Higher education plays an important, multi-faceted role in the new global development agenda, which strives to eradicate poverty while addressing social needs such as education, health, social protection, job opportunities, climate change and environmental sustainability. All of these areas, and more, are reflected in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Campuses worldwide are slated to play a crucial role in driving this ambitious agenda towards success. They provide the advanced human resources and knowledge needed to address the complex challenges related to sustainable development. The strength of higher education institutions lies in their interdisciplinary teaching and research, and in their capacity to develop innovative solutions to global and local problems.

By Michaela Martin, IIEP-UNESCO

The changing role of higher education

HIGHER EDUCATION ON THE ROAD TO 2030

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Higher education underpins the overall global development agenda. Universities and colleges are fertile ground for new ideas, innovation and research that shape key sectors such as health and renewable energy and policies that help create cohesive and fair societies. Higher education equips graduates with skills for the workplace, including future teachers who will prepare the next generation of students. The impact is boundless and helps set the tone for how the world can achieve not only the education-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4), but all 17 goals of the 2030 agenda.

Concurrently, we are faced with an opportunity to reimagine a higher education sector that can fully respond to the pressures and challenges of today’s world as well as prepare students for a better future. Higher education is rapidly expanding, diversifying, and attracting more students from every background. Yet, as the following pages explain, we also know that as planners and managers of education systems, we must prepare the sector for this transformation, open its resources to as many as possible, and ensure that it is well aligned with the demands set out in the SDGs.

This will entail systemic and institutional changes to ensure that quality does not diminish and relevancy remains at its highest as the sector continues to grow apace. It will mean adapting curricula to meet the demands of a green future, confronting corruption and fraud head on, and opening access to campuses – both virtually and physically – to as many people as possible, men, women, and those who have been displaced or have sought refuge elsewhere.

The effects of instability on higher education can claim lives, destroy infrastructure and send shock waves throughout an entire education system. Addressing higher education within conflict settings and crisis-affected countries is of utmost importance. The advanced skills offered by tertiary education can help heal a country. Yet, too often, efforts to ameliorate the devastating impacts of crises on education fall short of including higher education. At IIEP, this will require us to address the broader definition of education through sector-wide planning and the establishment of new partnerships and expertise.

It will be impossible for higher education to fulfill its new central role in the SDGs unless it provides equal opportunities and access for more students. A new analysis by IIEP and UNESCO’s GEM report, Six ways to ensure higher education leaves no one behind, revealed that only 1 per cent of the poorest have spent more than four years in higher education, compared to 20 per cent of the richest. A combination of policies, as outlined in the paper, must be used to guarantee affordability and equitable access. Let’s take advantage of the sector’s growth before it is too late and work together to ensure that higher education evolves to serve people in their pursuit of lifelong learning.
Overall, higher education is a pillar to the whole education system through its teacher training and educational research functions.

Education 2030 is much broader than the earlier Millennium Development Goals, which focused on primary education and gender equality. SDG 4, the overarching goal of Education 2030, aims at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. More precisely, SDG 4 insists on 12 years of free, publicly available basic and secondary education, of which nine years are compulsory. It pleads for an integrated education system, which views higher education as part of a lifelong learning system. And two targets specifically mention higher education, with target 4.3 saying that by 2030, equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university should be ensured.

**BUT SDG 4 ALSO RAISES QUESTIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

The recent policy paper, *Six ways to ensure higher education leaves no one behind*, by UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) and IIEP, discusses some of the implications that the new agenda has for higher education. For example, equal access can imply an equality of rights or an equality of opportunity approach. The former one is blind to cultural, social and economic differences and disadvantage, while the second one pleads for affirmative action policies. Countries will need to decide which approach they take according to their particular circumstances, but the policy paper recommends that, while affirmative action is controversial, it may be necessary in contexts with deeply entrenched inequalities.

