

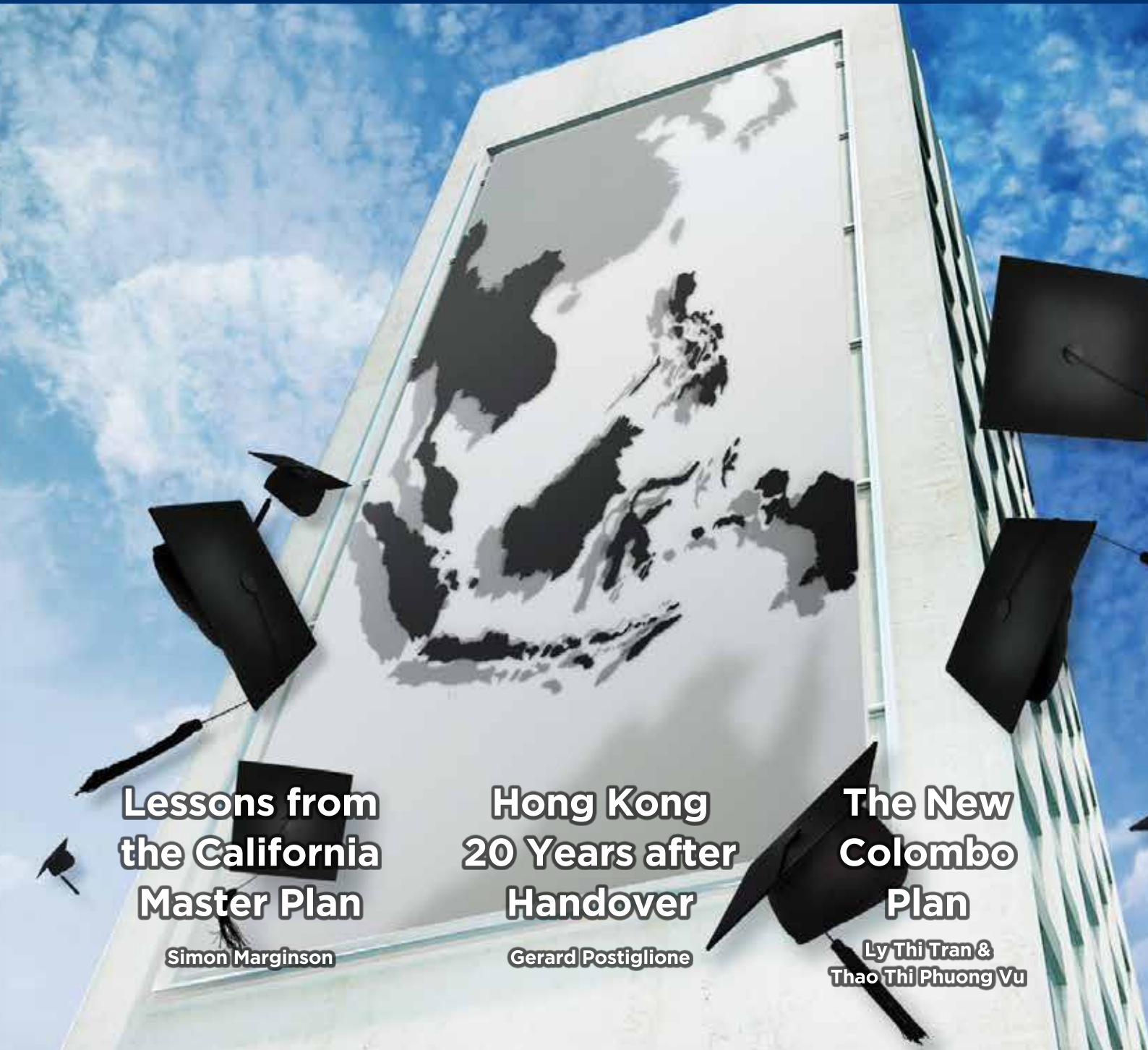
HESEB

HIGHER EDUCATION IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA AND BEYOND



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**Lessons from
the California
Master Plan**

Simon Marginson

**Hong Kong
20 Years after
Handover**

Gerard Postiglione

**The New
Colombo
Plan**

Ly Thi Tran &
Thao Thi Phuong Vu

Editor's Message

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I am pleased to introduce the third issue of *Higher Education in Southeast Asia and Beyond* (HESB), as we continue our aim of building up a platform for scholars and practitioners to share their work and insights on higher education in ASEAN and Asia, from both within and without the region.

Simon Marginson, whose book *The Dream is Over: The Crisis of Clark Kerr's California Idea of Higher Education* was recently published, writes about the important lessons from the Californian experience for Singapore in particular, now that the golden era of California's higher education system is over. Reflecting on the 20 years since Hong Kong's return to China, **Gerard Postiglione** writes on the state of the territory's higher education, and the issues it faces going forward.

Gordon Redding frames for us the role of universities and critical thinking in larger society today, and cautions us about the trend of growing economism in the mission of universities. **Fazal Rizvi** joins in the debate on massification, and elaborates on the pitfalls that higher education administrators and policymakers should pay attention to. **Agustian Sutrisno** explores whether and how it is possible for international branch campuses, known primarily as teaching institutions, to become research universities.

The original Colombo Plan of the Australian government promoted inbound student mobility. With the New Colombo Plan, as **Ly Thi Tran** and **Thao Thi Phuong Vu** writes, student mobility has now become a "North to South" phenomenon, reflecting the principle of international education as public diplomacy. Meanwhile, **Yasmin Ortiga** looks into how higher education institutions in less developed locations like Vietnam, the Philippines and provincial China have sought to become education hubs.

In continuing the discussion on skills and higher education in Singapore, **Lim Lai Cheng** gives her perspectives on the changing state of continuing education, and how university academics can react to these new developments. **Michael Lee** takes stock of higher education development in Singapore from a researcher's perspective. **Viswanathan Selvaratnam** examines the issue of English proficiency in Malaysia's higher education institutions, and what would need to be done to transform the country into a high income economy.

Li Jie Sheng looks back at the role of international donors and the universities they supported in the East Asian miracle, and highlights the issues for governments and new donors to consider with regard to higher education in Southeast Asia today. Finally, after a year of rising economic nationalism around the world, **Yojana Sharma** reports from a forum of university leaders on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Vietnam this past November, in which the participants underscored the role of universities in driving cross-border collaborations.

We hope that you will enjoy the articles in this issue, and we invite you to consider contributing to future issues, and be part of the conversations and debates on higher education in Southeast Asia and beyond.



Prof. S. GOPINATHAN
Editor, HESB
Academic Director, The HEAD Foundation



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Access and Excellence in Higher Education: Lessons from the California Master Plan

Simon Marginson

Modern higher education can be said to have begun in the United States in the 1960s. Participation grew rapidly in the world's first mass higher education system, federal grants underpinned a remarkable growth in research, and the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education in California established a template for system design that was to shape developments across the world.

Until the California Master Plan, excellence and access were seen as opposing goals. The Master Plan addressed them both at once, and on a grand scale. At the base of the system were community colleges offering two-year programmes in every district in the state, free of charge. Above were the campuses of the California State University, with programmes up to Masters level, though providing little research and no doctoral places. At the top were the University of California (UC) campuses, led by science giants UC Berkeley and UCLA.

California was the first ever higher education system to guarantee universal access, primarily through the community colleges. At the same time the exclusive UCs received concentrated research dollars and enrolled large number of doctoral students while also educating the top 12.5% of school leavers at first degree level. Like Singapore's higher education today, California 1960 was at one and the same time steeply

hierarchical, open and democratic – emblematic of the American approach to higher education.

For the first 25 years or so, the 1960 Master Plan succeeded in creating both high excellence and universal access. But while California fashioned the world's strongest system of public research universities, the political and fiscal conditions supporting the Master Plan settlement evaporated. The access mission faltered first, from the 1990s onwards. The excellence mission, too, is now under growing pressure.

