needs of the village. A comprehensive plan for community development which looks at poverty eradication, health promotion, environmental conservation and disease prevention is being handled by the University-Community Partnership Office.

Conclusion

University-community initiatives are valuable in instilling social responsibility and accountability in pursuit of a bottom-up approach to community development. For students, the community provides a real-life experience for developing leadership, organizational ability, team spirit and responsibility. In Malaysia, the community is also a classroom for inter-ethnic respect and valuing of cultural diversity. The community benefits from the expertise, resources and research output for its comprehensive development. To be effective, the university needs to reorganize the way it interacts with the community and society at large as well as make it count in the staff appraisal and student credit systems.
Chapter 8

The Scholarship of International Service Learning
Implications for Teaching and Learning Participatory Development in Higher Education*

Experiential learning and reflection lead naturally to seeing and interpreting things in new ways, to evolving personal practice, and to a grounded confidence on which further learning can grow.

Chambers, 2005, p. 214

Introduction

Attending the University of British Columbia (UBC) Faculty Certificate Program on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in the 2006/07 school year created an opportunity for my own experiential learning, akin to the process Robert Chambers describes above. The intent of the programme is to empower university teachers to move confidently from doing scholarly teaching to contributing to the scholarship of teaching. Scholarly approaches to teaching and learning enable individual faculty members and their institutions to develop better curricular programmes, improve the quality of student learning and professional training, and evaluate effectively the learning strategies that work best under specific contexts (Hubball and Burt, 2006, p. 2). The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), on the other hand, brings scholarly teaching to the next stage of more rigorous engagement by producing and disseminating pedagogical research in peer reviewed contexts, such as journal publications, conferences and other practices of different learning communities. It may involve and encompass varied practices at the faculty and institutional levels, such as:

…the development of a teaching dossier, development of a learning-centred course syllabus, curricular and classroom research projects, team-teaching projects, peer interview of exemplary curricula and/or teaching practices, pedagogical grant applications and manuscript publications, curriculum development initiatives, program evaluation projects, and faculty development programs. (Hubball and Burt, 2006, p. 3)

While the immediate sites for SoTL would be classrooms, schools, colleges, universities and other institutions of formal education, there are also many types of teaching and learning processes that

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take place beyond the classroom walls. One may therefore ask if SoTL principles and processes can also be used in analysing the scholarship (read: quality, rigour, erudition) of teaching and learning in community service learning (CSL), whether this is led by universities or non-government education, or of co-operative education, practicum and internship programmes. This potential applicability of SoTL to a variety of curricular practices led me to this project of examining the scholarship of teaching and learning within international development projects based on north-south university-community partnerships that contribute to participatory development through capacity-building goals and objectives.

To the extent that many north-south university-community partnerships involve curricular review and development projects, team-teaching projects, peer review of existing and exemplary curricula and/or teaching practices, pedagogical workshops, evaluation of research skills training, internships, manuscript publications, programme evaluation projects and faculty development programmes, they offer productive sites of analysis of the quality and outcomes of teaching and learning that takes place in these international partnerships. In this chapter, I will analyse the scholarship of teaching and learning in these international partnership projects as a form of international service learning (ISL). ISL may be defined as a form of experiential education that combines volunteer service with academic study by connecting theories with practical skills in real-world or real-work settings. The intent of ISL is to prepare students to become more socially responsive and oriented to contributing to community and international development. While the pedagogies and scholarship of CSL programmes across North American universities are increasingly being examined (see Maybach, 1996; Zlotkowski, 1998), these overseas capacity-building projects as forms of ISL are often rarely problematized in terms of their pedagogical approaches and learning outcomes. More importantly, there are many lessons to be learned about the conduct of scholarly teaching and learning within university-based, international capacity-building projects; we need to improve more than the pedagogical approaches and evaluation of participant learning outcomes. These lessons can be shared and used to contribute to the promotion of SoTL using international development projects as subjects of study.

**The Neglect of Universities in Capacity Development and the Neglect of Capacity Development in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning**

Northern university involvement in the “capacity development” of southern universities and their immediate communities has a much longer history than the emergence of capacity development or capacity-building as one of the most highly contested analytic concepts in international development discourse (Angeles and Boothroyd, 2003). It began earlier in the colonial period when colonial administrators needed to rely on academic expertise to study and “control” populations for research and social engineering. Many similar engagements in the postcolonial period following formal independence later fell within the rubric of “technology transfers” or “technical co-operation”. The use of the term “capacity development” by the 1990s represents a linguistic and operational move away from one-way “technical co-operation” between “university donors” in the north and client-beneficiaries in the south, to north-south “partnerships” for holistic, integrated and sustainable development of the capacities of institutions, organizations, beneficiaries and other agents. This operational term is a form of adjustment by donor agencies to the changing
realities, limitations and politics of development assistance in the era of increased globalization and transnational linkages. Improving development aid effectiveness means focusing on new approaches that develop the existing capacities of developing countries for institutional reforms to manage, implement, evaluate, and sustain their own long-term development. “Capacities” are not only instruments, that is, “the organizational, technical and even political skills to carry out particular functions or tasks”, such as effective teaching, service delivery or policy assessment, but also involve the ability to assume new values, roles, attitudes and responsibilities, and to respond, adapt and exert the will, cohesion, self-organization and self-discipline necessary to make progress over time (Morgan, 1999, p. 4). Capacity development therefore is about “complex learning, adaptation and organization change at the individual, group, organizational and even societal levels” (Morgan, 1997, p. 4).

Capacity-building is often used interchangeably with capacity development, but there is a clear distinction between the two. The distinction is not only a matter of semantics. Capacity development includes efforts to both transform the macro-level environment where institutions operate, and reform the meso-level of systems and structures of institutions. Capacity-building, on the other hand, takes place more at the meso (institutional) and micro (local, project) levels. Capacity-building is therefore crucial to wider capacity development because “meso-level interventions cannot remain detached from micro-level activities”). This suggests that “the true test of meso-level capacity-building is actually micro-level impact, as well as, to a certain extent, macro-level impact” (Jackson et al., 1996, pp. 48-49).

Drawing implications for innovative higher education, the utilization of scholarly approaches to teaching and learning might be conceptualized as a form of “capacity-building” at the individual and institutional levels, while the widespread production and dissemination of scholarship of teaching and learning might have greater potential to contribute to wider “capacity development” of universities and their engagement in international development work.

Capacity development arises from the replication and scaling-up of capacity-building. There needs to be greater synergy between micro, meso- and macro-level capacity-building activities for capacity development to succeed. Likewise, SoTL brings scholarly teaching to a higher level of rigour and engagement by its sheer multiplier effects and attempts at replication in various learning communities within and outside classroom and university settings. Herein lies the importance of community-university partnerships and the role of universities in capacity development, and the role of capacity development in both scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching. If capacity development aims to transform the functions of organization, such as the improvement of decision-making, service delivery, policy analysis and formulation, networking, strategic planning and social learning, then universities-as-organizations can no longer ignore their important contribution to community development, social learning and policy change.

Despite the obvious relevance of institutions of higher learning to capacity-development discourse, the study of universities and their involvement in community and international development rarely becomes the subject of serious examination. Interest in analysing the role of Canadian universities in international development began with Walmsley’s (1970) “ground-breaking report” (Shute, 1999) on development-related activities at 46 universities across Canada. Other works and regular surveys (AUCC, 1977, 1983, 1985, 1986; Knight, 1995, 1996) examine the integration (or not) of international
development concerns with mainstream university activities “but rarely tackle questions about the organisational capacities, resource base, and institutional commitments of Canadian universities when they engage in development work” understood as “an integrated process of sustainable poverty reduction involving empowerment, strengthening civil society and good governance, gender equity, and other broad forms of social change” (Angeles and Boothroyd, 2003).

The literature on capacity-building and development has tended to focus mainly on single unit analyses of organizational capacities, primarily government agencies and NGOs, but rarely on universities, and even more rarely on the networks or partnerships between universities, communities, governments and international development agencies. Talk about capacity-building needs and goals of community organizations and governments, or occasionally, of development agencies and universities, often tackles these institutions as separate and independent entities. However, we have not fully understood what capacity-development needs and goals must be met if the partnerships, networking and interdependence between these institutions are taken seriously. We have not also fully understood the capacity-building needs of universities, particularly in the fields of faculty and curriculum development to make them better agents of international development. We may therefore ask: What teaching and learning capacities do universities and university people need to develop so that they can better collaborate with local communities and governments as well as international development agencies to achieve long-term development goals? How can the uptake of the scholarship of teaching and learning by universities and indirectly by government ministries and international development agencies interested in the role of higher education for development goals, contribute to this new emphasis on capacity development?

The relevance of capacity-development requirements to scholarly teaching and learning is clear, and yet this element is rarely examined in the literature, given the lack of cross-fertilization of literature on SoTL, higher education studies and international development studies. As capacity development is envisioned to have greater ability to incorporate “the importance of stakeholders, participatory techniques, indigenous ownership, consensus and commitment” (Qualman and Bolger, 1996, p. 2), it has significance for long-term human resource development, particularly professional faculty development, within colleges and universities. Unlike traditional social and human resource development, capacity development includes organizational capital (i.e. what organizations can do), as well as long-term attitudinal and behavioural reorientation, and changes in values and relationships that support systemic or structural improvement with some permanence or sustainability (Morgan, 1997, p. 9; Qualman and Bolger, 1996, p. 1). Human resource development remains a critical aspect of a much larger capacity-development approach. However, for capacity development to take place in universities, human resource development must be tied strategically to the strengthening of other components, such as: 1) Functions (e.g. service delivery, policy analysis and formulation, networking, strategic planning, teaching and learning, decision-making, etc.); 2) Actors or agents, that is, individuals (e.g. university administrators, faculty members, student leaders); formal organizations (e.g. university departments and faculties; networks of university organizations); 3) Resources (e.g. human, informational, financial, technological); 4) Normative context, that is, values (e.g. gender equality, human rights, governance, democratization); organization strategies (e.g. strategic planning); policies (e.g. curricular internationalization and interdisciplinarity); and 5) Societal Context, that is, global, regional, national and subnational levels (adapted from DAC, 1995, cited in Qualman and Bolger, 1996, pp. 5-6).
From this inventory of capacity-development areas, it is easy to see how and why educators and higher education administrators must consider these for the internal capacity development of their institutions. Faculty development certificate programmes as a form of human resource development are clearly linked to universities’ key functions as learning, research and service extension institutions. Universities and colleges use public money and private resources to meet these functions adequately. Lastly, universities operate within a normative value-based context and the wider societal context that affect the mission and operations of universities. I now turn to a discussion of how we might draw lessons to be gained from both CSL and adult education literature when examining the scholarship of academic service learning.