The paper also discusses the notion of affordable higher education. Affordability means that existing tuition and living costs are not an obstacle to access, participation and the success of qualified applicants. Yet, given the rapid expansion of higher education and the inability of the state in many countries to create a sufficient number of study places and opportunities for student support, an increasing share of the higher education cost has been shifted to households, including the poorer ones whose children often access higher education as the first generation. This basically asks the question of who should pay for higher education, and what contribution can be expected from students and families from modest backgrounds. Income contingent student loans with acceptable repayment plans appear as a solution that combines financial sustainability with affordability. The paper calls for this, but it also suggests that repayments should not be higher than 15 per cent of the gross salary of a former student.

And there is of course no universal definition of what constitutes quality higher education. Countries (through their national quality assurance systems), higher education institutions, and professors need to define quality in regards to disciplinary, institutional, local, and national circumstances. As a consequence, it is difficult to provide international guidance that goes beyond existing international codes of good practices, which are typically very generic.

**HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS NEED TO FURTHER MOBILIZE FOR THE SDGS**

The future direction that the SDGs present to higher education is open to many national and institutional choices, but it clearly positions higher education as a lever for sustainable development. The 17 SDGs require strong international cooperation in both teaching and research that can help identify innovative solutions to ecological and societal challenges. Higher education institutions need to develop a holistic institutional approach to sustainable development, comprising of teaching, research and ecologically sound functioning. Several global level north-south university networks do already exist, and some universities have taken action to systematically integrate issues related to sustainable development into their teaching and research. But many others still need to be better informed of the SDGs, and they also have to mobilize their academic communities to fully engage in this global agenda. This is especially the case for universities in industrialized countries and for those not well-versed in the UN discourse and policy agenda circles.

Funding bodies for higher education also need to fully recognize the role that higher education institutions can play in the implementation of the SDGs. This includes targeted scholarship programmes and funding opportunities that foster inter-university collaboration for the development of research and training in SDG related areas. ●
Higher education is currently confronted with an unprecedented growth of enrolments. Between 2000 and 2014, the number of students in higher education institutions more than doubled, rising from 100 million to 207 million. In the same period, the global higher education gross enrolment ratio increased from 19 per cent to 34 per cent.

As with all global figures, they obscure major differences between regions: the higher education gross enrolment ratio ranges from an average of 8 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa to 75 per cent in Europe and Northern America. Nonetheless, over the last two decades, the number of students participating in higher education has also risen in less prosperous regions, where, since 1995, higher education participation rates have grown at an average of 4 per cent a year.

Several reasons account for the rise in global participation rates, including increased demand, greater wealth, more supportive government policies and a growing sense of responsibility for social equity. The main driving force has been the increase in global demand for higher education. Now is the time to rethink curricula and ensure the sector’s relevance.

By Taya Owens, UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report)
in demand for higher education from the middle classes. The increased numbers of youth completing primary and secondary school contribute as well as the higher participation of non-traditional students, including part-time students and working adults. Adults (aged 25+) make up more than a third of enrolled undergraduate students in 10 European countries, while in five countries at least one in four students is signed up part-time.

REFRAMING A CURRICULUM TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF A GREEN FUTURE

Enrolling more students may not be sufficient to help us build sustainable and prosperous societies. The 2016 GEM Report showed that, by 2020, there could be 40 million too few workers with tertiary education relative to meet demand. Meanwhile, higher education enrolment is currently weighted towards academic study programmes with relatively low labour market demand, particularly, in the social and human sciences.

All eyes are on universities and colleges to reframe curricula to meet the demands of a more sustainable future. Green companies are already employing millions in high and low income countries, and these industries are expected to expand in the future. More jobs will be created in green industries, and some jobs will disappear. All of this will require a major focus on skills development in an array of academic, professional and technical-vocational programmes. Both highly skilled workers and workers with technical training are needed to spur green industries, as well as continuing training and education for low and medium skill workers in existing green industries.