The University of California, facing spiralling deficits, now finds it more difficult to maintain operating costs and compete with top private universities for leading researchers. The same failure to maintain taxpayer-sourced state financing that impoverished the colleges and undermined the access mission is increasingly affecting the research universities as well.

The spectacular rise and partial fall of the public higher education system in California has lessons for higher education everywhere – not least in Singapore, where the continuation of the remarkable global rise of the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University depends on a continued domestic electoral consensus about equity and public financing in Singapore's higher education.

OUTCOMES OF THE MASTER PLAN

In terms of the excellence objective, the public research universities in the UC system were brilliantly successful. Even today, three UC campuses – UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC San Diego – are listed in the top 15 of Shanghai's research-based Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) and eight UCs are in the ARWU top 100. UC Berkeley is still the world's leading university in the production of high citation (top 10%) papers in the physical sciences and engineering.

However, the access mission proved less successful. While the leading universities in the UC system made, and still make, a substantial contribution

to equitable access, further down the chain, in the state universities and the community colleges, underfunding has fatally undermined the promise of universal opportunity so important to the 1960 Plan.

According to the Master Plan, on the UC campuses upward social mobility through higher education was to be facilitated in two ways. First, with top students of all social backgrounds to choose from, the UCs could admit a high proportion of students from low income and first generation higher education families. This was achieved. Even today, UC Berkeley and UCLA continue to admit a large minority of their students from first generation higher education families. Second, there was meant to be substantial upward transfer from community colleges to state universities and the UCs. This was less successful as an access device – most of the community college graduates who enter UC Berkeley were from middle-class dominated colleges. Transfer into the UCs from community colleges in poor districts, where there was high drop-out, was weak and became weaker. This was partly because the community colleges themselves were allowed to deteriorate as a sector.

The Master Plan rested on the willingness of state and federal taxpayers to guarantee uniformly good public schools and strong higher education. The Californian tax revolt, with Proposition 13 (1978) and after, signified a middle class that was no longer willing to include, in the common good approach to higher education, the growing number of immigrant families who had entered California from south of the border. The shift in the political environment was cemented by the 1981-89 Reagan administration's tax reductions, cuts to public programmes and fostering of income inequality in the workplaces. For the next two decades the effects of under-funding accumulated. Then the 2008-2009 recession triggered massive reductions in state education funding that now seem very difficult to reverse.

Tuition fees are rising in community colleges, which turn away 250,000 students each year. In some years, the state colleges also turn away large numbers of qualified students. There are similar problems with

state funding of public higher education in many other American states. The case of California is especially significant because whereas the state once led the country in its participation and graduation rates in higher education, it is now positioned in the bottom 10% of states on these indicators. The Master Plan era is certainly over.

THE WAY FORWARD

Where does California, and American public higher education, go from here? While the previous Obama administration proposed to abolish tuition fees to encourage enrolment in community colleges, this is unlikely to be the magic bullet. Fee abolition without a concurrent increase in state budgets, tagged to higher education, would worsen the chronic problems of state fiscal incapacity and college poverty.

A better solution would be for the federal government to support student tuition through the introduction of a national system of income contingent loans (ICL), which have been successful in both the UK and Australia. ICL are much better for access than the present American system of mortgage-style student loans, with its high default rates.

Mortgage-style student loans in the US are bad for access and equity. Graduates from poorer backgrounds find it more difficult to obtain work adequate to sustain repayments, and women earn less on average than men. This affects participation of both groups. The cost of default is carried by government. It would be better to spend public dollars on underwriting an ICL system than on funding loans companies when student debtors default.

An ICL system has minimal deterrent effect at the point of entry and minimal socio-economic bias. Students handle no money. Government-backed loans cover tuition at the point of enrolment. The loans are repaid later through income tax on a percentage of income basis. Graduates who work for low pay or leave the workforce for extended periods may not repay in full. Government funds both non-repayment and sub-commercial interest rates, so that the public

subsidises equality of opportunity, not loan companies. Subsidies can be tweaked by altering the interest rate on debt, the income threshold for repayment, and the percentage of income repaid. Government imposes a standard rate to restrain costs and, in the US, would subsidise high private sector tuition only up to the standard level.

ICL would overcome the inability of the states to fund public higher education. It would allow California to upgrade many two-year diplomas to four-year degrees, which have more bang in the labour markets, and grow the number of doctoral research universities, bringing advanced higher education to more than the present 12.5% of young people.

Meanwhile, in California, the crucial policy condition for the resurrection and realisation of the twin goals of 1960 is a new public consensus, based on long-term commitment to the common good and equal educational opportunity of all families, rich and poor.

What are the implications of the California experience for Singapore? First, education systems never function well on autopilot mode, and as the circumstances change, those systems must evolve. Intelligent policy in higher education and science, which California had in the past and Singapore has in the present, can only be maintained by deliberate political will. Californian public higher education declined because the focus of policy wavered and the underlying social, political and fiscal consensus was allowed to deteriorate. Second, government must nurture a continuing balance between inward moving migrants and local citizens, in education as in other sectors. Potential citizen/migrant tensions take a different form in Singapore to those in California, but in each case the message is the same: getting the citizen/migrant balance right is essential to the consensus that underpins successful higher education systems.

Simon Marginson's book *The Dream is Over: The Crisis of Clark Kerr's California Idea of*

Higher Education (University of California Press and the UC Berkeley Center for Studies in Higher Education), published in 2016, can be accessed free online at: www.doi.org/10.1525/luminos.17



Hong Kong's Higher Education: 20 Years After Handover

Gerard A. Postiglione

Twenty years after its retrocession to Chinese sovereignty, Hong Kong managed to develop more world-class universities than perhaps any other city in the world. How did this happen, and can it be sustained?

In 1960, it would have been hard to imagine that a colonial society with one small undergraduate university would come to spawn several great universities. One English-medium university, established in 1911, prepared civil servants and other leaders from the local community, as well as some overseas Chinese. As the school system grew, it became necessary in 1964 to establish a second university, with Chinese as a medium of instruction, to address the need for a broader community of a highly educated elite in business and government.

TWENTY YEARS BEFORE

By the end of the 1980s, degree places at these two universities and several local colleges crept up from 2% to 8% of the relevant age group. Around 1990, several factors and forces came together

that would change Hong Kong higher education in a significant way.

First, the Research Grants Council was established in 1991, leading the way for an expansion of postgraduate research.

Second, the emigration of talent in response to the 1989 Tiananmen tragedy triggered the need to double the number of university places and upgrade four colleges to university status.

Third, the transfer of low skill manufacturing to the Chinese mainland opened the way for an upgrade of Hong Kong's technological infrastructure, a need that was met by the establishment of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in 1991. While Hong Kong's universities sustained their excellence, other Asian universities also become more competitive. Hong Kong did not follow the other three Asian dragons (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore) when in the early 1990s, their governments decided to invest heavily in high technology. (It would take another quarter century for Hong Kong to invest heavily in technological innovation, especially as its adjoining mainland Chinese city of Shenzhen, a farming village until 1984, was transformed into a high tech powerhouse 30 years later).

Fourth, approaching the uncertainties of retrocession in 1997, university salaries rose sharply to ensure they could retain and attract a talented professoriate from Hong Kong and abroad. As Hong Kong approached the retrocession of sovereignty in 1997, it found itself with seven universities.

TWENTY YEARS AFTER

The end of the colonial era in 1997 coincided with the desire of many overseas Chinese scholars and scientists from the US, the UK, Canada and Australia, to return to China's new Special Administrative Region (SAR), which had a high degree of academic freedom

and professional autonomy similar to their overseas alma mater. Moreover, the end of the colonial era also saw recruitment from an increasing pool of overseas nationals from non-English speaking countries who had earned their doctorates in Western countries.

Shortly after the retrocession of sovereignty and before 2000, the University of Hong Kong found itself atop a new ranking of Asia's top universities. By 2000, and through the first decade and a half of the 21st century, all factors were in place for Hong Kong to live up to a reputation as a university global city. Despite spending 0.7% of GDP for research and development (R&D), much lower than South Korea, Singapore or Taiwan, Hong Kong's universities managed to enter and sustain their place in the world-class global rankings.