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in ISL: Lessons from CSL and Adult Education Literature

The Canadian Association for Community Service Learning defines CSL as “a form of experiential learning that integrates service in the community with academic courses and/or extra-curricular programs”. The community becomes simultaneously the site of service and the space for hands-on learning in the course of community service. CSL as a form of experiential learning involving adult learners is more than the systematic acquisition and storage of knowledge and information. It also involves “making sense of our lives, transforming not just what we learn, but the way we learn, and it is absorbing, imagining, intuiting and learning informally with others”. Adult education sees adult learners in a holistic manner, that is, as individuals with “mind, memories, conscious and subconscious worlds, emotions, imaginations, and physical body, all of which can interact with new learning” (Merriam, 2001, p. 96).

CSL that takes place in the international context is a form of ISL incorporating adult education. In ISL, as with adult education, the learning process is as important as the context of learning in which situated learning becomes cognizant of how axes of social difference (e.g. class, gender, race, ethnicity, age, etc.), power relations and differing conceptions of knowledge and truth shape the context, process and outcomes of learning (ibid.). While there is a lot of reflection about the processes of teaching and learning that goes on within university classrooms, there is still a dearth of material that reflects on whether there is wide acceptance as well as full and effective use of teaching and learning innovations in CSL and ISL. This is because CSL and ISL practitioners tend to focus more on their practice of teaching rather than reflecting on the practice itself. And yet, CSL in international contexts offers many opportunities and promise in integrating innovative and alternative teaching and learning strategies beyond the typical lecture, chalk and talk, approach. They typically involve co-operative forms of adult learning that have positive impacts on multiple outcome areas, such as improved teaching, enhanced self-esteem of learners, harmony in the learning environment and greater interest in the subject matter. Co-operative approaches to learning can enhance strategies used in the training and learning component of ISL such as problem-based learning, classroom assessment, curriculum review and development, charrettes and on-line courses.

In CSL and ISL, teaching and learning are seen as integrated processes of “mutual learning” instead of one-way training. When CSL and ISL programmes involve research based on reflection of what goes on during the “training” or “education” component of the programmes, they are often
designed as “action research” instead of in the traditional research mode. Collaborative forms of participatory action research (PAR) in CSL may be done within institutions or the community, hence the preference for the qualifier “participatory” when community participation is an essential ingredient. PAR is also increasingly seen as an important component of capacity-building projects and programmes that promote intercultural and mutual learning. I now turn to two cases of ISL that involved north-south partnerships to illustrate some of the approaches and challenges used in enhancing the teaching and learning component of these programmes.

**Teaching and Learning in North-South University Partnerships**

Universities across Canada partner with southern universities and communities for international development projects. These projects, mainly funded by the Canadian International Development Agency and the International Development Research Centre, often involve research and teaching capacity-building components in order to serve broader goals such as poverty reduction, creating sustainable livelihoods, or accountable and participatory governance. They may be conceived as forms of ISL, the overseas counterpart of the numerous CSL programmes taking place across North American universities. These university-university and university-community partnerships are also new forms of transnational co-operation. And when they involve collaboration between researchers and teachers in the north and in the south, they are likely to involve capacity-building in teaching, research and community service functions of academic institutions. Often, the partners and participants are adult members, such as faculty members, staff and students of universities and colleges. In some cases, they involve adult participants from the government and private sectors, and from non-profit, non-governmental organizations.

In this section, I use two cases of overseas capacity-building projects based at UBC’s Centre for Human Settlements to illustrate their teaching and learning components. One is the case of the “Localized Poverty Reduction in Vietnam” (LPRV) project, a capacity-building project in participatory project planning and policy assessment for poverty reduction. The LPRV project started in late 1998 and continued until 2003. UBC worked in close collaboration with Hanoi’s National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities (NCSSH) and Quebec’s Laval University in the institutional strengthening of five Vietnamese universities: Thai Nguyen University, Vinh University, Hue University, Dalat University and Ho Chi Minh National University of the Social Sciences (i.e. the north-south connection). The main objective of the LPRV project was to assist Vietnamese partner institutions in developing their human resources, library collection, electronic networks and course offerings so that they could work more effectively with local communities (i.e. the university-community connection) in doing participatory planning and policy impact assessment to help reduce poverty. The strategy was to develop centres for poverty reduction (CPR) in each of the five Vietnamese partner universities, link them with the NCSSH into a mutual learning network, and implement learning-by-doing commune-level projects through the CPRs in collaboration with local officials and community members. The project provided lessons for universities, governments and community associations about the effectiveness of various participatory approaches and methods for ensuring that women, ethnic minorities and the poor were meaningfully included in participatory planning, local project development and implementation, and institution building. The LPRV teaching and learning processes included seminars and training workshops based on mutual learning principles; curriculum review and development; production of course materials
such as manuals, handbooks and sample course outlines; policy dialogues between government, academics and community residents; field research; and learning-by-doing field projects.

The other is the case of the "Community-based Watershed Management" (CBWM) project, a capacity-building project to promote healthy and sustainable watershed management practices in the favela neighbourhoods of a city of some 650,000 people in the São Paulo metropolitan area. The main objective of the CBWM project was to make watershed management in Santo André more effective, adaptive, participatory and responsive to the needs of informal settlements that were growing in the watershed area of Santo André and neighbouring municipalities. Various planning and collaborative learning methods were implemented to address the problems in environmentally sensitive areas. These included participatory mapping, zoning, impact assessment, settlement design, conflict management, and community economic development workshops, neighbourhood upgrading pilot projects, inclusive planning strategies to incorporate youth and women living in informal settlements, and multi-stakeholder workshops, some of which were institutionalized in the ongoing work of the municipality and its agencies.

While there are fundamental differences between the two projects in terms of partnership structure, management approach and institutional composition, they share some similar features in terms of creating networks that encourage local flexibility, creativity, mutual learning and responsibility. Both projects focused on building participative and comprehensive problem-solving capacity in order to build the capacity of individuals (professors, researchers, students, planners, officials, community leaders, etc.) through skill and knowledge enhancement, and of institutions (universities, research centres, local governments or community-based organizations) through organizational development. Both projects also emphasized learning about development work in three ways: 1) learning by the overseas partners about the specific planning tools (or “technologies”, in the language of the Brazilian project) such as gender analysis, participatory action research, environmental sensitivity analysis, conflict management), through training workshops and other delivery mechanisms; 2) mutual learning between Canadians and their overseas partners such as innovations in democratizing local governance of cities, or government roles in poverty reduction; and 3) mutual learning through involvement in complex development problems by creating new knowledge through continuous reflection and joint action (Angeles and Boothroyd, 2003).

Reflecting on the LPRV and CBWM projects, Angeles and Boothroyd (2003) assert that:

*At another level, both projects placed emphasis not just on learning about development work but also on strengthening ongoing learning capacities in individuals (e.g., capacity to reflect on and learn from pilot projects) and institutions (e.g., capacity to gain feedback from many perspectives and to adapt management principles and programs in response). There was increasing realisation on the part of active participants that enhanced learning capacity was the most critical outcome to strive for. It was not so important that specific skills be acquired as a result of our projects, but that participants become interested in life-long learning about tools they could invent, adapt and apply to help people solve complex social, economic and environmental problems. It was … more important for a university to commit to continuously and creatively develop its capacity to apply teaching resources to community work, or for a local government to put in place processes for helping staff to learn how to be good listeners and deal sensitively with cultural barriers to inclusive participation.*
The approaches used in the LPRV and CBWM projects as forms of ISL within capacity-building projects present major challenges in further promoting scholarly approaches to teaching and learning. The first challenge is the need for continuous and effective assessment of the teaching and learning that occur within capacity-building projects in order to use the assessment results to improve educational performance. Systematic measurements of specific student/participant learning outcomes are important in providing feedback to project implementers as to how specific training workshops, classroom-delivered courses, on-line courses, manuals and handbooks are contributing to the capacity-building and other goals of the project. Measuring specific student/participant learning outcomes that encompass a wide range of student abilities and attributes can be further undertaken by dividing outcomes into cognitive outcomes that include demonstrable knowledge and skills acquired by the participants; behavioural outcomes that include demonstrable behavioural changes; and affective outcomes that focus on values, self-concept, world view and attitudinal shifts. While both the LPRV and CBWM projects have used assessment tools to evaluate specific learning activities, the results and feedback from these exercises could have been more systematically collected and analysed not only to measure specific student/participant learning outcomes but also to link these outcomes to transformative goals of university partners and government agencies involved. For example, the training of university professors and researchers in the methods and tools of CSL, community-based research and development work could have been more adequately assessed in terms of the cognitive, behavioural and attitudinal outcomes that were generated by their involvement in the LPRV project.

The second challenge is the need to take advantage of the opportunity for international capacity-building or capacity-development projects such as the LPRV and CBWM projects to further contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning by producing outputs dedicated to the methodology of demonstration projects that focus on environmental management, poverty reduction, or health policy and development issues; as well as the dissemination of lessons learned and recommendations in the development of collaborative policy review, policy research networks, policy dialogues, policy direction, and policy engagement tools and processes. Both the LPRV and CBWM projects have carried out collaborative forms of policy review, policy research, policy dialogues and policy engagement, but neither project has produced any outputs exploring the processes and methods entailed in these activities. This lost opportunity is especially significant to consider, given the projects’ international contexts, use of various forms of institutional partnerships involving universities whose main mission is to engage in knowledge generation and dissemination, and their creative integration of cross-cultural comparative perspectives.