INVEST IN KNOWLEDGE AND RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH

Innovation requires cooperation from higher education alongside research and development (R&D) backed with public funding. To develop new technologies, higher education systems need to provide enough researchers and developers with specialist knowledge and skills.

Green innovation systems depend on public funding since the private sector may be unable or unwilling to invest in green technology, especially in early development stages. Public R&D spending in energy and the environment is only a fraction of total public R&D budgets – averaging less than 6 per cent in the EU and less than 12 per cent in the OECD. By comparison, military public R&D in the US is 30 times as large as the energy R&D.

For higher education systems to provide enough researchers and developers with specialist knowledge and skills in a wide range of fields, diverse and specific curricula are needed along with cooperative study programmes across fields. Major emerging economies such as Brazil and China are expanding their tertiary education systems with that approach in mind.

The new Sustainable Development Goals demand that we re-align education and training to make it relevant to the changing workplace. With the number of students enrolling in higher education expanding at such a fast pace, there is huge potential to build a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable future for all. The time has arrived to transform higher education systems and re-orient its focus to provide students with the necessary skills for a green economy.
Rapid change and constant transformation are common themes today in higher education. The sector is quickly expanding, and higher education institutions (HEIs) and programmes have become much more diversified and are often privatized. Within this context, the quality of institutions and their programmes are increasingly questioned. This has triggered the development of external quality assurance (EQA) mechanisms in higher education throughout the world. Governments are also engaged in the quality control of HEIs and/or their programmes through periodic external assessments using accreditation, quality audits or evaluations.

Although externally driven at the beginning, many HEIs around the world have also strengthened their internal processes to assure academic quality and employability by applying internal quality assurance (IQA) mechanisms. For example, many HEIs now periodically review their academic programmes, also in light of their relevance to the labour market. For this purpose, they are systematically collecting data from students, graduates and employers. But HEIs also face many challenges in organizing IQA methods. Information systems are often too weak to support quality analysis in terms of student retention and student completion. Information is collected without being used for planning, resource allocation and decision-making, and there may be internal resistance to IQA.

**IIEP LEADS COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ON IQA**

In 2014, IIEP launched an international research project focusing on effective IQA...
IQA HELPS SPUR REFORMS

The research project found that in the institutions studied, IQA has helped to initiate a large set of reforms, particularly in the domain of teaching and learning where the introduction of IQA has generally improved the internal coherence of study programmes as well as their alignment with labour market needs. In addition, thanks to IQA, management processes have been streamlined and better integrated with data analysis and evaluation. IQA also motivated universities to strengthen their management information systems and improve their ability to make evidence-based decisions by collecting survey data from internal and external stakeholders.

The research data also revealed a number of common factors for success, although they largely depended on the context of each individual institution. Overall, the participating universities agreed that leadership support and stakeholder involvement were of tremendous importance. The effectiveness of the IQA system also relied heavily on the level to which students and staff were aware of and involved in its processes and tools. Students and staff felt that they did not receive enough feedback from certain IQA tools, such as course evaluations or student satisfaction surveys, the study found. Finally, the data from certain tools was not always used to maximum effect by the intended audience. For instance, the results of graduate tracer studies were predominantly used by management rather than academics who are in charge of the revision of study programmes. Overall, the study concluded that IQA is most effective if it leads to a regular internal dialogue on quality. This dialogue fosters a quality culture that is also the ultimate purpose of IQA and will help pave the way to improved academic quality and graduate employability.


Breaking barriers in education

HIGHER EDUCATION CAN INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHANGE-MAKERS. HOWEVER, ONLY 1 PER CENT OF THE GLOBAL NUMBER OF YOUNG REFUGEES HAS ACCESS TO THIS LEVEL OF EDUCATION.

The DAFI scholarship, implemented by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and funded by the Government of Germany, is helping change this reality. Since its inception in 1992, it has helped over 9,300 young refugees access higher education, enabling them to contribute knowledge, skills and leadership to their communities.

Connected learning programmes are also helping link hard-to-reach refugees to accredited academic institutions and mentors using information communications technologies.