Much of Hong Kong's success has been due to confidence in the autonomy of universities, an openness to new ideas, a lack of deference on the part of academics, scholars and scientists to anything except the truth as the first value of universities. Hong Kong is the most academically free and autonomous academic system in Asia. For example, no one has ever been fired for academic views or actions as a public intellectual. On the contrary, university presidents have upheld academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The world wide web is completely open to academics and students. There are no travel restrictions on academics. There is no book, academic or otherwise, or article in academic journals or the print media that is not accessible to all. In short, Hong Kong's academic atmosphere is not unlike that at top overseas universities, which explains why it can attract academic staff from such institutions.

A new tension in higher education and society emerged prior to the 20th anniversary of sovereignty retrocession. Struggles over universal suffrage spilled over into university politics. The Umbrella Movement became a historical turning point in

Hong Kong society, but it also made its way into the blocked appointment of a new university vice-president and created a controversy over the role of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong SAR and his/her appointment of members of university councils.

The future of Hong Kong higher education will hinge upon whether it can sustain the values and practices that have made Hong Kong a centre of global higher education. As of now, such values and practices are still prized. Hong Kong's universities continue to ensure the promotion of open enquiry and trust, widespread communication of ideas, and inclusive educational and academic exchanges. Hong Kong's universities also work hard to attract the best minds from around the world and integrate them closely into their universities, including governance. Hong Kong's universities also ensure that impersonal criteria is used for establishing scientific facts, as well as ensuring that scientists and scholars do not profit financially from their research. Although the universities have state-of-the-art hardware, including a developed infrastructure of laboratories, libraries, and IT, they emphasise the software side of things. All of Hong Kong's universities use external peer-review systems to ensure academic and scientific arguments are tested by the best. Academics are given a significant voice in running their universities, and academic communities work for the growth of an enlightened public and civil society. Finally, Hong Kong's universities are attuned to the value of diverse types of intelligence in the recruitment of students and staff, including men and women from different regional, racial, ethnic, and national communities.

The challenge will be to sustain the position of Hong Kong's universities and their service to the local, national and global community. Some positive changes for the future are currently taking place. These changes are on both the local and national levels. On the local level, the Hong Kong government will double the R&D percentage of GDP over next five years. The Chief Executive announced that

investment in R&D would increase from the current 0.73% to 1.5% within five years. The government has allocated about HK\$10 billion (US\$1.3 billion) for university research funding. To increase innovation and collaboration with industry, there will be a tax deduction for R&D expenditure incurred by enterprises. On top of this, the Education Bureau is putting HK\$3 billion (US\$400 million) toward studentships for local students in University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded research postgraduate programmes. The Innovation and Technology Bureau allocated a HK\$500 million (US\$64 million) "Technology Talent Scheme", including a "Postdoctoral Hub", and \$700 million (US\$90 million) will be invested for projects to develop Hong Kong into a Smart City. On the national level, Hong Kong's universities will be positioned within two new initiatives. First, the Belt and Road initiative will deepen educational and academic cooperation with the Belt and Road countries, especially those in South and Southeast Asia. Second, the Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Macau, Bay Area initiative will give a role to universities in making the region competitive with the high tech centers in San Francisco, Tokyo and New York.



Higher Education and the Role of Critical Thinking

Gordon Redding

Perhaps the greatest policy challenge in higher education is that a society's universities share among them the responsibility of acting as a society's "brain" – in other words, the society's capacity to

think through its challenges. They are not the only institutions doing this, but they are usually the body a society invests in most heavily to ensure it has a supply of thinkers. The challenge is that this function is under threat.

Universities carry out this brain function in several ways: by storing the society's accumulated knowledge in their libraries; by employing scholars to study matters of significance to the society; by creating research centres to focus on special fields of interest; and of course by preparing future citizens to use their own brains. But they are also charged with the job of preparing citizens for the practical realities of making a living, and so preparing students for practical fields.

A society's brain, if it is to work like the brain of a person, implies that it can carry out two functions, each of them essential for long life. The first of these functions we might call *innovativeness*. It is to read what is going on in the environment to detect changes that may threaten or enhance the person's (or society's) well-being, and to work out a valid response to the threat, or opportunity. The brain reads what is going on and decides what to do. In a society under conditions of change, a citizen takes part in guiding that society through periods of change, and can do so better if prepared to think clearly and completely, with the ability to persuade others. The second job of a brain is to keep the body stable and balanced. In a society we might label this balancing act *cooperativeness*. A key learning in higher education is a sense of citizenship, the essential basis for such cooperativeness.

There is much evidence to suggest that societies with more active thinkers make better progress than the average. Investment in education pays off more predictably than any other form of development. But today it is worth considering higher education more closely because although its "training" component is crucial for the building of skills that accumulate in a

society's "human capital", there are also other skills, less easy to see or to measure, that allow a society to meet the demands of change, or the increasing complexity of its workings. For these challenges the need is for available powers of "critical thinking". This is a rigorously thought-through mental process, based on evidence, consideration of alternatives, defensible logic, and convincing understandable conclusion. To become accustomed to such individual mental discipline takes time, practice, and respect for one of the highest arts of several civilisations. It is rarely acknowledged as such, but those who have influence tend to have also mastered that art.

The problem in higher education is the decline in the cultivation of that subtle competence. This should be occurring in studying for a degree; exactly the place where and when it can have the most chance of being acquired. It is absorbed as students debate in small tutorial groups over issues they are puzzling over, as they discuss with a supervisor an argument they are trying to make, as they join in open debates, write essays that have impact, projects good enough to be published, examination answers that show full understanding, work in groups to complete projects that need explaining, debate with teachers in case discussions, read literary criticism and then write their own, try to explain someone's theory to a friend.

But looking around the world, many of these activities are now in decline. The occasions for cultivating them are being replaced by forms of robotisation: MOOCs, flipped classrooms, teaching by computer, forced choice questionnaires instead of written exams, classes of several hundreds, less and less discussion with teachers. Cost-saving is driven by the economic and managerial logics of "new public management" as universities become, of necessity, increasingly corporate. As pointed out by Martha Nussbaum, a commonly lamented victim is "the humanities" – the origin of the skills of rhetoric. Chomsky laments "the death of American universities" and the rise of two classes with a gulf

between them; the “plutonomy” of administrators and the “precariat” of academics, as Noam Chomsky has put it. Benjamin Ginsberg argues from a deep study that many American universities have degenerated into poorly-managed pseudo corporations. Ronald Barnett sees the air being sucked out of universities. And Phillip Brown writes of “education and the death of human capital”.

If human capital is in decline, then the brains of societies will be starved. Without critical thinking, dealing with change and with societal balance will not be possible using robots. Higher education is “higher”, because it needs to be.



Rethinking Massification

Fazal Rizvi

The growth in gross enrolment ratios (GER) in higher education in Southeast Asia reflects an increasing level of economic, social and political confidence within the region. As the countries of Southeast Asia become integrated into the global economy, the expansion of their systems of higher education is inevitably considered necessary for them to take advantage of the global flows of capital, the shifting modes of production and the global supply chains.

Not surprisingly therefore, governments throughout Southeast Asia have been prepared to allocate large sums of public money to higher education, facilitate greater private investment in the development of new universities and colleges, and encourage the public to view an investment in higher education as an outlay that is likely to bring good returns to both the individuals and to the nation.

In view of this line of thinking, the massification of higher education should clearly be welcomed. It is however important to consider whether the speed of growth has not in fact been *too rapid*, and its form *too ad hoc*. We need to ask if the systems of higher education in Southeast Asia been able to cope with the pace of change. To what extent has the drive towards massification been driven more by demand than by a proper consideration of the issues of supply – by opportunism rather than systematic processes of policy development?

As the demand for higher education among the rapidly growing middle class in Southeast Asia has grown, we need to ask what kind of a job the governments have done to adequately prepare their public higher education institutions (HEIs) to expand, with appropriate levels of support, resource allocation and capacity building. Has a pool of appropriately trained academic staff been available or has been prepared to look after the needs of new cohorts of students, many of whom hail from families that lack traditions of higher learning?