**Conclusion**

This chapter contributes to the SoTL by reflecting on the approaches to scholarly teaching in ISL within capacity-building projects that involve north-south partnerships. It also explores some of the challenges and opportunities that north-south capacity-building projects present to international audiences and stakeholders, especially universities. Although SoTL has been traditionally applied to classroom teaching and universities, the considerable teaching and learning processes within capacity-building projects, as forms of CSL and/or ISL, warrant closer attention and scrutiny. In fact, the teaching and learning that happen within these projects in particular and CSL/ISL in general are not only considerable in terms of
quantity and quality, but they also have greater relevance and significance in contributing to social change and transformative learning compared to more traditional types of classroom-based teaching. There are a number of reasons why this is so. First, the involvement of dense networks in capacity-building projects that include governments, policy bureaucracies, communities, and university teachers and researchers suggests that the type of community or international service teaching and learning in these projects are not only practical and demonstrative, but also policy-informed and publicly engaged. Second, these projects often contribute to policy uptake by governments and the setting of new research agendas within government and university-based research units. Third, as the participants in the learning activities of these projects are often professionals or professionals-in-training who see themselves as change agents, there are many immediate and future ripple or multiplier effects within universities and government units. Lastly, as the learning within these projects is cast within the frame of capacity-building or capacity-development goals, they have a strong potential to contribute to participatory and sustainable forms of human and social development. Hence, promoting SoTL principles and processes of enquiry in the conduct of university-based CSL/ISL programmes and capacity-building projects would ensure not only self-reflexive documentation of their teaching and learning processes, but also analyses of their outcomes and implications.

References


Quality Assurance of Higher Education as a Means of Capacity-building*

Introduction

For many years, and to this day, the discussion about the purposes of quality assurance (QA) centres around QA’s enhancement and accountability dimensions. When external quality assurance (EQA) emerged in Europe in the mid-1990s there were two distinct groups adhering to either one purpose or the other. Generally speaking, the first group consisted of agencies “owned” by the universities or the national rectors’ conferences which argued that EQA was for improvement purposes whereas the second group consisted mainly of agencies set up by governments and they tended to be of the view that EQA had an important accountability function. Over the years, the views have merged and there seems to be general agreement that EQA can have more than one purpose. We should never forget that QA is not a means in itself, but an end to improve quality. So there should be an inherent development dimension to QA.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the main QA processes for higher education, and the parameters for making decisions about QA for capacity-building purposes. The focus of the overview therefore is on how QA can be organized to provide support to development processes with respect to higher education. The chapter will discuss the context for EQA, the main QA approaches and principles, and the role of peers and site visits, followed by a few concluding remarks.

But before commencing the main part of the discussion, I would like to take the opportunity to briefly introduce the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), which is the network of QA agencies in the Asia-Pacific region (see www.apqn.org). It is a membership organization with 20 full members, 8 intermediate members, 5 associate members and 7 institutional members (a total of 40) plus 3 observers. The region covered by APQN includes all Pacific island nations and territories, New Zealand, Australia and Papua New Guinea; all island and mainland nations and territories of Asia, including Russia, Afghanistan, the other central Asian ‘stans and Iran, but excluding the Gulf states (which are covered by another network). Established in 2004, the main purpose of APQN is to enhance the quality of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region through strengthening the work of QA agencies and extending the co-operation between them.

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Context for EQA

QA does not function in a vacuum. It is applied in particular contexts. Below are listed some of the most important contextual parameters, important in terms of their impact on the outcome or effects of QA:

- Objectives: accountability, enhancement or both, and exchange of experience and good practice
- Ownership: government, institutional or fully independent in ownership structure
- Scope: universities, non-university higher education or both, vocational education and training, or all other sectors of education, national, regional or global
- Participation: mandatory or voluntary participation.

I will briefly comment on each. I have already indicated that the purpose of a particular QA approach is important for the effects of QA. Purposes may include the provision of accountability through the dissemination of information, often public, about higher education institutions and their work, or supporting the enhancement of the quality of higher education through the application of processes with a dual focus on strengths and weaknesses or a combination of these. Furthermore, the purpose of QA as a means of exchange of information and sharing of good practices not only through the results of the QA processes but also through the involvement of stakeholders is often neglected. I will return to that point later.

QA takes place in a political system which will have an impact on what is possible in terms of the “ownership structure”. Typically, structures of ownership rest with governments, institutions themselves or funding or professional bodies.

In terms of scope, higher education institutions function in an ever-increasing complex environment and the relevant context for QA and its coverage can happen at the global, regional or national level as well as in a particular cultural and institutional context, all of which will have an impact on the QA assurance approaches and practices.

The last point I would like to stress is that, whether participation is voluntary or mandatory, it has an impact on the overarching effects of QA.

Main QA Approaches and Principles

The definition I use for QA is:

Assurance of quality in higher education is a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfils expectations or measures up to threshold minimum requirements.

QA refers to any of the different processes and approaches used by EQA agencies, and may involve:

- evaluation: discipline, programme/qualifications, theme, institutional
- accreditation: discipline, programme/qualifications, institutional
- audit: programme, institutional, theme.
Evaluation is the process of assessing an object. Accreditation builds on an evaluation process but ends with a judgement, that is, a yes or no decision when accreditation has been achieved. Accreditation is also, in most cases, based on predefined standards. Audit, in the context of higher education, is a process for checking that procedures are in place to assure quality of the object.

What is important to emphasize in terms of the appropriate choice of QA approach is that different approaches may be relevant at different stages in different contexts. In many parts of the world, countries have gone through different life cycles. Given that many EQA systems are run in cycles with a certain duration, it is possible to consider the relevance of a certain approach at the time of the start of a new cycle or if new major political initiatives are introduced. An example of what I mean by life cycle is the situation in Europe, which has gone from evaluation to accreditation, and there is an emerging trend towards audit driven by the European standards and guidelines (ESG).

**Good Practice for EQA**

Good practice for EQA agencies is based on the following factors:

- The agency has clear objectives for its work.
- The procedures adopted by the agency are made publicly available and there are clear criteria for decision-making.
- Quality and QA are an institutional responsibility.
- There is a self-evaluation phase.
- Peer review is carried out.
- There is a final result (typically a written report).

Given that the ability of EQA agencies to support the development and building capacity of higher education institutions has been a recurrent concern for the agencies, we have, in our various regional and global groupings, been sharing experiences and views on how to be efficient and how to achieve the intended enhancement effect in higher education institutions. INQAAHE (2005) and ENQA (2005) have developed good practices or guidelines for the work of EQA agencies. Although slightly different in content, they are based on a number of common principles:

- Transparency and consistency are for the benefit of higher education institutions.
- Quality and QA are primarily institutional responsibilities and therefore internal and EQA should go hand-in-hand or at least not work against purposes.
- EQA builds on a process of self-evaluation in higher education institutions.
- There should be an element of peer review.
- There is a final result of the process.

I will elaborate on the value of the factors listed above from the perspective of their ability to build capacity or support development in the relevant context.

**Self-evaluation**

As just mentioned, it is important that the QA approach considers how the internal QA work can best be supported so that participation in an external review does not become completely separated from the quality work that takes place in the higher education institution.
There are various approaches to the provision of instructions or guidance on self-evaluation, ranging from very detailed instructions in particular on content and format, to guidance notes in the form of good practices or inspiration. There is not one approach which is the right approach.

There is often a need for more detailed instructions where QA is being introduced for the first time or where a new approach is being introduced. For accreditation systems which underpin a qualifications framework, there could be a need for more detailed and technical instructions.

Instructions have a value-function that should not be underestimated. But it is important to continuously strive for the right balance between advice/good practice and prescription so that the level of detail does not hamper reflection and innovation.

Self-evaluation is an efficient tool for internal development which many institutions, not only higher education institutions, make use of on a continuous basis. Therefore, information about how self-evaluation processes can be organized (including who can/should be involved in a self-evaluation process) can be useful. Generally speaking, depending on the scope of the QA process, the process often involves only a small group within the institution, but it could potentially involve a bigger group ensuring the involvement of the main stakeholders in embedding the quality work and thus the platform for QA more thoroughly in the institution. The need for broader involvement depends on the level of maturity of QA within the institution. Research shows that the value of self-evaluation should not be underestimated. The most often heard reply from higher education institutions on the value of EQA is that self-evaluation was very rewarding and that it started an improvement process which was then confirmed by the peer reviewers.

The scope and criteria applied to the QA approach have a considerable influence on the impact of QA’s role as a tool for development. I will outline some different approaches with respect to context, scope and criteria to emphasize the point that QA is a flexible tool for development.

**Scope and Criteria at the Global Level**

An example of QA at the global level is the Washington Accord, the purpose of which is to recognize qualifications through a process of accreditation based on graduate outcomes. Graduate outcomes cover the following areas (see www.washingtonaccord.org):

- Academic education
- Knowledge of engineering sciences
- Problem analysis
- Design/development of solutions
- Investigation
- Modern tool usage
- Individual and team work
- Communication
- The engineer society
- Ethics
- Environment and sustainability
- Project management and finance
- Lifelong learning.
The Washington Accord facilitates the mobility of students in the area of engineering. This is not entirely global in its coverage but includes countries from different parts of the world.

**Scope and Criteria at the Regional level**

An example of QA at the regional level is the ESG for internal QA within higher education institutions. The ESG have been developed at the regional level as a possible tool for higher education institutions and EQA agencies alike. The focus is on the institutions’ internal mechanisms for QA. They are also aimed at developing a minimum level of QA at the institutional level to facilitate the movement of staff and students in Europe and altogether raise the quality of higher education in Europe.

The ESG cover the areas listed below and consist of standards with guidelines that offer an interpretation of the standard:

- Policy and procedures for QA
- Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards
- Assessment of students
- QA of teaching staff
- Learning resources and student support
- Information systems
- Public information.

The ESG state that institutions should regularly publish up-to-date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they offer. In fulfilment of their public role, higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Published information might also include the views and employment destinations of past students and the profile of the current student population. This information should be accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible and should not be used simply as a marketing opportunity. The institution should verify that it meets its own expectations in respect of impartiality and objectivity.