Amina, a Sudanese refugee, recently became the first female DAFI graduate in Chad.

"The graduation ceremony was a deeply moving day in my life. Despite all difficulties along the way, I was among the lucky ones to pursue primary and secondary education as a Sudanese refugee in Chad and selected for a DAFI scholarship in 2012. Now I have obtained my degree in Public Law. Refugee women are often deprived of their right to education, despite its importance for a person's whole life. I want to continue acting as a role model and sensitise both the youth and parents, as still today girls drop out or are not even enrolled in school in my community. My dream is to continue studies up to doctoral level and support my community in returning back to our home country in peace. It is not the time to cross our arms, but to act for a better future."

As reported in UNHCR’s DAFI 2015 Annual Report. For more information, visit [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org).
OVERCOMING CORRUPTION
AND ACADEMIC FRAUD
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By Muriel Poisson, IIEP-UNESCO

Fighting corruption in higher education has taken on new urgency – for never before has the crucial role of higher education in building sustainable, prosperous societies been so clear.

In Japan, former high-level government officials stepped down after revelations that they illegally obtained post-retirement university posts. In Kenya, a government crackdown has sought to eliminate widespread cheating. In Colombia, investigations are looking into entrance exam fraud. In Malaysia, a national PhD registry aims to curb the production and usage of fraudulent academic titles and a Pakistani company accused of defrauding tens of thousands of students in the United States by selling them below-standard coursework faces charges. All of these examples illustrate not only the magnitude of corrupt and fraudulent practices in higher education worldwide, but the various attempts to clean up the sector.

Creating incentives to fight corruption and academic fraud is not an easy task, particularly in a context where the increased autonomy given to universities has not always been counterbalanced by appropriate accountability mechanisms; and where capacities to regulate and control corruption and fraud also remain limited. Nevertheless, the pressing need to improve higher education integrity is likely to grow over the coming years. Stakeholders are better positioned today to measure the harmful effects of loss of resources and credibility caused by fraudulent practices. Those with vested interests include funders concerned with the efficient use of available resources, higher education institutions (HEIs) needing to maintain trust in the diplomas that they deliver, employers who have to rely on the validity of higher education credentials, and individuals who can be easily tarnished by allegations of corruption or fraud that can spread more easily today via the Internet.

Examples of effective actions to prevent corruption and enhance integrity in higher education were recently outlined by the
IIEP: Which aspect of the reform has contributed the most to improving the quality of Togo’s higher education?

The recent emphasis on quality assurance has improved educational quality. The integrated system, which manages all the components of the university structure, has facilitated the monitoring of student enrolment as well as the management of their careers, scholarships, diplomas, examinations, and the overall financial and human resources. It has also improved the communication between all members of the higher education community. The integrated system also serves as a tool for decision-making and good governance.

IIEP: Similarly, which aspect has had the biggest impact on planning processes?

The development of Togo’s university map has clearly contributed to the improvement of higher education planning and reflects the country’s dynamic 2025 vision of education. It aims at achieving a better balance between education’s supply and demand; it guarantees greater equity in the access to higher education, especially for girls, women and the most disadvantaged groups; and strengthens the link between academia and the labour market. Through this reform, the usual university education based on general and theoretical knowledge is left behind to move towards more specialized and professional training, in close relation with each region’s field of activities. This is a real gain for the Togolese workforce.
As Chilean voters went to the polls in the 2013 general election, there was a clear consensus across society about the need to reform higher education. Michelle Bachelet was elected with the promise to address the main issues facing the sector: the recognition of higher education as a social right, rather than a consumer good; the strengthening of public higher education, which operated under a private approach with very limited public funding; the need to improve the accountability and quality of its offerings; and most urgently, to reduce the financial burden on undergraduate students.