Most governments in Southeast Asia have tried to “soak up the demand” by allowing the entry of a range of private providers, with varying degrees of commitment, expertise and resources to provide quality higher education. And yet the approval and quality assurance processes to which these hastily established private institutions are subjected, have been at best uneven. Indeed, it is also important to ask if the government bureaucracies themselves have the expertise to develop and implement the mechanisms to coordinate the work of private HEIs.

In Southeast Asia, the use of technology has often been considered as a viable option for meeting the growing demand for higher education at a reasonable cost. Experience around the world has shown, however, that online learning can often be much more expensive and complex, if it is to be done properly. Lacking pedagogic traditions in this area, it is a folly to assume that pedagogic expertise in this area can be developed cheaply and quickly,

without sacrificing quality and making sure that the online learning systems are sustainable.

A number of universities in Southeast Asia, both public and private, have been created as a result of rebadging or rebranding the existing technical schools, polytechnics and teachers colleges, without any substantial shifts in the ways in which they are expected to operate, or the type of students they recruit. Many are grossly underfunded, and are widely regarded as “overcrowded factories”. They lack the libraries and laboratories that any decent HEI should possess.

At the same time, little is often done to forge systems designed to develop their staff professionally. It is true that not every staff employed at HEIs needs to be a researcher or publish in international journals. But an institution that is committed to higher learning cannot ignore its responsibility to insist that its staff possess advanced level of knowledge in their subject area, and have a scholarly disposition. In this way, the task of capacity building should be regarded as central in any attempts at massification.

In the haste to establish new universities and expand the existing ones, without any substantial focus on capacity building, curriculum options at most HEIs in Southeast Asia have inevitably been narrow, often restricted to subjects that do not require expensive laboratories, extensive libraries and highly qualified staff. For example, programmes in Business and Management, which are assumed to be cost effective and affordable to many new students, have thus experienced explosive growth, while growth in programmes in much-needed STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) areas has been limited.

As a result, there has been an oversupply of graduates in some subjects, along with a shortage in others. Many graduates moreover do not possess the knowledge and skills that employers consider necessary in the changing labour market geared towards the global economy. The students are often unable to secure a

job in their area of study, creating a risk therefore that, in the longer term, this is likely to generate a legitimisation and motivation crisis among the graduates.

Nor would these graduates be able to make the kind of contribution to national economic development that governments hope from the massification of their systems of higher education. What this suggests is that massification is not inevitably a good thing. Much depends on what its outcomes are, how it is organised and coordinated, and what contribution it makes to the development of the knowledge and skills needed in the global economy.

An increase in GER in higher education may be necessary but is not sufficient to drive economic growth and prosperity. What is required additionally is a more comprehensive program of higher education reform. This involves re-imagining and renewing curriculum and teaching methods, as well as the ways in which HEIs are governed. Above all, it involves capacity building and adequate measures in quality assurance.

The question of the forms in which massification of higher education is achieved should therefore lie at the heart of debates over the expansion of systems of higher education in Southeast Asia – as should indeed the broader questions about the purposes of higher learning, not only in relation to economic growth, but also social and cultural development.

This article was written as a contribution to the debate in The HEAD Foundation’s Policy Brief No. 1: Massification, Globalisation and the Global Knowledge Economy: Policy Challenges and Opportunities for Universities in Southeast Asia (available for download at: www.headfoundation.org/publications-reports/)



International Branch Campuses: Can They Be Research Universities?

Agustian Sutrisno

Many international branch campuses (IBCs) are established by research-intensive universities in their home countries, such as Monash University Malaysia and NYU Abu Dhabi. There are also cases when a partnership needs to be formed between foreign and local universities; Xi'an Jiaotong–Liverpool University in Suzhou is an example of an IBC whose “parent” universities are both classified as research universities. However, these IBCs are not usually seen as research-intensive universities. IBCs are often considered teaching institutions without adequate capacity to undertake in-depth research.

FACTORS INHIBITING RESEARCH AT IBCS

Many factors contribute to a lack of research focus among IBCs. The initial motivation to establish branch campuses is often profit generation. British and Australian universities, two top IBC exporting countries, faced continuous funding cuts from their governments and had to be entrepreneurial in looking for additional sources of funding, consequently establishing IBCs in emerging Asian and Middle Eastern countries. Intensive research, which demands substantial funding, is thus rarely the priority.

Support from local host governments can be difficult as they see IBCs as “foreign” entities. These host governments allow the establishment of IBCs mainly

to absorb unmet demand for higher education at the undergraduate level. Postgraduate courses are on offer chiefly to increase professional skills – thus coursework programs, rather than research programmes, are on offer in most IBCs.

With regard to the academics involved in the IBC operations, many involve fly-in, fly-out lecturers from the home countries who spend short periods at the IBCs delivering intensive courses, without real opportunities to conduct research. If they are engaged in any research during their stay, it most likely takes the form of short-term data collection. The bulk of the research work is completed back in the home country universities. Their publications are associated with the home country universities.

As the number of IBCs continues to increase, some are becoming more permanent features of the local higher education scene, notably in Malaysia. It is natural to think that these campuses will begin to have the capacity and aspirations to do research. The recruitment of academic staff will be for longer terms and fewer fly-in, fly-out lecturers from the home country universities will be involved. The new faculty will have better opportunities to do research locally. Some IBCs also have some access to local host government research grants. Recently, the Chinese and Malaysian governments, main host countries for IBCs, have voiced their aspirations to make these campuses more research focused. While the possibility to be more research focused is starting to emerge, will these IBCs in the long run become research universities?

Etzkowitz’s “Triple-Helix” model seeks to clarify how entrepreneurial research universities function. The model requires three key elements working in unison: government support, research-oriented human resources in universities, and partnering industries. When applying this model to analyse IBCs, the partnership with industries is perhaps a key problem in turning IBCs into research universities. This of course is not an exclusive problem of the IBCs. National flagship universities throughout emerging

Student Mobility from Australia to the Indo-Pacific via the New Colombo Plan

Ly Thi Tran and Thao Thi Phuong Vu

The latest figures from the OECD show that there are currently more than 5 million internationally mobile students, and this number is projected to reach 8 million by 2025. International student mobility, aimed at seeking full degrees overseas, is largely seen as a “South to North” phenomenon – a movement from developing to developed nations. Another significant dimension of student mobility is intra-degree student mobility, through which students undertake education abroad or an international experience component as part of their study programme. A notable example of this student mobility category is Australian students' learning and engagement in the Indo-Pacific as part of their domestically delivered programs. This mobility trend from Australia to the Indo-Pacific region, comprising Asia, the Pacific and the subcontinent, is often referred to as a “North to South” mobility phenomenon.

Student mobility has been considered a strategic tool to assist with the goal of nation states to develop human capital and enhance diplomatic, economic and cultural ties among countries worldwide. Although Australia has long been one of the three most popular destinations for international students, together with the US and the UK, its government and universities have also actively encouraged Australian students to travel abroad to study, especially over the past decade. According to the Australian Universities International

Directors' Forum, the volume of Australian students learning abroad has risen by more than six-fold between 2005 and 2015, from 6,000 to 38,144. It is growing faster than ever, due to the introduction of the New Colombo Plan (NCP). Presently, about one in five Australian students undertake education abroad during their undergraduate study.

Australia recognises that its future is increasingly connected with the Indo-Pacific. In particular, approximately 80% of Australia's trade and a majority of its biggest service export of over A\$29 billion (US\$22 billion) for international education are with Asia. The Australian government has made students' engagement with and learning in the Indo-Pacific a national priority because of the importance of this region to the nation's social, political and economic development.

Beginning in 2014, the NCP, which represents Australia's signature initiative of student mobility and public diplomacy, aims to provide Australian undergraduate students with the exposure to the Indo-Pacific region and “broaden and deepen” Australia's engagement in the region through “people-to-people connections”. According to the government, the number of Australian students funded by the NCP to undertake international experience and study in the Indo-Pacific will reach 31,000 by 2018.