The standards are broad in their formulation in order for them to be used in different national and institutional contexts and thus not prohibit institutional strategies and policies while still offering examples of good practice. The guidelines are formulated as options.

**Scope and Criteria at the Institutional Level**

The scope of institutional accreditation of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in the USA – one of the regional accreditors in the US – is based on five topics which reflect an understanding of a higher education institution as a place of learning, knowledge and discovery and with a particular role in society (engagement and service). This is further emphasized in the detailed criteria applied by the HLC:

- Mission and objectives
- Preparing for the future
• Student learning and effective teaching
• Acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge
• Engagement and service.

With respect to engagement and service, the organization should have the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 3.1-6).

The activities of higher education institutions are not only about providing teaching, learning and research but they have a role to play in society. This role is important for the performance of the higher education institution and needs to be considered and assessed.

**Scope and Criteria at the Programme Level**

The last example is that of programme accreditation at the national level, which includes a focus primarily on the teaching and learning process. For instance, the scope of programme validation carried out by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications concentrates on the following (see www.hkcaavq.edu.hk):

- Programme management
- Programme structure and content
- Curriculum and syllabi
- Admission
- Progression and assessment
- Teaching and learning
- Staffing
- Staff development
- Facilities and support
- Quality assurance.

The structure of the programme should be coherent and show a clear articulation path while demonstrating the currency and relevance of content. There should be appropriate duration and teaching hours in terms of the whole programme and individual subjects. There should be a clear rationale for the structure of the programme, for example between professional skills courses and theoretical and conceptual courses, and a balance between courses in subject discipline areas and courses in general education and liberal arts.

Some EQA agencies are very demanding in their request for evidence both in terms of amount and type of evidence. There is no doubt that QA processes are only credible if they are evidence-based and should not be based on hearsay, assumptions and claims by either higher education institutions or the peers. It is important to carefully consider the needs for evidence, and request what is valuable for the review but also for the development of the institutions under review. A suitable balance between what is necessary and what is interesting should be applied to ease the burden on the institution in the preparation of external reviews. Evidence can be:

- qualitative and/or quantitative
- new and/or existing
- in advance and/or on site.
Peers and Site Visits

The peers and their role are a key factor in a successful QA process that can add value to the development of the institution. The peers should always be selected carefully with a view to the purpose and focus of the review. Discipline specialists with strong academic credentials in a particular field may not always be the best peers. It depends on the purpose of the QA process and the objective of the institution. This could warrant the involvement of peers in QA more broadly, in higher education, in policy development or in assessment and curriculum design if a process is focused on outcomes and academic attainment. If the scope of the QA process broadens as we saw in the example of institutional QA, so do the requirements of peer review.

Site visits can be organized in various ways, for example, they can be focused on checking documentation or interviewing; if the latter, what types of interviews to be carried out have to be decided. It is part of the QA approaches applied by most agencies to focus on the visit for triangulation rather than as a means of discussion and dialogue.

The role of site visit is one that warrants attention in terms of striking a better balance between discussion and interrogation. In summary, peer review should consider:

- profile of peers
- size of peer panels
- division of labour of QA agency and peers
- role of site visit.

Conclusion

As previously stated, there is an inherent element of development in EQA and it is inherent in the various elements included in a QA process. But it has to be based on a “fitness-for-purpose” approach, which should be the main focus of attention of EQA agencies and higher education institutions alike.

For the QA processes to be effective in terms of development, they need to be adapted to the relevant contexts. It is important to keep in mind that QA is a tool which should be continuously developed to address the needs of the context it is used in if it is to effectively benefit all stakeholders: the higher education institutions, governments, students and the labour market.

There are a number of principles for good practice that EQA agencies can refer to and hopefully achieve better results for the benefit of higher education institutions, students and the main stakeholders, including society at large.

Last, but not least, I would like to emphasize that QA is also a flexible tool for development and its full potential can only be explored if it is used as such.

To emphasize the points made above, I would like to finish with a quote from the Quality Convergence Study carried out by a project group consisting of representatives of ENQA member agencies and conducted by six member agencies of ENQA:
The systemic approach to quality assurance also leads to a reformulation of the question about quality. Independent of its definitions (results achieved, methods used, analysis of the stages between project and result etc.), quality is the product of interaction between actors or elements in the system. It is the consequence of the functioning of the system. (Crozier, Curvale and Hénard, 2005, p. 8)

References


Chapter 10

Putting Participatory Development into Practice by Academia

Challenges and Prospects*

Introduction

Neo-liberal agendas and the competition to excel as institutions with world-class status have restructured universities to meet the demands of the rapidly globalized capitalist economy to such an extent that universities are fast forsaking their original, noble goal of producing knowledge and generating learning to foster the development of democratic humane societies to one that serves the corporate capitalist world. Various attempts have been made to address these emergent challenges and to renew the role of higher education for sustainable, human and social development. How can universities embrace their civil responsibility through their curricula and teaching-learning strategies? How can universities contribute to reducing the emergent global, national and local disparities and exclusion through their teaching and research agendas? Engagement with local communities, be it through collaborative action research, participatory research, service learning or community-based research, has proven to be an effective and challenging approach to enable universities to be socially relevant in producing “really useful” knowledge to serve the excluded two-thirds majority of the world’s population. This chapter examines some of the dilemmas, possibilities and challenges of putting participatory development (PD) into practice by academia and universities.

Section one situates the contexts and rationale for PD by outlining the current state of development (exclusion) in the world, the practice and discourse of PD and the present agenda of most universities. The main and second parts of the chapter are the author’s reflections on her engagement with PD as an academic. The final part delineates some key challenges and prospects of putting PD into practice in the milieu of universities.

The Current Configuration: The State of our World, Role of Universities and PD

The current modern capitalist economy has brought considerable benefits for many people in terms of longer life expectancy, more access to education facilities, more equality in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, class, etc., more consumerism and consumer choice, and some extension

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of human rights and political freedom. It has also brought about much disparity, destruction and exclusion of many people. Some of this destruction exists in various forms of violence, loss of cultural diversity and critical fundamental values, human/psychological insecurity, and increasing consumerism, materialism and individualism.

Evidence of worsening global inequalities and exclusion is also overwhelming. This is well illustrated in current wealth distribution, consumption patterns and non-access to basic amenities. Two hundred and twenty-five of the richest people in the world have a combined wealth of more than $1 trillion, equal to the annual income of the poorest 47% of the earth’s population (some 2.5 billion people). Similar patterns are observed in the gross domestic product of different countries. The gross domestic product of the poorest 48 nations (i.e. a quarter of the world’s countries) is less than the wealth of the world’s three richest people combined (Ramonet, 1999, cited in Leal, 2006a, p. 11).

Consumption has increased six-fold in the last twenty years and doubled in the last ten. Yet one billion people have been left out of the consumption boom of the past 20 years. Over 20% of the world’s population accounts for 86% of global consumption (UNDP, 1998). People in Europe and North America spend $37 billion a year on pet food, perfumes and cosmetics. This is enough to provide basic education, water and sanitation, as well as basic health and nutrition to all those who are now deprived of these needs, and still leave $9 billion. Among 4.4 billion people in developing countries, almost three in every five lack basic sanitation, a third have no safe drinking water, a quarter have inadequate housing, and a fifth are undernourished (HDR, cited in Huckle, 2002). Nearly a billion people entered the twenty-first century unable to read a book or sign their names (UNICEF, 1999).

Indeed, inequality, poverty, insecurity and exclusion are pervasive despite the abundance and prosperity amongst some of us. Exclusion is not just a lack of material resources. It is “the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially from any of the social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society” (Walker and Walker, 1997, p. 8). People are excluded not only from access to education, health, work or resources like land, but from life itself. The forces of economic, social and political control over the majority world by forces of global capital have generated and continue to evolve new forms of exclusion and disempowerment.

Are we addressing these concerns in universities? How can these understandings of the state of the world be taken on board in the teaching and learning of the current and next generations? How can we foster an understanding and ownership of this shared current state of the world? How can we nurture awareness and commitment among the young and not so young, teachers and students to be personally and collectively engaged for a sustainable now and future? The current state of university education is now reviewed briefly to situate the role of universities.

Current Role of Universities and University Education

Universities are known and expected to fulfil their two historical core functions of teaching and research directed at the production and dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of society and its continuing development. However, the extensive spread of global capitalism has redesigned
these agendas and traditional functions. Market-driven aims increasingly dominate the thrust of universities throughout much of the world. The focus has shifted to generating knowledge and labour for the capital enterprise instead of developing the capacities of people most in need – especially the poor, deprived and excluded. Competition for world-class recognition has propelled universities into techno-bureaucratic institutions as they vie for measurable accomplishments and visibility instead of developing partnerships for people-centred development.

Together with government policies, neo-liberal agendas have constricted the role of universities. As universities are rapidly being restructured and corporatized to meet the demands of the rapidly growing global economy, the role and value of universities, hence recognition, hinge on their contribution to the global market. Thus teaching and research agendas are increasingly determined if not dictated by industry, or where the money lies. Recent trends, especially in developing countries, suggest the emergence of an entrepreneurial model of academic research. In fact, this model is being strongly advocated as “good practice”, as a way of fostering entrepreneurship among university researchers to attract industrial funding. Faculty members are encouraged and rewarded to undertake consultancies with the business sector. Offices are even established in universities to boost university-industry collaboration.

As universities conformed to market demands, specialization and up-scaling of certain disciplines have occurred, for example, business studies, engineering and technology, including ICT departments, have been given prominence while the humanities and social sciences have been put on the back burner. This further accentuates the absence of concern for the social-political aspects of development agendas and disregards the university’s social and democratizing role in society.

The institutional ethos and current system of academic assessment and rewards in universities are far from being conducive. As lecturers pursue fast-track promotion up the academic ladder, few engage with communities as collaborators or allies. If they do, they come in as disengaged experts extracting information or informing communities of the seriousness of their problems or providing solutions from the ivory tower, without committing to how they can become part of the solution. Engaging with communities to address their problems and needs will inevitably take much more time, energy and creativity than just publishing academic research, thus affecting their measurable output in internationally referred journals. Indeed, the role of academia either as organic intellectuals at the local level or as public intellectuals in society has become irrelevant and unimportant to academia as universities strive for world-class status.