The government embarked on an ambitious plan to collect opinions: commissions were formed, representatives from many different institutions and associations were consulted, and an Advisory Council was appointed. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education worked silently and secretively in preparing the reform. After much delay, it was finally introduced on 4 July 2016. It was strongly criticized from all possible fronts for ignoring the realities of a highly diversified, massive higher education system, for being based on an arbitrary diagnosis, which seemed designed to justify certain measures, rather than to paint an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses, and for ignoring the opinions of experts and the participants in the consultation process.

Earlier, in May 2015, with the President’s popularity systematically declining, her advisors decided to advance a campaign promise: all students in the bottom 50 per cent of income distribution would be able to study without paying tuition. Universities could freely adhere to the scheme, but technical and vocational schools were excluded (however, they are now eligible, provided they are truly organized as non-profit organizations).

The promise of free tuition profoundly impacted the contents of the reform: free tuition inevitably translated into a significant gap between the income received from the government and the normal institutional budget, putting higher education institutions in financial risk. As a result, the debate moved from the conceptual aspects of the reform to a corporate defence of institutional interests, resulting in a fragmented higher education sector and a myriad of interest groups.

The reform is now stalled before parliament. Furthermore, the current draft falls short on addressing the main challenges related to its accountability, quality, and affordability. Most of the higher education system in Chile is still under market regulation and while the government has promised to address in a different proposal the issues related to the country’s public universities, nothing has happened – and time is running out. The much contested quality assurance mechanism is being kept without any major changes. Free tuition is perhaps the exception, but it is argued that the financial burden it imposes on institutions jeopardizes the goal of improved quality, which was one of the reform’s key objectives.

The Ministry of Education introduced some revisions to the proposed reform. However, there has been little progress and the changes appear to pacify specific interest groups rather than to respond to the needs of the sector. Higher education reform in Chile faced a rare window of opportunity, yet it was slammed shut due to the inept handling of the process.
REVIVING HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

By N.V. Varghese, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA)

More and more students are attending university – the challenge now is how to promote equity and quality in a country rife with social disparities.

This century has witnessed a revival of higher education reforms worldwide. India is no exception. Several reform measures recently introduced have contributed to the expansion of the system, quality improvement and enhanced relevance.

REFORMS TO EXPAND THE SYSTEM

India’s higher education sector has moved from a period of slow growth and low gross enrolment ratios (GERs) to an era of unprecedented expansion. Over the past 15 years, student enrolment has quadrupled to reach 34 million with a GER of 24 percent in 2015-2016. The size of India’s education system has now surpassed the United States, becoming the world’s second largest after China.

Massification of the education system has relied heavily on non-state funding. Market friendly reforms introduced by the state include cost recovery measures in public institutions and the promotion of the private sector to own and operate universities. While privatization started slow, private universities are proliferating, and now account for more than 60 per cent of the enrolment share both in terms of institutions and enrolment. Massification in India is also accompanied by persisting social inequalities and widening regional inequalities in enrolment in higher education.

REFORMS TO IMPROVE QUALITY

India established external quality assurance agencies and internal quality assurance mechanisms to enhance higher education quality. Although accreditation is mandatory to obtain public funding, a majority of private higher education institutions still remain non-accredited.

Ranking has been another effort to enhance quality. Indian institutions do not fare well in the world ranking of universities. In response, India initiated a national ranking process with the National Institutional Ranking Framework in 2015. The first results published in April 2016 and 2017 clearly indicated that the top ranking institutions are mostly public funded Central universities.

It is currently believed that creating world class universities will boost India’s position in the global rankings. This has also prompted India to plan to support the creation of 20 world class universities in the immediate future. It appears that India, like many other developing countries, is on a fast track towards the reorientation of existing institutions into world class universities.