The NCP represents a type of reciprocal international education and a reverse form of the original Colombo Plan. The Colombo Plan is the Australian government's signature inbound mobility programme, which reflects the principle of international education as public diplomacy. The plan began in 1951 and provided aid to enable around 20,000 Asian scholars to study in Australia by 1985. Other premier mobility initiatives by the Australian government over the past four decades include the Endeavour Award programme and the AusAID scholarship programme (now Australian Awards Scholarships) and the Australian-Asian Universities Cooperation Scheme (AAUCS), which eventually became the

International Development Programme (IDP) in 1981. These mobility initiatives are partly underpinned by the ideology of education for nation building, despite being criticised as perpetuating the political, diplomatic and economic agenda of the provider country. Scholars who have been provided with the opportunities to study in Australia are expected to become key actors contributing to the development of their country and the relationships between their home and host countries upon return. In this regard, public diplomacy is constructed in line with an “education as aid” principle.

“MOBILITY AS CONNECTING” AND “MOBILITY AS BECOMING”

The extent to which the government’s goal of using student mobility as a tool for public diplomacy is largely under-researched. This topic is critical, given the current context in which both the government and institutions require evidence-based research and advice to formulate policies and initiatives that effectively harnesses the potential benefits of student mobility for individual students, institutions and the nation states. Our research on Australian students’ engagement with learning and public diplomacy via the NCP addresses this important topic and thus generates some foundational knowledge about two important issues: the forms of learning Australian students undertake in Asia and the effects of their learning and regional engagement.

The research draws on Pierre Bourdieu’s notions of habitus and capital to interpret the extent to which the NCP students have developed their potential as an actor of public diplomacy. It indicates that the potential to employ student mobility as a mechanism of public diplomacy should be understood in relation to the concepts of “mobility as becoming” and “mobility as connecting”.

Firstly, “mobility as becoming” underscores how the NCP experience and exposure to Asia provides Australian students with new conditions and

possibilities to transcend the ‘normal’ to the new “normal” and the new “possible”. This encompasses their evolving worldview of Asia, broadened understanding of the future chances and growing awareness of their “life possibles”. Deeper, broader and more sustaining engagement with Asia beyond the level of travel or tourism has become a new “possible” to the students. In certain instances, such a recognition of the new “possible” shapes and is shaped by what students want to do in their life.

Secondly, there is a critical need to frame student engagement with Asia through “mobility as connecting”, which underscores the students’ accumulation of embodied cultural and social capital as the enablers of their participatory capital in their engagement with Asia. Viewed through the lenses of “mobility as becoming” and “mobility as connecting”. NCP as education diplomacy can motivate students to transcend their initial goal of undertaking international mobility to pursue a personal interest in travel and/or enhancing their own employability towards engagement for the collective, through which students aspire to create additional meaning and connections between their education and the wider and “different” communities both inside and beyond Australia.

SUSTAINING STUDENT MOBILITY AS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

There are three important factors that can help enhance and sustain the Australian students’ role as meaningful and productive actors in engagement with the Indo-Pacific.

First, the mobility programme must help students develop participatory capital and transcend the level of awareness and understanding to more reflective and participatory capacity. Previous studies suggest that the pedagogy embedded in the design of the mobility programmes across the pre-departure, in-country and re-entry stages is of significance. Engagement with the Indo-Pacific through the NCP

program encompasses an array of educational activities situated in a different space from their home and their conventional education setting. Guided and structured learning through critical reflection and specific learning activities aimed at validating, integrating and extending students’ international experiences in the curriculum will be significant. These activities enable students to engage in productive and meaningful integration of international experience post return and beyond, capitalising on the potential impacts of the exposure to the Indo-Pacific on identity, life, career and capabilities. Without these, the learning and engagement may be at a superficial level and sometimes pose the risk of reinforcing imperialist perspectives or stereotypes about another culture and its practices to which students are exposed during their brief encounter with the Indo-Pacific.

Second, the awareness of the Australian identity and national attachment should be brought further to the fore in the pre-departure programme and reflections during the programme. Such consciousness provides students with the lens to view themselves as individuals and Australian citizens in intercultural interactions and connections with the Indo-Pacific.

Third, a critical need arises to promote Indo-Pacific engagement opportunities in Australia post-return, to transform students into active and sustaining actors of public diplomacy beyond in-country engagement. In this regard, the suggestion made by the head of Asia Options, an online platform for Australians interested in studying, working and living in Asia, is worth reiterating: to foster “Indo-Pacific engagement opportunities beyond engagement in-country” as well as to promote “the region back in Australia post return.” Strategies and support to help NCP alumni become active and sustaining actors of public diplomacy beyond in-country experience are critical to harnessing student mobility as a mechanism of public diplomacy via sustaining, meaningful, and productive connections between Australian students and the Indo-Pacific.

This article is a short version of a forthcoming paper on the New Colombo Plan in Higher Education Quarterly.



Who Teaches What Types of Students? Segmented Markets in Asian Higher Education

Yasmin Y. Ortiga

The Asian region has figured prominently in studies of international student migration, with scholars highlighting the rapid advancement of Asian universities and the growing influence of international students in higher education. Much has been written about the massive state funds poured into teaching and research, and the rising number of students seeking degrees in emerging education hubs within the region.

Yet, existing studies have tended to focus on specific sites and subjects – in particular, wealthy “global cities” such as Singapore and Hong Kong, where local institutions compete with prestigious counterparts in the West. Fewer scholars have looked into the role of institutions in other less developed locations in today’s knowledge-based economy, in which lower-tier universities with limited academic resources, also seek to compete for foreign students. Despite an obvious lack of academic prestige, these institutions seek to take advantage of a growing

international market for higher education. They do so by catering specifically to less privileged students unable to access more desirable destinations, either in the West or within the region.

Institutions within this segment of the Asian higher education market often utilise the same discourses of internationalisation and human capital development that more “prestigious” universities use. Yet, at the same time, institutional efforts to put these discourses into practice vary widely on the ground. In this article, I describe three cases, based on research studies conducted by myself and two other scholars who sought to investigate unlikely cases of higher education and mobility within the Asian region.

First, Le Ha Phan’s work reveals how regional universities in Vietnam attempt to create a “global” image by offering English-language programmes, despite the limited capacities of teachers and students within the institution. Phan describes how such programmes encourage two very different migration flows: an influx of English-speaking teachers from neighbouring countries such as the Philippines, as well as the internal movement of poor, rural students within Vietnam. Phan describes how, despite a strong desire to seek global education as a means to social mobility, students develop a sense of “educational mediocrity,” or are resigned to the uneven quality of their “global” education.

In contrast, Peidong Yang’s research challenges the traditional belief that international student mobility is always a rational desire to accumulate human and social capital. As Yang notes, this view of the motivation of students reinforces the assumption that students tend to move towards institutions in the “English-speaking West”; in reality, students move for a variety of reasons, not all of which are necessarily calculative and purposefully strategic. His research shows how lower-middle/working class Indian students pursue Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) degrees in provincial-

level Chinese universities. Such a phenomenon is not insignificant, given that there are now up to 10,000 Indian students in 50 Chinese colleges. In his ethnographic fieldwork in both China and India, Yang argues that such movement is characterised by compromise, chance, and complicity with mediocre educational experiences. In this sense, Indian medical students in Yang’s study see their move towards China as a way of negotiating educational desires and social expectations within the realities of their limited resources and abilities to enter more selective medical schools.

Lastly, my own work investigates the creation of an unlikely education hub in Manila, Philippines. Like Yang and Phan’s work, I find that while Philippine universities do not possess the quality education that attracts students to other countries, these institutions have also seen a growing number of international students from countries such as South Korea, Nigeria, and India. Yet, in contrast to Vietnam and China, Philippine universities appeal to students seeking qualifications in professions where Filipino migrants are highly represented – nursing, medicine, and seafaring – either to gain an advantage within their home countries, or as a stepping stone towards jobs in the Middle East and North America. Here, Filipino school owners and state officials build off the country’s reputation as a top source of migrant labour, marketing Philippine universities as the best venue to train for jobs found anywhere in the world.