Renewing, Re-visioning the Role of Universities

In the mindless pursuit of world-class status, are we teaching for credentials, inculcating market-driven competencies to serve capital and the already privileged, or are we enabling students to understand the realities of our times, promoting critical and futures thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills? Are universities contributing to the widening or narrowing of the emergent global, national and local disparities and exclusion through their teaching and research agendas? What knowledge is being produced, by whom and for whose benefit? Are universities producing really useful knowledge for public consumption and for the public good?
Indeed, universities are at an important crossroad. They have the critical mass for making the potential difference to critical global needs with a student population of 200 million by 2030. While universities have to produce graduates who have skills to operate effectively in a globally competitive environment, it is also widely recognized that their fundamental challenge is to provide an ethical knowledge base responsive to societal needs, and contribute to the common wealth (not just financial or economic wealth) and well-being of its entire people. We need to take stock of the role of universities and re-vision what is being taught, how our teaching and learning approaches have produced non-thinking, non-critical graduates who are only good at following instructions mechanically. If universities are to engage responsibly and thrive within contemporary realities, a basic shift needs to be made from relying exclusively on neutral curriculum content and approaches designed to develop market-oriented competencies and values of competition and power, to developing an educational practice that exemplifies and engenders the valorization of commitment, compassion, responsibility and service.

Re-visioning the role of universities, the way knowledge is being produced, including a review of what knowledge is essential in building what kind of society and how universities define their role in this regard, is indeed necessary and critical if universities are to be of any relevance to society. Engaging in the teaching and practice of PD can help universities return to their humanistic roots and open up “spaces of hope”. Engaging in PD will help restore universities as civil and innovative spaces where students may develop as discerning citizens who can reflect on and interact with their world with integrity, understanding and committed action. Indeed, PD in its various forms, if taught and practised critically and reflexively, can offer universities the opportunity to restore their socially relevant role in society. Outstanding examples of these efforts already exist. For example, the Talloires Network aims to build a global movement of engaged universities. The Talloires Declaration on the Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education (2005) asserts that institutions of higher education “do not exist in isolation from society, nor from the communities in which (they) are located. Instead, (they) carry a unique obligation to listen, understand, and contribute to social transformation and development”. Likewise, the Global Alliance on Community-engaged Research (2008) calls for developing new generations of community-engaged scholars and community-based researchers to support communities and groups to co-create healthier societies and environment.

The discourse and practice of PD is now reviewed briefly to problematize PD.

**Practice and Discourse of PD**

PD is not a recent phenomenon. Aspects of PD have blossomed in many places. For example, democratic forms of decision-making have existed in most indigenous cultures, political dissent movements and even religious communities. Participatory principles were central to the international co-operative movement, many nationalist and some socialist movements. Indeed, the practice and call for PD is not new, though its accepted place in higher education is still relatively rare and even diminishing as values and implications of PD practice conflict with the dominant institutional ethos, practices and priorities of universities in their pursuit of competitive excellence, as world-class universities.
PD has been promoted in various forms and for various reasons depending on the underlying ideology adopted. It ranges from the tokenistic focus on (superficial) participation of beneficiaries to using participation for a more transformative agenda for the goals of justice, agency, representation or redistribution.

In the third world, PD has emerged as a grassroots approach to facilitate bottom-up mobilization for social transformation and emancipation of the most marginalized classes, commonly referred to as community organizing or organizing for people's power (Maglaya, 1978; Dionisio, 1985). This approach rejects positivist social science and its premise of neutrality. Instead, it seeks to build really useful knowledge (power and empowerment) with disenfranchised communities by combining social investigation, education and political action (Hall, 1975; Tandon, 1981), which is also referred to as participatory research. The fundamental task is to facilitate disenfranchised groups to be “active subjects of knowledge creation and action” through the praxis of collective action and reflection, creating countervailing political power (Goutlet, 1989). PD practised in these situations is a bottom-up, people-centred approach. It aims at developing the capabilities and full potential of people at the grassroots, especially the poor and excluded (women, men and the transgendered), to engender their participation, and collective analysis of the structural causes to define what should be done to transform the unjust situation. PD is pursued deliberately as an alternative approach to countervail the mainstream capitalist model of economic growth and capital accumulation that is highly exclusive and unsustainable. As an approach to transformative change, it was practised to shift power structures towards attaining justice, equity, peace and sustainability. Underpinning PD is the fundamental issue of power, recognized as inevitably influenced by the dynamics of the global capitalist system. PD requires and is grounded on a commitment to a process of personal and social-structural change, not just incremental improvement! Thus the ability of PD practitioners (and researchers) to comprehend and take on board the capital-based power dynamics in their praxis is essential (Leal, 2006a and 2006b).

In the 1970s and 1980s, PD became prominent as a response to the failure of many expensive, large-scale, top-down development projects. In fact, the remedy proposed and advocated by international development aid agencies was to mainstream PD. This emphasis on PD was also mooted in the 1980s to cut back state expenditure and to direct greater attention to NGOs as providers of services previously provided by the state. By the end of the 1980s, PD had become a common slogan for a "new" type of development, heavily promoted by international donor agencies from the north, focusing on enlisting beneficiaries' participation, without problematizing the complexities of the face value of participation, not to mention the politics of and in participation. “Participation in development” became perceived as a northern innovation and northern agenda, despite the fact that countries in the south were already organizing communities and oppressed groups to build people's organizations and people's power, with the focus on collectivity, voice and agency as the primary goals to resist exploitation and oppression.

As the meaning of PD diversified, a multiplicity of practices evolved, as illustrated in the plethora of manuals on techniques for participation (e.g. Brock and Petit, 2007; Cornwall and Pratt, 2002; World Bank, 1996) and the various approaches to attain participation for development. Participatory methods became synonymous with PD and participation became the orthodoxy of development. Various hybrids of PD have developed over the past three decades: PRA (participatory rural appraisal), PLA (participatory learning and action), PR (participatory research), PAR (participatory research)
action research), VIPP (visualization in participatory programmes, complementary approach to PLA), Reflect (tool for group work to develop literacy and critical reflection), ILS (designed to provide information for programme evaluation and to facilitate community members to reflect on and change their lives) and PPA (participatory poverty assessments). Thus, by the end of the (last) century the discourse on PD has shifted from the margin to the mainstream to refer to a “depoliticized methodological package” (Leal, 2006b, p. 15) used for the implementation of development projects and government programmes where the rhetoric of participation is commonly associated with efficiency, cost effectiveness, accountability and sustainability (Tikare et al., 2002). This is not to discredit the value of this work as some are truly innovative approaches to generate effective participatory methods to address new emergent challenges.

The proliferation of these participatory methods has elicited a series of critiques on both the practice and theoretical underpinnings, culminating in Cooke and Kothari’s (2001) edited volume Participation: The New Tyranny? The most significant set of critiques raised in this compilation is the preoccupation of PD with the local and methodological dimensions, to the extent of disregarding structural aspects which serve to reproduce inequality, social injustice and exclusion. While PD may have brought real benefits to some local communities, it has led to an obsession with, and romanticization of, a homogenous local process, drawing attention away from the need for large-scale structural change. Unequal power relations within the local, and extra-local, processes are ignored. Although these participatory practices may enable more people to participate, they also reproduce and reinforce the unequal power relations. They do not aim to change or transform the institutions and structures of society that have caused those unequal, disempowering conditions of mal-development or under-development.

Despite the rhetoric of participation and community involvement of all, the very projects and processes that appear so inclusive and transformative often turn out to be supportive of a status quo that is highly inequitable, especially for women. As a conceptual and development framework, PD appears to hold promise for addressing issues of gendered power, agency and representation, yet its language and practice often obscure women’s worlds, needs and contribution to development, making equitable PD an illusive goal (Guijit and Shah, 1998). Participatory processes, even those initiated from the bottom up, are not necessarily egalitarian or inclusive. Grassroots or people’s movements frequently exclude or marginalize the very poor amongst the poor who are not only women but members of other marginalized groups like the physically challenged; immigrants, refugees, etc. are left out all the time.

Development workers or change agents from outside further reinforce existing inequalities because of their ignorance of local inequalities and/or their dependence on these power structures to gain acceptance and access. Their cultural insensitivities and preoccupation to enlist community participation blind their attention to gender relations and other existing forms of power relations. In fact, it has been recognized that the malleability of participation methods has made it possible for PD practitioners to dominate and even manipulate the voices of the poor and marginalized. Indeed, the emphasis on participation has masked processes in which participation has become extremely superficial and/or unequal and/or manipulated in supporting the interests of the development enterprise.
Many of the theoretical critiques of PD have their roots in debates about the nature of democracy/governance and the role of citizens, civil society and government. Amongst these critiques is the emphasis that people’s participation cannot be substituted for pro-poor policies to address poverty, inequality and exclusion. PD thinking and practice rarely employ adequate theoretical analyses of capitalism/neo-capitalism, the role of structure, agency, knowledge and power in social change. A fundamental deficit with mainstream discourse and practice of PD is its failure to engage with issues of power (including gendered power) and politics. In short, what began as a political issue in PD was translated into a technical problem by development enterprise, submerging the more radical, transformatory dimensions of participatory practice (Cornwall, 2002; Tandon, 2002).

**Reclaiming and Repoliticizing PD**

From the late 1990s, a growing awareness of the limited scope of liberal PD led to a shift in the mainstream discourse of PD to embrace citizens’ engagement to influence political processes. The recognition of the need for active citizenship to engage with state institutions for good governance (Cornwall, 2002; Gaventa, 2002) was promoted to bring back the political dimensions and extra-local processes underpinning PD.