REFORMS TO ENHANCE RELEVANCE

Despite the sector’s growth, many employers in India have lost confidence in the quality of the qualifications awarded by the country’s universities. It is questioned whether these universities offer the skills and competencies to its graduates as expected by the labour market. In order to regain the credibility and enhance the relevance of university qualifications, India is now in the process of developing a National Higher Education Qualification Framework, which is focusing on learning outcomes, employability skills and competencies. This follows the 2013 development of a National Skills Qualifications Framework.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The massification of higher education has been accompanied by a widening of regional disparities, persisting social inequalities and commercialization of the sector. The challenge now is to address the issues of equity and diversity to provide affordable, quality higher education in a period of market-led reforms. It is hoped that the national policy on education currently in development will address some of these concerns.
NEW PROFESSIONAL PATHS NEEDED FOR STUDENTS IN MAURITANIA

A new IIEP Pôle de Dakar research study is looking at how to better align higher education with a changing economy.

By Olivier Pieume and Koffi Segniagbeto, IIEP Pôle de Dakar

While higher education in Mauritania is overall less developed than nearby countries, the sector is also characterized by a large number of students who are pursuing long-cycle higher education rather than short cycle. For example, 72 per cent of higher education graduates have a diploma equivalent or higher than a master’s degree, according to the 2013 general population and housing census. This appears inconsistent with the realities of the economy where informal employment stands at 85 per cent. The Mauritanian situation is rather unique. Even in OECD countries where the informal sector is weak, the majority of higher education graduates have diplomas below or equal to a bachelor’s degree.

To better match higher education with the economy, both a diversification of vocational programmes and improved management of entering students are required. This could include short courses that respond to market needs. Projections show that by 2030, most jobs for graduates will come from the manufacturing, water and energy sectors. The number of jobs requiring higher education qualifications in these sectors is expected to increase six times over the next fifteen years (Table 1). On the other hand, the fishing and mining sectors are expected to see one quarter of jobs disappear.

If the coverage of higher education in Mauritania is less compared to similar countries, the sector’s expansion will have to be achieved through the development of short vocational training that is more labour intensive. To do this, the subsector must have a real academic and professional outlook integrated into its structure. Otherwise, it will remain a missed opportunity for students. For example, it can take up to five years for half of a graduating class each year to find a job placement, according to an IIEP Pôle de Dakar 2012 national survey. Both during studies and after graduation, students lack access to information on the opportunities offered in the labour market. This is a major barrier to better integrating graduates into the Mauritanian economy.

Table 1: Medium-term projection of skilled labour needs by economic sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity sector</th>
<th>Number of jobs in 2015</th>
<th>Number of projected jobs in 2030</th>
<th>Total number of jobs created over the period</th>
<th>Growth over the period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, etc.</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>2,242</td>
<td>1,577</td>
<td>237%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>-147</td>
<td>-24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>2,365</td>
<td>1,984</td>
<td>-381</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing, water and energy</td>
<td>3,173</td>
<td>19,193</td>
<td>16,020</td>
<td>505%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction industry</td>
<td>1,376</td>
<td>2,134</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>30,399</td>
<td>35,776</td>
<td>5,377</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38,595</strong></td>
<td><strong>61,799</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,204</strong></td>
<td><strong>60%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculations based on Ministry of Employment data.
HOW DOES THE COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION IMPACT YOUR STUDIES?

Join the conversation on Twitter @IIEP_UNESCO

FROM INDIA

I think higher education is becoming more and more important because of the complexities and diversities of the job market. In India, most of the education facilities provided by government institutes are affordable, however they lack in practical and technical expertise, skills, etc. Graduation doesn't really make you qualified for the job market. However, private institutes affiliated to universities abroad with their exchange programmes, internships and dual degree programs are better equipped with modern technology and expertise in that sense, but they are very expensive and only cater to a particular class of society.

Indians are, however, aware of the plethora of opportunities by way of scholarships and grants that universities abroad provide in terms of higher education and livability. Platforms like DAAD and Fulbright Scholarships set standards for students to aspire and work hard in order to achieve such meritorious scholarships.