All three studies emphasise the diversity of knowledge institutions and student mobilities within the region, and how such “unlikely” locations create different forms of migration within a segment of the higher education market largely ignored in current academic scholarship. These gaps signal new possibilities for higher education studies in the future – in particular, a direction that is likely to move towards studying

different motivations, different cohorts of students, in different types of institutions.

This article is based on a panel presentation entitled “Discrepant Student Mobilities and Unlikely ‘Global’ Universities in Vietnam, the Philippines, and China” at the International Conference on Asian Studies 2017 at Chiang Mai, Thailand.



How the Mission to Embrace Adult Learning is Changing Singapore’s Tertiary Landscape

Lim Lai Cheng

“Old models are not working, new models are coming thick and fast, and we’re having to adjust and to keep up, because of technology and globalisation. And the disruption will happen over and over again, relentlessly” — Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, 2016 National Day Rally Speech

Technology is radically transforming every industry sector in Singapore and most parts of the world. As Singapore’s leaders have continually reiterated, this will continue to have a severe impact on jobs, professions and careers. Although unemployment in Singapore is relatively low compared to other developed countries, the annual average of 3.1% for citizens in 2016 has been the highest in six years. At the 2017 May Day Rally, Lim Swee Say, the Minister for Manpower, underscored the fact that a shortage of skills is likely to be the catalyst for higher

unemployment in the future, rather than a lack of jobs. The key to growth ultimately depends on how fast Singapore is able to restructure its industries to remain competitive and how able workers can develop new skills to stay relevant.

Since 2016, different agencies in Singapore have been working hard on Industry Transformation Maps (ITMs) to help drive productivity and innovation. These ITMs cover over 30 industry sectors that contribute close to 80% of Singapore’s GDP. SkillsFuture, a national movement which encourages all Singaporeans to engage in lifelong learning and gain mastery in domains they are passionate in, has also gained momentum with substantial government funding and programmes to drive skills upgrading. More significant for higher education is the fact that a second ministerial post was created within the Ministry of Education, solely to oversee Higher Education and Skills. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education chairs a committee comprising the provosts of the six public universities and principals of the five polytechnics in Singapore, as well as key officers from SkillsFuture Singapore, a government agency. This committee coordinates the work of skills training and competency building among the Institutes for Higher Education (IHL) for Singapore’s workforce and the future economy.

There are now schools, academies or centres in every IHL specially focused on providing professional continuing education for working adults. Each university and polytechnic has been assigned lead roles in emerging areas identified by the government as critical for the growth of the future economy. Each spearheads training at the basic, intermediate and advanced levels in areas such as finance, data analytics, tech-enabled services, digital media, cybersecurity, entrepreneurship, advanced manufacturing and urban solutions.

How is this new imperative and surge of professional education programmes shaping the tertiary landscape, especially with regard to universities that have thus far been focused on research?

Here are three key changes in paradigms that I expect will take place.

OPEN SYSTEMS: THE NEW "TRADITIONAL"

Universities have traditionally operated on a cohort-centric model where all students attend classes for consecutive years. This has allowed for a lot of efficiencies but resulted in a separation of pre-employment from continuing education training. Adult education or training should not be confined to simply "working adults". Similar to emerging trends in the West, we have to be prepared for high school leavers with good academic grades from the junior colleges and polytechnics to choose to take their degrees in a completely new way. They may want to integrate real world or work experience with just-in-time learning and design their own academic journey over a period of years. Our autonomous universities (AUs) do not yet have an open system for individuals to move in and out of university to periodically top up their learning. In light of this, universities should begin to think about delivering higher education in a more imaginative way, leveraging new technologies to provide greater flexibility and autonomy for learners of all ages to enter or return to university at different points in their career. Micro-credentialling and nano-degrees, where learners can stack up competency-based modules to create their own degrees from different institutions, blended or otherwise, may be the new norm.

RELEARNING ADULT EDUCATION AND ANDRAGOGY

Adult learning is less about maturation and whole person development than instrumental learning, that is, learning focused on actual knowledge and skills, and the application of performance-based learning for specific employment purposes. The key to effective adult learning lies in identifying the skills or competencies that employers want, that are directly related to jobs. Adult education does not have a "captive market" unlike undergraduate education. Adult classes usually carry significant opportunity

costs for both workers and employers in terms of lost work time, wage sacrifice, increased costs, less leisure time and so on. This is why adult workers and employers have a very low threshold for training that they deem "irrelevant". Universities need to cut straight to competency-based training that imparts the skills needed to improve productivity in the workplace. The delivery of adult learning has to be customised to meet adult workers' needs, that is, "bite-sized" modules and just-in-time learning. Universities will have to strike a good balance between using faculty and practitioners or adjunct with practical experience to teach courses. Having industry practitioners share their experiences and embedding real-life projects in the programmes enhances industry knowledge, makes the programmes more relevant, and is insightful and beneficial for the learners.

MULTI-MODAL TRACKS

Universities have built up valuable content for undergraduate education. Central to the new approach to continuing education is the unstacking of modules from undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and the re-purposing of the content for delivery for working adults. Continuing education centres can allow working professionals to combine modules to form a certificate or diploma. Part-time students could subsequently stack the modules from their diploma or certificate programmes, obtain credit recognition or waivers for them, and work towards a master degree in a shorter time frame or on a part-time basis. For working adults who do not as yet possess a basic degree, it is possible that they are allowed to take undergraduate modules in bite-size format and stack towards a bachelor's degree as well.

INCENTIVISING AND REWARDING ACADEMICS

Research universities tend to reward faculty based on their research publications in top journals. With the falling undergraduate enrolment due to a decline in birth rate, and funding directed to continuing education, the allocation of faculty workload in terms of teaching undergraduates versus working adults

will have to be adjusted. Incentives and schemes to recognise service or contribution towards upskilling the workforce will have to be put in place, to ensure prioritisation and sustainability. Universities will be well advised to review their performance matrix to ensure that academics who are strong adult educators are duly rewarded so that there is continual unlocking of university resources for the SkillsFuture initiative.

CONCLUSION

While the opportunities to provide industry-relevant competency training abound, universities will have to adopt appropriate measures for quality assurance of modules that are credit-bearing. There should also be coordination on the part of centres set up for continuing education with the schools so that marketing efforts and outreach to participants and funding agencies are well organised. The coordination will also ensure that there is provision for the recognition of prior learning for working professionals who seek credit exemptions, within reasonable limits, for skills and competencies acquired from previous training and on-the-job learning.

Malaysia's National Language Policy and Graduate Employability

Viswanathan Selvaratnam

Malaysia's goal is to transform itself by 2020 from the middle-income trap it is currently in, into a technologically savvy, export-driven and high-income developed nation. The key drivers for this intended growth trajectory are high quality human capital, in addition to vibrant foreign and domestic investment. To boost the country's critical stock of talented, entrepreneurial and "balanced" human capital, Prime Minister Najib Razak launched the "Soaring Upwards" higher education initiative. Its aim was to accelerate the production of a "first-rate educated workforce" to upscale productivity and hasten economic growth, high-wage employment and economic prosperity.

Developed and developing nations, including Malaysia, have believed over time that their talented human capital needs can be actualised through sustained and effective investments in a broad-based high quality education provision for their young citizens. This was to be achieved through a well-formulated, efficiently coordinated and well-funded, inclusive national education system from pre-school to tertiary level. Students have to be equipped with bilingual and numerical competency, critical thinking, communication skills and core ideas, as well as be nurtured to be creative, innovative, technology savvy and entrepreneurial in preparation for work.