In the current global contexts of pervasive exclusion, poverty and inequities amid plenty and prosperity, PD must be reconceptualized and re-imagined not as superficial beneficiaries’ (unproblematized) participation, but as popular political struggles (of women, men, the transgendered and children) aimed at reversing the power (including gender) relations and hegemonic control of people’s lives in their various quotidian spaces. There is an imperative to return to emancipatory principles that participation pioneers such as Freire (1973) and Fals Borda (1998) advocated. PD needs to be redefined, repoliticized and rescaled beyond the local and men’s definitions, and be part of the struggle to reclaim participation not as a placatory gift from the powerful but as a genuine shift in the social and power structures of capitalist society (Buhler, 2002) to address issues of power (gendered power), difference, voice, agency, rights and integrity.

Hickey and Mohan (2005) have raised the danger of returning to the so-called “radical golden age” of participation, highlighting internal deficiencies of the approach. These cautions are valid and must be taken on board for PD to be of relevance and value in universities. We therefore have to recognize that the underlying principle of these renewed approaches to participation is centred on the struggle for deep social transformation which is something quite different from liberal institutional reform or development as incremental improvement, or accepting a technocratic solution to a political problem. As well, we have to recognize that all social practices are gendered, historical and contextual and must be adapted to the existing social and political conditions as well as contextualized in their respective place and time.

Reclaiming and repoliticizing PD means relocating participatory action in broader political struggles (of and by women and men) for social transformation, with a strong social movement base rather than returning to a golden past. As Leal (2006b, p. 16) has asserted, “The hope is for the recovery of the foundational principles and politics of participation in order to construct a new, better and more sustainable future”. This would require a methodology and pedagogy that can engage academia in committed partnership with the diverse poor, marginalized and excluded, rather than acting as professional experts with social subjects. It would require going beyond short-term
projects to a sustained collective endeavour of imagining and constructing new forms of a “good society” (Knight et al., 2002) that will help transform the existing – alienating – social, political and economic order. This calls for a renewed praxis in PD that helps us to learn to transform and transform to learn (Leal, 2006b; Chan, 2007), paralleled by continuing analyses and theorization from local to macro power dynamics grounded on understandings of capitalist social relations and transformative approaches to creating constructive sustainable changes for a good society that is good for the currently excluded two-thirds majority as well.

Engaging in PD: A Reflective Journey

To concretize the possibilities and challenges in putting PD into practice, I will refer to my experience of engagement in PD. I would like to emphasize that this is not a story to illustrate success. Rather, it is to discern insights, contradictions and challenges so as to elucidate the possible prospects.

I first stumbled into the realm of PD while working in an internationally funded project for women workers in the newly established free trade zones in Penang, some thirty years ago. I was then a very naive but committed fresh graduate in search of relevance and a meaningful existence, wanting to make a difference to the lives of the poor and marginalized and to bring change to the world of injustice, to ameliorate people’s sufferings. I have personally experienced miseries through growing up poor in a Chinese immigrant family, where I could not understand why my mother, who worked so hard as a domestic servant, was constantly berated, reprimanded and shamed by my grandmother for producing seven daughters, and up to the age of eighty-five my mother still believed that she was an unfulfilled woman who failed because she was not able to produce a son!

At the initial phase of the project, I was oriented to address the needs and problems of women workers as identified by the sponsors of the project who had undertaken a participatory consultative process to incorporate the voices of the different stakeholders but unfortunately the most important group, the “beneficiaries” of the project, were excluded. I had no prior knowledge or training in PD despite a degree in social sciences, majoring in sociology. However, immersion with the women workers, listening to them with my heart and head, and struggling against top-down decisions of the project’s management committee and the project’s three consultants amongst a working team of four staff members, soon exposed me to the meaning (contradictions) and politics of participation: sponsors’ and funders’ agendas vs the needs of the women workers. Working with the women or for them? Implementing projects or building the women’s capacities?

Fighting against top-down decisions to provide organized services in favour of creating spaces to address the women’s unarticulated needs, silences and passivity and witnessing how this approach conflicted with the seemingly good intentions but patronizing stance of those in power – even in planned and intended PD endeavours – was a battle in itself. In retrospect, listening intently to what was not said (but expressed loudly in the silences of the women), I also realized that spaces for participation and participatory methods alone are not sufficient if repressed silences are not unearthed and taken on board. Voice, agency and representation are critical in reclaiming rights and building capacity to act against exploitation and oppression as well as in reclaiming self-dignity and self-worth – all fundamental to the goals of PD. But empowerment and working for social change need to move into collective organizing to resist, as well as to build, viable alternatives. Is this PD as well?
Gender is only one of the multiple intersectional forms of domination and oppression. Even among the same ethnicity and class, many other diverse elements divide a seemingly homogenous group of women. Indeed, to foster participation of those who have been excluded in some dimensions of their lives for so long can be problematic if we do not recognize they are diverse survivors and not necessarily victims all the time. Issues of control and power relations among and between the various stakeholders in PD projects are very contentious. Whose voice gets heard and acted upon in PD? As PD practitioners, how do we struggle to bring the agenda of the group we are working with to the forefront without sidelining other oppressed groups? The issues highlighted so far are about the challenges in putting PD into practice in the field.

Putting PD into practice as an academic brings forth another set of challenges, especially when the agenda of PD is not that of the university’s, or where the outcome of genuine PD is threatening to the status quo and considered as antithetical to the university’s mission.

When the project ended after its two years’ funding, I joined the university as a social work lecturer with the hope that I could integrate this work into the social work curriculum. In fact, this practical experience was one of the key factors favouring my recruitment into the university at that time with the then dean of the school. Meanwhile, further funds were sought to continue the work and when the funds came through for another two years, I was able to secure the university’s sponsorship for the project’s continuation. This arrangement came directly under the office of the academic deputy vice-chancellor, who recognized the relevance and potential contribution of this project to the social work programme. Around the same time, research collaboration with the University of British Columbia, the Universiti Sains Malaysia and the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), initiated by the academic deputy vice-chancellor, gave the project further legitimacy as the work was documented as an example of participatory urban services, and later even published by IDRC as a collection on participatory urban services in Asia (Yeung and McGee, 1986).

Inspired by the philosophy and principles of participatory research and Freire’s writings, the project developed into a workers’ centre, whereby a core group of workers learned to take collective responsibility – without funding or staffing – as a collective self-help group to nurture the development of a women workers’ organization. The centre also became deeply engaged in organizing against retrenchment and plant closures during the global recession of the 1980s.

Change of personnel in the university affected the availability of the project’s continued endorsement. As this was a rather unusual partnership and since it was not institutionalized, the departure of the academic deputy vice-chancellor also meant there was no longer protection and legitimization from the university. In fact, the work was considered antithetical to the university’s mission and conflicted with its legislative framework. Shortly after the departure of the supportive deputy vice-chancellor (academic), I was recommended to be terminated when I submitted my application for tenure. The reason being that, in the words of the then vice-chancellor, I was doing activist work, not academic work despite my argument that I could not be engaged in armchair social work teaching, and that social work for social change is as legitimate, if not more urgently needed, as band-aid, status quo social work. The vice-chancellor could not comprehend the necessity or relevance of engaged scholarship. Instead, I was positioned as being anti-government.

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18 The academic deputy vice-chancellor was the dean who first recruited me into the School of Social Sciences.
Fighting against the recommendation of dismissal and suffering the shame of not having tenure approved, as though one had been negligent in one’s responsibilities, were rather shattering and demoralizing. The biggest challenge for me was not about not getting recognition from the university. It was finding the strength and resilience to learn how to survive and continue doing what the university prohibited, but what every organic intellectual should be doing. I learned how genuine PD will ultimately conflict with status quo individuals and institutions, inside or outside the university, and found the courage to continue and not get co-opted or withdrawn, or become cynical in the process.

The biggest force to reckon with was the state police and a litany of restrictive legislation undermining people’s participation and academic freedom. In countries like Bolivia, there is a law on popular participation that empowers registered community-based organizations’ participation. Instead, in Malaysia, participation is controlled nationwide, inside and outside universities, through a diverse set of legislation like the Universities and University Colleges Act, the Internal Security Act, the Societies Act, the Public Assembly Act, etc.

Despite the threat of dismissal, repeated harassment and intimidation, the limited flexibility available in the way lecturers are given some autonomy to design the courses they teach and how they can engage students’ learning provided some space to bring the principles and agenda of PD into the classroom. This period of involvement taught me two key elements to bring to my teaching: (i) relevant content knowledge from various disciplines that go beyond textbook knowledge, and the importance of, and knowing, how to elicit and affirm perspectives and knowledge of the people we are working with; and (ii) the use of participatory training especially popular education and experiential-based participatory learning including spaces for reflection and reflexivity.

Reflecting on, and learning from, this experience has given me insights and knowledge to develop appropriate courses for the social work programme. The industrial social work course was designed to embrace perspectives of disenfranchised groups to include topics like workers’ participation, labour organizing and the politics of social services. The community work course was based on theoretical understandings and practice of PD whereby the goal of building people’s power and people’s organizations was highlighted. The social work research course was redesigned to incorporate participatory feminist research. The workers’ centre was used as a venue for field placement to expose students to the movement of social work. All these efforts were not without problems. Colleagues with conventional degrees in social work felt threatened and could not accept the multi/transdisciplinary approach as professional social work. Teaching students to draw on people’s knowledge and from different disciplines was a big threat to colleagues who wanted to preserve the conventional elitist knowledge base of “technicist” professional social work.

Later, I was also able to use my PhD research to evaluate this piece of work, including the use of participatory research to investigate women’s silences further. The research enabled me to theorize on women’s experiences of emotional subordination, silences, subjectivities and agency, and then bring these insights back to grassroots work and, to a limited extent, to social work teaching, completing the cycle of generating knowledge to deepen the praxis in PD.

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19 I was removed literally from teaching social work subjects as colleagues with social work degrees decided that only those with a social work degree were qualified to teach students majoring in social work!
Putting Ourselves into Practice: Challenges and Prospects

Universities as sites of PD are a contradiction in terms given the fact that most universities are non-participatory institutions with rigid power hierarchies and a bureaucratic ethos. PD can be threatening to the status quo of universities that are not receptive to democratic participation. Yet universities as centres of knowledge creation are well placed to play a more active role as agents and partners in PD through their regular core business of teaching, research and community service, especially in service learning programmes.