But yes, cost does impact studies. Young people can be empowered if the same education can be provided at an affordable cost, and if the number of scholarships increase for the student pool. Cost factor is an important factor especially when students wish to further their knowledge in the home country or study abroad. It makes them take out loans and other forms of funding to support their study. However, I would like to point out that the "cycle" of taking out loans especially in an economy that is competitive and expensive can be quite a risk and especially for engineering, banking and finance, MBA degrees, and degrees that have huge tuition but are only one year degree programmes.

FROM COLOMBIA

The cost of higher education was the determining factor in selecting which University I'd attend. Although there are good quality public universities, their selection process is extremely demanding. Good quality private universities are only accessible to those who have a high family income or who have the best grades.

Due to my family’s income, I have to attend a university that does not meet my academic objectives. Throughout the years, fees have augmented to the point that my parents have been forced to get a loan so that I can finalize my studies and pursue my professional goals.

FROM FINLAND

I'm definitely one of the lucky ones since my University education is completely free for me. In Finland, where I live and study, our education is provided by the government. But I do recognize the challenges that may come when education is to be paid by the students or others.

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ACHIEVING EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By Juana Barragán Díaz, IIEP-UNESCO

IIEP convened a strategic debate this past May on what can be done to strengthen equity between students in higher education.

Over the past several decades, more and more young people in France have been able to access higher education. In 1960, 310,000 students were enrolled in higher education. Fast forward a half century and the number multiplied by more than eight, reaching 2,551,000 by 2015. In absolute terms, progress appears evident. Yet, in relative terms, students from disadvantaged backgrounds remain underrepresented in France’s higher education system. For example, 10.8 per cent of university students have parents who are workers, while 30 per cent have parents who hold managerial positions or who perform a higher intellectual profession. The gap is even more striking in the most prestigious schools (Écoles normales supérieures), where the figures are 2.7 per cent and 53.2 per cent respectively. And yet, workers account for nearly a fifth of the French population.

Student inequity in higher education is also a global issue, which has become more severe alongside issues of educational affordability. Indeed, the costs of higher education are increasingly shouldered by households. On average, in European countries, 15 per cent of the cost of higher education is paid by households, whereas outside Europe, households cover between 40 to 50 per cent, as revealed in the recent UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) and IIEP policy paper Six ways to ensure higher education leaves no one behind.

However, initiatives to tackle inequity are emerging. In France, Pierre Mathiot, the former Director of Sciences Po Lille in Northern France, who was a key speaker at the IIEP Strategic Debate, founded the Integrated Studies Program (PEI in French) in 2007. To date, PEI has helped prepare 3,200 students from modest backgrounds for higher education. The approach includes tutorials organized by university students who supervise high school students for four years, university visits and the establishment of local partnerships between universities, schools and associations. Mathiot believes information needs to be provided to high school students, as well as their sense of legitimacy and self-confidence reinforced.

IIEP’s second 2017 Strategic Debate was devoted to this issue of access and its message was clear: it is possible to strengthen equity between students in higher education. Initiatives such as the PEI demonstrate this. With a “bottom-up” approach –based on field experiences --states can tailor decision-making to local contexts. However, it is important to remember to continue to collect data, including qualitative assessments, to have a clearer, more reliable picture of equity in higher education. ⚫
IIEP’s Virtual Campus offered for the first time the distance education course on ‘Quantitative Methods in Monitoring and Evaluating the Education Sector Response to HIV and AIDS’.

Monitoring and evaluating the role of education in the overall response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic is critical for countries to improve their policies and school-based programmes. But this can be challenging and there are many elements to contend with, such as what to measure, over what period, and with what resources.

The six-week course, which ran from 24 April to 2 June, was designed to reinforce participants’ skills in collecting and reporting for core indicators, and in formulating policies in order to monitor and evaluate the education sector’s response to HIV and AIDS.

Some 20 national teams, representing a total of 82 participants, from 15 countries in Africa followed the course. Participants were mainly planners, managers of the Educational Information Management Information System (EMIS) within ministries of education, HIV and AIDS coordinators, and national and regional administrators of UNESCO.