In order to achieve developed nation status with its limited domestic market, Malaysia has no alternative



than to be a robust exporter of high value-added goods and services to a highly competitive global marketplace. To hold and enhance its competitive edge in its export value chain with other aggressive market players, the country's higher education institutions have to continuously acclimatise its graduates on an upward scaled knowledge, language and skills path. Additionally, the country must be able to leverage its graduates in the ever-changing occupational structures in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Otherwise, the country will not be able to generate and accumulate the capital to achieve high-income and developed status. Does Malaysia's education system – from pre-school to the tertiary level – inculcate in its students the critical and complex bundle of ingredients to meet the human capital challenges the country's advancing economy aspires to?

MALAYSIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION MODEL

Malaysia's higher education provision is underpinned and driven by a politically determined, structurally divergent and racially polarised public-private higher education system. The public provision is centrally controlled, highly subsidised and driven by a politically resolute, race-based affirmative action strategy and an insular national language policy. In the last four decades, public education has been characterised by a low level of English competency. This has drastically inhibited the system from preparing students to keep pace with the accelerating growth in new knowledge as well as the changing needs of the labour market. The parallel, highly structured and overwhelmingly profit motivated private system is also anticipated to meet the high-quality graduates needs of the economy. Can these parallel yet divergent systems, inbuilt with overpowering political and economic constraints, generate the right mix of high-quality skilled graduates to drive a technologically savvy economy and achieve high-income and developed nation status?

Small countries like Malaysia have no choice but to be intertwined with the increasingly competitive global marketplace to market their products and services. To maintain and enhance their competitive-edge over other competitors in the global marketplace, Malaysia has to develop the requisite cognitive, analytical, problem solving, decision making, communicating abilities and interpersonal and management skills underpinned by a good command of English. The packaging of these complex skillsets will enable graduates to command their own value in the advancing knowledge economy.

WEAKENING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY, DECLINING QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Bahasa Malaysia, the national language, was made the sole medium of instruction from 1983. Although English was made a compulsory second language, nationalist and patriotic sentiments, conjoined with political exigency, progressively gave greater emphasis to the usage of Bahasa Malaysia, while the use of English was allowed to deteriorate substantially. This has contributed to a drastic decline in English proficiency in the national schools in the last forty years, as well as among tertiary students and the academic community. The policy was pursued despite the pre-eminence of English as the dominant world language and the lingua franca in international communication, knowledge, trade and diplomacy. An overwhelming majority of academic books, research documents and high-impact research journals, particularly in the critical STEM subjects, are in English. English has emerged as the indispensable language of the international scientific community, and for accessing rapidly advancing scientific knowledge. Malaysia's drive towards a modern scientific and technological savvy and export-driven nation hinges on a high-level of competency in the English language and its access to the latest discoveries and development in tandem with the rest of the world. English is a key requirement to secure high-wage employment in the areas of commerce,

finance, trade, technology, science, both nationally and globally, and social mobility.

SUPPLY-DEMAND MISMATCH AND GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT

The outcry from both the public and private sector is that the universities are not nurturing graduates with sufficient English language skills, the mental building blocks to think constructively, and of a quality workforce that Malaysian industrial and service sector employers are in dire need. As the private sector’s demand for better skilled workers increases, many top firms are almost exclusively recruiting returning Malaysian graduates from selective overseas English medium universities.

A government law maker pointed out recently that thousands of local public university graduates were unemployable by the private sector because of their poor command of the English language. These graduates are recruited into the highly bloated public service. The concern over the failure of thousands of local university graduates to secure employment due to their poor command of the English language and their “inability to string a sentence together in English” was reiterated by Adenan Satem, the former Chief Minister of the East Malaysian state of Sarawak. To alleviate this serious and growing problem of “graduates without a future”, the Chief Minister decided to adopt English, the “language of the world”, as the second official language for Sarawak.

The National Graduate Employability Blueprint 2012-2017 highlights the prevailing serious mismatch between the supply and demand of graduates in the labour market and the country’s general employability rates for graduates “remain poor and unimproved”. The Malaysian Employers Federation pointed out in 2016 that there were 200,000 unemployed graduates in the country. In JobStreet.com’s survey of 2013, employers stated that there was a gap between their expectations of graduates and the quality of

graduates produced by the country’s universities. Nearly 70% of employers think that the quality of the country’s fresh graduates is average. They lacked sufficiently developed cognitive skills and the ability to write correctly as well as communicate orally in English. Poor command of the English language was singled out as the primary reason for their growing unemployability.

To boost the employment rate of public university graduates, the government instituted the 1Malaysia Training Scheme and the Graduate Employability Management Scheme. It is perplexing how public university graduates need to be retrained, at the taxpayer’s expense, when deficiencies within the higher education system are not addressed. The question also is whether short programmes are likely to be sufficient in enhancing candidates’ glaring deficiencies in the English language, and other work related deficiencies, to the required level for the workplace.



Researching Higher Education in Singapore

Michael H. Lee

Higher education as a field of academic research became more developed and important in Singapore in the 1980s, when the city-state began placing more emphasis on reforming and restructuring its higher education sector to achieve the status as “Asia’s global education hub”. The past few decades have witnessed a significant growth of research and literature on higher education in Singapore, which

have covered several trends of development and major issues arising from changes facing the higher education system in Singapore.

It is common for scholars to highlight the close relationship between higher education and the state, which used to rely on a strongly interventionist policy and implementation strategy to ensure that the higher education system served the national and economic interests of the young nation. In this sense, the universities were not independent from the state system, but had to work with the government in order to achieve goals of national development. Consequently, research on higher education in Singapore is related to both national policy issues and international trends.

In reviewing the major themes of higher education studies in Singapore, the focus should be placed on the relationship between higher education and Singapore's developmental state, which has consistently played a significant role in boosting economic growth, facilitating export-led industrialisation, regulating market competition, propelling social progress, and strengthening racial harmony since Singapore's independence in 1965. From the Singapore government's perspective, major investment in the higher education system is deemed necessary, for it has contributed well to economic growth. The higher education system has a definite role to play in achieving national development priorities such that it has to be placed under direct policy guidance of the government, rather than for academics to be given a free hand in governing the higher education institutions themselves.

Meanwhile, the prominent role of the state in higher education is not only confined to scrutinising institutional performance – it is the most important financier for the higher education system. The Singapore government still large heavy financial subsidies to higher education institutions. University governance has been characterised by the term

“centralised decentralisation”, which demonstrates the combination of centralisation and decentralisation strategies for reforming and restructuring higher education. The devolution of mainly financial and human resource control is matched by the centralisation of policy and decision-making power and strategic command in top management of higher education institutions with the state authority steering the sector from a distance.

Apart from addressing the prominent role of the state, most researchers note the impact of massification on Singapore's higher education system. The policy of higher education expansion, which came after the first economic recession in Singapore in the mid-1980s, was considered a viable means of upgrading the skills of the workforce to facilitate economic restructuring. This massification of higher education was marked not only by a significant rise in student population, but also by a steady growth of higher education institutions (including both universities and polytechnics), and funding for research and development (R&D).

Most studies in higher education research revolve around striking a right balance between expansion and excellence amid the process of massification. While Singapore has witnessed a significant expansion of higher education, the quality of higher education is maintained through strict admission criteria, together with a highly competitive system for the selection of students. Even though the higher education system has been expanded, the government's elitist belief largely remains unchanged, for universities are seen to be reserved for quality students without compromising admission standards and quality of students. This not only concerns the quality of students – a stringent recruitment policy is adopted to ensure that local and international academics with high professional and standards are engaged, in order to strengthen the academic leadership and scholarship in Singapore's higher education institutions.

Another major theme which has been widely covered and delved into by researchers, especially from the mid-1990s onwards, is concerned with how globalisation would affect the development of higher education in the city-state. Whether or not Singapore will be able to preserve its competitive and comparative advantages in the global market, its universities definitely have a clear role to play – not only in producing highly skilled labour, but also, more importantly, new knowledge and ideas for the future of Singapore’s economy to be built on the Silicon Valley experience. This would provide the critical mass of advanced knowledge sources, including universities, advanced public and corporate research laboratories, venture capital, entrepreneurial talents, knowledge workers, specialised professional services, and sophisticated end users.