Indeed, there are many challenges in universities putting PD into practice. These challenges are both internal and external to the university, and range from issues of shortage of finances to lack of human resources, but most critical is the lack of political will and a vision that does not include the aspirations of the excluded two-thirds majority.

One of the biggest challenges is the lack of enabling environments in the university, non-acceptance and non-recognition or even prohibiting transformative PD efforts as integral to the work of academia. Non-conducive academic assessment, prioritization of research agendas and practices that are predominantly market-oriented, non-recognition of alternative paradigms of knowledge production even in practice-oriented disciplines, the kind of programmes and courses offered, and didactic, one-way teaching-learning approaches are concrete examples of the non-conducive university environment and practices. In some situations, not only is there a lack of institutional support, but there is also legislative restrictions on academic freedom of speech, which discourage or deter action and engagement. In some countries like Malaysia, universities are government institutions which carry out active surveillance of students and academics, imposing stringent punitive measures to make sure they toe the line. However, initiatives from many parts of the world are demonstrating that universities do not only have a role to play in fostering democratic social and political changes, they also have the potential and obligation to do so, and that it is possible to undertake these functions which will also enhance the image and performance of the university.

The next challenge is about continuity and sustained involvement. Because of the absence of systematic support from the university and even non-recognition in some situations, at best most efforts of PD sponsored by universities exist on the margin. Thus, PD efforts are short-lived and seldom extend beyond the funding or project cycle and, if they do, the work is often disrupted while waiting for new funds to arrive. For PD to really take effect with visible results, six months or even one year is insufficient time for communities to experience the benefit and lessons to be drawn. This is why in some university-sponsored projects, it is the university and students who are the beneficiaries while the communities feel they have been used. PD efforts that are not sustained over a sufficient length of time, extending through a number of years, can become a major disruption to people on the ground. How can we institutionalize and mainstream PD efforts so that support from universities can ensure their continuity?

There is a serious shortage of a critical mass of university educators who are equipped with the appropriate capacities, skills, passion and commitment for PD practice. Most university lecturers originate from rather comfortable middle-class backgrounds preoccupied with the pursuit of the 3Cs (credit card, car, condominium) in their lives rather than spending time and energy with communities that they think they cannot benefit from. Most of them are not interested nor do they have the orientation or desire to work for social change, except for their own betterment.
A PD world view challenges the contemporary models and practice of university education from “teaching for credentials” to “education for social change”. This would have implications for the way we research, design and develop curriculum, as well as the way we embrace and integrate multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in our teaching and learning as we educate and become educated. How can universities address education and learning that are relevant for sustaining life? How can university education become transformed to include learning for transformation and transforming to learn? How can university education play a role in embracing learning for active citizenship? How can compassion and passion be nurtured so that students and lecturers develop a caring ethic and lifelong liberatory practice?

The challenges outlined above provide potential prospects for us to collectively mobilize our resources and energies to change the way things are currently in universities. Indeed it is a time for change. The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development will give us a strong legitimate base to leverage on. But to do this more effectively, we need to strategize collectively to delineate the points of intervention and appropriate forms of action. To do this we need human resources – most important of all the resource of passion and commitment and the will among ourselves to be dedicated to this task.

To enhance and strengthen the practice of PD in universities, I offer some proposals below. We need to find ways to:

- delineate a conceptual and practice framework for PD engagement and an appropriate transdisciplinary curriculum grounded on integrating the various disciplines and pulling together the various appropriate teaching and learning approaches and pedagogies. Popular education as a course and as a pedagogical methodology are very appropriate, especially in applied/professional programmes

- conduct participatory training … capacity-building for university educators in PD. Some intensive short courses will be helpful starters

- create appropriate spaces and methodologies for those involved to reflect on their work and to develop knowledge for our practice from knowledge, from practice, so that knowledge-in-action can be generated for knowledge-for-action, to further our praxis in PD as well as to build up the practice knowledge base of PD

- explore ways to bring back passion and dedication to the classroom and to professional training

- promote dedication and professions that are pro-poor and people oriented

- introduce or strengthen service learning with a strong component on reflective learning and reflexivity – as immersion avenues to orientate students’ and staff’s heads and hearts and hands

- conduct participatory advocacy research to lobby and build strategic alliances with potential organizations like professional associations and other civil society organizations to explore collaborative ways to pursue the agenda

- reaffirm and popularize the value, status and role of local and public intellectuals or engaged/activist academia
• lobby for a change in universities' institutional practices – introduce changes, no matter how small, to the university system of academic assessment to incorporate the labour and love for engaged action by academics

• reframe the notion of world-class university to include criteria of academic engagement and service and actively promote a public discourse on this by forming alliances with regional/international organizations.

Conclusion

Putting PD into practice is putting ourselves into practice. As university educators and researchers we need more than conviction. We need insubordination, love and courage to pursue PD that is progressive in the university. This means teaching, researching and living with integrity, humility and commitment. We need to reinvent and sustain our vision of the world – how we want it by working for it. Challenges we will definitely encounter. It is only when we reframe these challenges into prospective strategic interventions, collectively and collaboratively, will we be able to move forward.

Indeed, putting PD into practice is a necessity as much as a possibility. It is time that universities engage in and help construct a new narrative of the world. I am hopeful that the various efforts to re-vision the role of higher education will move us forward with a renewed way of challenging and engaging higher education, in particular in teaching and practicing social sciences. The future is in our hands. Let us walk the talk.

References


Closing Address*

Four days ago, at the City Hall in Oslo, a Nobel Prize was awarded to Al Gore. As expected, he once again voiced his inconvenient truth, “The world has a fever,” he said, “and unless we do something about it, the fever will become worse, and the planet will be critically ill”. Two days ago, here in Bangkok, at the Raja Roy Singh lecture, we were warned by President Stephen Toope, UBC President, that the time for debate on sustainability is running out, and urgent action is needed. In the first plenary of the conference, Peter Taylor, using Thomas Paine, put it even more forcefully, and I quote, “I believe, absolutely, that if my own children and the generations beyond theirs are to experience an existence that is in harmony with all the world’s inhabitants then we need to act now … we need to do this in our own day, and not ask those who come after us to carry the burden we leave for them”.

I have been asked to share with you my summary and my reflections on what has transpired before us over the last three days. But before I do that, I thought I should once again sound the clarion call emphasizing the importance of our conference theme, the link between our work in universities and sustainable development; nothing could be more urgent, nothing could be more essential. I congratulate APEID and the organizers of this conference for bringing such a vital matter into sharp focus and for bringing together such a formidable gathering of experts, experience and collective wisdom from all over the university community of Asia.

There is another thing for which I would like to congratulate the conference organizers, and that is for the clarity and elegance of the conference structure itself. APEID seems to get better at these conferences every year. We had three days, with two plenary sessions and two concurrent sessions each day. True, there was such a wealth of ideas and insights that it has become quite impossible for me to summarize or do justice to all of them: 21 main speakers and panellists in plenaries and some 162 presentations in the concurrent sessions, not including stimulating questions and discussions from more than 300 of you from the floor and in breakout sessions. In any case, the best summary you can find is in the programme itself, which gives not only the schedule, but also the abstracts of most presentations, and the names of those who did the presentations, in case you want to follow up or pursue particular questions.

* Written by Victor Ordonez, a former director of the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau in Bangkok, Thailand.
But, aside from the opening and this closing session, the four plenary sessions were divided clearly into: 1) paradigms for development; 2) possibilities for development; 3) partnerships for development; and 4) permitting development (I prefer to call this last session promoting or pursuing development). This gives me the four main points around which I would like to organize my ideas today.

First, paradigms for development. The word paradigm, that is, a revolutionary way of looking at something and then changing fundamentally the way we act accordingly, is one that has been dominant in my vocabulary for the last several years. I am convinced that the world has changed so dramatically and quickly that we can no longer assume that what worked before, works today. This is true not only with regard to universities, or to basic education, but to every modality of life, from the way we work and play, to the manner we acquire and transmit information, to the way we resolve ethnic tensions, to the way we administer justice, to the way we govern states.

Sheldon Shaeffer reminded us that our conference title calls upon us not just to reform or improve education, but to reinvent it. This is not just a play on words, but a call for a new paradigm.

But as we cast about for a new paradigm for higher education, we must first re-examine the old paradigm and test its continuing validity. We all know this paradigm, and many speakers have referred to universities as the bastions of knowledge, with their main functions of teaching, to disseminate that knowledge, research, to produce that knowledge, and service, to use that knowledge. Mr. Zhu of Tongji University, Vice-Chancellor Sharifah of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and President Kim of Handong Global University used it in their presentations; Professor Purwadi of Indonesia also referred to it.

But the world has changed. Universities no longer have the monopoly or even the dominant role in today's knowledge society. The World Bank has affirmed what we all know, “Knowledge itself is the most powerful driver of social and economic progress in the world today”. Because of that, knowledge is everywhere. It is transmitted at speeds, quantities, and modalities unimaginable twenty or even ten years ago.

In the old days, the seeker of knowledge would go to the universities and their great libraries; now where do they go? To Google, to Wikipedia. For specific information, one need not look up bibliographies or catalogues; one merely looks up the e-mail of the specific expert or source and comes into direct contact with them. Are universities as knowledge brokers being marginalized?

Let us take an example from everyday life. When you wake up in the morning, you brush your teeth, check for messages on your cell phone, scan the Internet, and get your Starbucks coffee on your way to work. From where comes the knowledge that makes all that possible? From universities? Or from multinational consumer corporations, from telecom companies, from Silicon Valley, or from the coffee kitchens of Seattle?

On a larger scale, the largest scientific achievements of humankind are in space travel, medicine, and sadly the evermore awesome arms race. Again, this knowledge is generated in NASA and governments, in labs of pharmaceutical companies, and in the military. Even in monitoring the Millennium Development Goals, information is no longer sought in universities, but in databases, NGOs and IGOs around the world. Where is the university?
Let me ask a provocative question: Is it possible that one day universities as we know them will be obsolete, as knowledge transmission and development take on modalities and speeds yet unknown, as knowledge continues to explode, new ways of delivering it evolve, and new knowledge needs arise?