Built around three modules, the course started with an update from Christopher Castle, UNESCO’s Global Coordinator for HIV and AIDS, and the Chief of the Section of Health and Education, who highlighted the important role of education in ending HIV and AIDS and promoting the health and well-being of all children and youth.

He also stressed the importance of measuring progress through basic indicators, including those recommended in the UNESCO Global Guidelines Measuring the education sector response to HIV and AIDS: Guidelines for the construction and use of core indicators.

The second module looked at the status of data collection tools. The quality of data collected has a direct impact on the quality of analysis and ultimately, the policy decisions related to HIV and AIDS. Course participants critically examined the Annual School Census (ASC) questionnaire and School-Based Survey questionnaire to construct the core indicators and additional indicators that are relevant for the country context. The examination process confronted two main challenges: the level of inclusion of core indicators and the collection of disaggregated data.

The last module provided participants with an opportunity to present, analyse, and interpret the calculated core indicators using country data and ‘dummy’ tables designed to ensure consistency with The UNESCO Global Guidelines and the comparability of results. The purpose of this guided work was not only to help participants describe the current status and progress of the education sector in responding to HIV and AIDS, but also to help them translate the findings into educational policy options.

Visit the UNESCO HIV and Health Education Clearinghouse: http://hivhealth-clearinghouse.unesco.org/.

REMEMBERING KHALIL MAHSI AND JUAN CARLOS TEDESCO


BOTH COLLEAGUES WILL BE SORELY MISSED, BUT THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION NEVER FORGOTTEN.
EXPLORING INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS (IQA)

Project coordinated by Michaela Martin, IIEP-UNESCO

A series of case studies from eight countries worldwide look at IQA systems within different national and institutional contexts to highlight the contrasting approaches to IQA.

REFORMS AND CHANGES IN GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA

N. V. Varghese

Based on studies carried out in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, this book shows how the reforms have led to changes in the governance and management of institutions of higher education in Africa.

CONFLICT-SENSITIVE AND RISK-INFORMED PLANNING IN EDUCATION: LESSONS LEARNED

IIEP-UNESCO

This policy brief presents lessons learned and recommendations based on the experiences of three countries, which have addressed conflict and disaster risks in their educational planning processes, with technical support from IIEP.

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A talk with the author

FOLLOWING GLOBAL TRENDS, HIGHER EDUCATION IS FAST EXPANDING ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. PROFESSOR N. V. VARGHESE FROM INDIA'S NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION (NUEPA), DISCUSSES WHAT'S BEHIND HIS NEW PUBLICATION, 'REFORMS AND CHANGES IN GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA'.

IIEP: Why is the topic of governance reform in higher education in Africa important?

N. V. V: Higher education in Africa was politically supported and relatively well-funded in the period following independence. However, state funding was questioned in the 1980s and the reforms of the 1990s aimed to find alternative ways to finance higher education through privatization and improve the management of universities. It's important to study the consequences of these reforms to better understand current changes in the governance of higher education both at institutional and national levels.

IIEP: What are some of the most striking results of these reforms?

N. V. V: Many of the reforms contributed to the expansion of the system, diversified programmes of study and sources of funding, greater institutional autonomy and improved operational efficiency and accountability of higher education institutions. The study explored the impact of these reforms in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.

IIEP: What are the challenges that remain?

N. V. V: First, the role of the state needs to be redefined more in terms of providing a framework for institutional functioning and regulating the system rather than controlling and managing the system. Second, most reforms are resource-constrained initiatives. There is a need for reforms focusing on enhancing learning outcomes and research productivity of higher education institutions in Africa.

Find the publication at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002454/24540de.pdf

“African higher education has come a long way since the first students graduated from an African institution (Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone) in 1879. Some 5.2 million students enrolled in African institutions of higher education in 2010. However, the average GER in sub-Saharan African countries is only 7 per cent, the lowest for any region in the world.”