Dorte Kristofferson passed on to us a lesson from her boss, that in higher education one must be patient, because it has a slow and regular rhythm (programmes of study that last years, endless meetings before policy change, etc.). But the world will not be patient, it will not wait for higher education to catch up with it.

Yet in all of this, those of us in higher education must find our unique role, our special niche in society. We must see to it that all society benefits from this knowledge, that the currency of knowledge is not usurped by those who have wealth and power to oppress and dominate the rest. Ironically, in some societies universities perpetuate this. What we need is a new paradigm. I submit that this new paradigm must be the pursuit of sustainable development – ensuring the continued and progressive survival of the planet. I must confess that once my understanding of that popular catch phrase was limited to the environmental dimension. I thought this meant that if development could not be sustained, the planet would not survive as we ravage its resources with greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and global warming. But now, thanks to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and to the initiative of the Government of Japan and UNESCO, I realize that threats to the survival of this planet are also in the economic, social and cultural spheres. The planet will not long survive if one-third of its population continues to hold only 3% of its resources (as Professor Kim reminded us), and the rich keep getting richer and the poor keep getting poorer. It will not long survive if different cultures deal with their differences through intolerance, violence and war. It will not long survive if the politics of power methodically starves off disenfranchised cultures, and allows them to die of avoidable diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS.

In this context, universities have a specific role: to marshal their efforts and resources to reverse those alarming trends. Of course, universities cannot do it alone. A giant step towards reversing the unhealthy trend of a neo-liberal consumerist, greed-based society has recently been taken in Thailand, and on the opening day of the conference we gratefully learned of the initiative of His Majesty King Bhumibol of Thailand, espousing “Sufficiency Economy”. It is now incorporated into the Kingdom’s 8th long-term planning cycle, as Khun Varakorn Samakoses, Deputy Minister of Education, Thailand, announced to us.

Second, the possibilities. I was obviously not able to attend all 162 breakout sessions, although it would have been wonderful. Nevertheless, I had a chance to look at the abstracts and I was amazed and impressed by the number of case studies and experiences that have tried to bring education for sustainable development (ESD) into the mainstream of university life. It was such a smorgasbord of experiences that I have had to pick my favourites, as I am sure you did, depending on your particular interests. Some of you in agriculture went to the sessions where agricultural programmes introduced ESD dimensions. Those of you in health, or in technical and vocational education and training, or in community service, or in minority education, all went to sessions related to your particular interest.
My own interest was in the ever greater use of ICT in education, and this drew me to the relevant sessions. My concern was that ICT would again be a tool used to discriminate against the less privileged, but this was assuaged by wonderful case studies of ICT use in the Yekooche first nation community in northeastern British Columbia, and the use of low-tech SMS and cell phones in remote areas by Allama Iqbal Open University in Pakistan.

But beyond specific examples, I began to distinguish between two types of case study interventions. The first type was innovations introduced as a concession to the importance of ESD. Universities remained within traditional boundaries and approaches, but added new subjects or ideas to existing programmes. The second type presented a much more fundamental shift in orientation. These examples, as typified by Quest University in Canada or Handong Global University in Korea, showcased a fundamental reorientation of the mission of the university. In Quest University, for example, after taking basic courses, students no longer majored in a traditional academic discipline such as biology or psychology, but had majors which were issue related, such as global warming, multi-ethnic conflict resolution, and so on.

Third, partnerships. Because the task of sustainable development transcends the task of universities, partnerships and participation are inevitable. And in a globalized society, such partnerships have to be both local and international. On an international level, we learned from the shared experience of the UNESCO chairs, of Handong Global University, Okayama University and the University of British Columbia. On the very important local level, we heard about the experiences at the University of Waikato in New Zealand, at Tongji University, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Allama Iqbal Open University.

Fourth, permitting development, or better, pursuing or promoting development. Here we move from the conceptual to the practical. It is all well and good to understand the fuller dimensions of ESD and indeed to look at it as the new higher education paradigm. But as I said, a new paradigm is not just a new way of looking at things, but more importantly a way of changing one’s work and behaviour in accord with that new way of thinking.

Academics have a sometimes undeserved reputation of being more interested in understanding a problem than in solving it. In dealing with sustainable development, we cannot fall into the same analysis paralysis; we must act. To prod us into action, I present a set of three practical questions:

1. If you change your paradigm, in what way will your university be different? Will you teach your academic subjects – accounting, algebra, etc. – any differently? Will your nursing courses be different?

2. Can you imbue your faculty with this same fervour and commitment to sustainable development? How? Faculty will determine the tone and ethos, as well as relevance and quality, of your university. Very often, universities have elegant sounding mission statements that are largely left on university plaques and not transformed into operational implications. And yet there is a science and methodology to translating high sounding mission statements to school goals, to department objectives, and eventually to daily lesson plans.

3. How do you know if you are succeeding? What are your measures? You are not alone in this, and you cannot take all the credit or blame, but you must be able to point out what your contribution will be.
Allied to this is the importance of quality assurance, as pointed out by Antony Stella and Dorte Kristoffersen. Evaluation and assessment are evolving sciences and encounter difficulty when attempting to address the question of standards. The problem is even more difficult when measuring effectiveness of paradigmatic change or behaviour modification. But it must be undertaken.

And aside from providing a benchmark, as Kristofferson said, it is also, especially within an accreditation framework, a means of capacity-building, of awareness raising, of motivating and redirecting mind sets.

Let me conclude. Like me, you have been to several education conferences such as this one. They are often a chance to reunite with old friends, to make new ones and establish contacts, and learn a few ideas on innovative practices that perhaps you can use to improve your work when you get home. But as I have tried to show, this conference should be different from all the others you have attended. It strikes at the very heart of what universities of the future should be about. Director Sheldon Shaeffer at the very beginning reminded us that the very title of this conference calls for reinventing, not just reforming or improving our systems. The times call for a fundamental shift, a fundamental reorientation on how we look upon our work and how the urgency of this new perspective demands no less than a revolutionary rethinking and redoing for sustainable development.

We are called upon to establish a radically new paradigm of sustainable development for the role of higher education in this fast changing world. We are called upon to discover new possibilities in translating that paradigm to carry out the mandates of our universities. To this end, we are called upon to expand our partnerships and participation, both locally and, because of a globalization where knowledge knows no boundaries, internationally as well. Finally, we are called upon to lead our universities in the practical day-to-day pursuit of sustainable development, translating that imperative into new approaches and mind sets for our faculty, our students, and the communities we serve.

The future will bring changes beyond our imagination. But it is our duty as universities and as human beings to ensure that this planet will be sustainable and that we do not destroy this future environmentally, socially, economically, culturally or morally. The cause we serve, the sustained development of our planet as one that continues to be free, peaceful, just, progressive and harmonious, is not only urgent but vital. We have no choice. The mission is important but nothing short of noble. After all, this fragile planet Earth is the only home we and our children, and our children’s children, will ever have. There is no other.
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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From a background interest in marine conservation issues, Richard Allen has been interested in sustainable development since 1996. He took a postgraduate certificate in education in geography at Oxford University Department of Education Studies (OUDES), eventually becoming a mentor for trainee teachers with OUDES whilst working as a secondary school geography teacher in the UK. He then moved on to work in Japan, and has been teaching and researching education for sustainable development for the past three years. He is also currently interested in promoting the introduction of ISO standards at the university whilst developing and creating partnerships for a more sustainable university.

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As a well-known philosopher and professor, Samuel Lee has dedicated himself to studies and activities for peace, unification of North and South Korea, social development and resolving religious conflicts. Lee taught philosophy at Soong Sil University, Korea, for over 20 years before joining Harvard University Divinity School, USA, as a visiting scholar. On his return to the Republic of Korea, he was appointed as the first director of the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), where he remained from 2000 to 2004. During that period, he created the annual teacher training programmes for education for international understanding in the Asia-Pacific region. Since his appointment as secretary-general of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO in 2004, Samuel Lee has concentrated on raising public awareness of education for sustainable development both at the national and regional levels. He is currently a member of the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development in the Republic of Korea. As a philosopher, he is the elected president of the Korean Philosophical Association for 2007–2008 which will host the World Philosophy Congress in 2008 in Seoul, Korea. He received his Ph.D. in social science
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Rajesh Tandon is an internationally acclaimed leader and practitioner of participatory research and development. He founded the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), a voluntary organization providing support to grassroots initiatives in South Asia, twenty-five years ago, and has been its chief functionary since 1982. Tandon specializes in social and organizational change, and has contributed to the enhancement of perspectives and capacities of many voluntary activists and organizations. He has served on numerous government task forces and committees, and is the founder of the Board of Directors of World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS). He has a Ph.D. from Case Western Reserve University and undergraduate degrees in electronics engineering and management. He has written a number of articles, books and manuals on participatory research and related topics. Recent publications include Citizen Participation and Democratic Governance: In Our Hands and Participatory Citizenship: Identity, Exclusion, Inclusion.

Peter Taylor

Peter Taylor is a research fellow and incoming team leader of the Participation, Power and Social Change Team at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Brighton, UK. He has also been head of graduate programmes at IDS for the last three years. He has experience and a Ph.D. in agricultural education and is a qualified teacher. Taylor has worked for many years on issues relating to education for agricultural and rural development, as well as participatory approaches and processes in educational arenas. In addition to authoring a number of publications, he has been involved in a wide range of research and advisory activities, including participatory curriculum development in agricultural and forestry education; research on the use of contextualized curricula and teaching methodologies in basic education; initiatives supporting the development of educational access for people in rural areas; and training of trainers and teachers on participatory approaches and methodologies. He directs the M.A. in Participation, Power and Social Change and the D.Phil. programme at IDS. He is also guest editor of the 2008 Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) publication on Higher Education in the World. He has lived and worked extensively in Europe and Africa, and Central, South and South-East Asia.

Stephen J. Toope

The 12th president of the University of British Columbia, Stephen J. Toope has enjoyed a successful career as a scholar and leader in higher education, with roles ranging from providing support to
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