In this context of globalisation, market forces and competition are the major elements to be considered in planning for the future development of higher education. The concept of “marketisation” aptly illustrates the situation facing most higher education institutions. More emphasis is placed on the importance of market relevance when higher education institutions have to develop their curriculum and pedagogy. Widespread attention is given to the employability of graduates and how much they earn, for they have become important performance indicators for higher education institutions, and whether they are responsive to market needs. Meanwhile, the Singapore government harnesses market forces to stimulate competition between local and foreign universities – not to cure the financial stringency problem, which does not exist in Singapore, but improve managerial efficiency and cost-effectiveness in higher education institutions.

Closely related to the trend of marketisation is how Singapore’s higher education has also been profoundly affected by internationalisation. The Global Schoolhouse project, which is not only

an education policy but also a population and immigration policy of drawing foreign talents and students, has implications for transforming higher education. It sets education out as an export service industry to boost the reputation of Singapore as a global education hub in Asia, and to generate national income for the city-state. Through various forms of linkages and partnerships formed between local publicly-funded bedrock universities and branding world class universities from overseas, it was expected Singapore could be developed as a “global knowledge hub” dedicated to new knowledge production and innovation, R&D activities, and also university-industry linkages.

More recently, higher education research has focused more on the entrepreneurialisation, which has been interpreted as the way for higher education institutions to add a more entrepreneurial aspect to their research and educational activities. This includes the commercialisation of knowledge and research and the cultivation of entrepreneurial spirit among graduates, for instance. The development of a “entrepreneurial university model” is aimed to make higher education institutions to shoulder more responsibilities and make more contributions to the local economy with the government’s proactive role in providing infrastructure and financial resources as well as forging strategic cooperation and alliances between local higher education institutions and multinational corporations.

Higher education is well-resourced for it is substantially financed by the state and public money. For Singapore, the strong state’s commitment and its significant financial input are indispensable to a relatively rapid growth and development of higher education. Nonetheless, it should also be noted that, besides substantial financial input, which is considered an investment rather an expense, it is necessary to have clear policy goals as well as swift and effective policy implementation strategy to enable such a

rapid growth and improvement of higher education as what is shown in the case of Singapore during the time when many higher education institutions around the world have suffered from financial stringency.

In spite of these achievements, it is important to note some unresolved issues to be tackled in Singapore’s higher education system. There is always a question whether the state’s highly interventionist approach to govern higher education institutions would be able to deliver a genuinely entrepreneurial and innovative environment for academics, researchers and students to be cultivated with the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit. Given the state’s interventionist approach in higher education governance, it should not be surprising to foresee questions and debates on such matters as academic freedom and institutional autonomy, both of which are more likely to be considered by top universities overseas in determining if Singapore will be a suitable point for them to expand their presence in Asia.

There are also some unresolved issues facing Singapore’s higher education system in the coming years: How can innovation and entrepreneurial spirit be promoted in higher education institutions, which are still bounded by the heavy presence of the state? How can the dilemma between strong state intervention in higher education and the core academic values of academic freedom and institutional autonomy be solved? How can the existing ethnic disparities in higher education institutions, in particularly universities, be rectified? These questions can be included in the future research agenda for higher education studies in Singapore.



Current Trends and Challenges for the Future of Higher Education for Development in Southeast Asia

Li Jie Sheng

Higher education was a key element in the East Asian miracle, the success story of Asian giants such as Singapore, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan. The World Bank’s 1993 *The East Asian Miracle* report noted that higher education investment, especially in the area of technical and vocational training, was a crucial factor in improving human capital. These East Asian governments did invest financially in their higher education sector, for example, Singapore’s focus on building world-class universities and training people in information technology. While these governments did invest their own finances in higher education, donors, however, have provided more financial aid to higher education budgets as well as development expertise. For example, Singapore’s then University of Singapore’s (today’s National University of Singapore) infrastructure was aided by a World Bank loan in 1972. Further up in Northeast Asia, South Korea similarly used a US\$ 100 million loan in 1984 to improve the quality of science and technology courses in its colleges.

In recent decades, other Southeast Asian nations have developed and implemented higher education blueprints, similarly investing in higher education

and gaining the aid of international development organisations. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was active in aiding Malaysia by providing loans through the “Higher Education Loan Fund Project” and sponsoring scholarships for Malaysian students at the turn of the 21st century. Vietnam’s Higher Education Reform Agenda, initiated in 2005, was financed by government and foreign aid funding. This pattern of investing in higher education and complementing it with foreign assistance will likely continue as more East Asian countries recognise the importance of higher education.

THOUGHTS ON THE PROGRESS OF EAST ASIAN EDUCATION

With this continued drive to improve higher education by this dynamic region by both governments and donors, there are four points that should be considered.

First, while higher education is essential, governments should not ignore the value of primary and secondary education. These other forms education naturally aid the creation of higher education and related institutions; if they are of high quality, tertiary education is also likely to be so. Publications such as *The East Asian Miracle* have noted how primary education helped to rapidly improve human capital amongst the East Asian Tigers. This is not to argue that more finances should allocate towards these forms of education. Rather, there should be a careful consideration when considering financing different levels of education.

Second, and following suit, in this era of increasing access and numbers of higher education institutions, Southeast Asian governments should constantly reflect on the role of higher education. Despite the above growth of higher education institutions, there is little empirical evidence that higher education has any impact on economic growth. Certain higher education subjects such as history and humanities subjects do improve individual human capital. They, however, do not always increased the productivity of future workers. Stakeholders should focus on the

type of education, such as type of courses offered, in order to create a positive impact on productivity and growth. Some Southeast Asian governments have carefully carved higher education institutions for improving productivity, for example Singapore’s Singapore Institute of Technology and the Singapore University of Technology and Design. Given the high cost of creating and maintaining high quality institutions, countries should still tread cautiously when investing in them.

Third, there needs to be a careful balance meeting global targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals and addressing local needs via higher education. This is a challenging issue to balance given that donors would still constantly urge recipients to meet global targets. For example, donors have been focused on the fourth Sustainable Development Goal and its sub-objectives. Donors may also focus their aid towards other objectives such as gender equality. It is not incorrect to aim towards topics such as access and quality of institutions. Yet, this may clash national priorities such as improving Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Malaysia or English language proficiency in Indonesia. Both donors and recipient countries should use global targets and shaped their objectives towards local concerns that could be addressed by higher education. As Jan Vandermoortele, one of the architects of the Millennium Development, notes, such context specific setting requires careful consideration, and countries should not bear a stigma for not focusing on global goals.

A fourth topic would be the embracing of new donors and new ideas. These new donors, many of which were previous aid recipients themselves, have also embarked on higher education development projects. China is one of these new donors and has been providing scholarships and training to Southeast Asian students in both Chinese and local universities. They have also improved higher education-related institutes such as providing an electronic library to the Royal Academy of Cambodia. These donors,

however, are not fully transparent in their financial assistance or projects, possibly resulting in inhibiting development and increasing corruption in Southeast Asian nations. New donors bring different ideologies to education, especially alternatives to the economic-centric, neoliberal policies from established donors. While some of these new donors are seeking to improve the transparency of their higher education projects, this push for transparency and coordination must be strengthened and sustained.

Southeast Asian and East Asian governments will continue to improve their higher education systems and governments through government financing and foreign assistance. As they progress, they should consider the utility of other forms of education and how higher education can improve worker productivity. As donors assist governments, both should not simply aim towards global goals but shape them to suit local needs. The ideas of new donors are also to be welcomed, but such projects must be transparent.

Universities Can Help Overcome Economic Nationalism

Yojana Sharma

In an era when economic and trade nationalism is disrupting the multilateral world order, universities have a role to play in driving multinational cross-border collaborations, and preparing for a future thrown into uncertainty by the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution.

University presidents, policy-makers and business leaders in the Asia-Pacific region came together in a University Leaders' Forum just before the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation or APEC summit in Vietnam earlier this month to talk about joint strategies and policies to keep pace with disruptive technologies – such as digitisation, robotics and artificial intelligence.

The rise of economic nationalism and decline of the multilateral trade system, particularly since United States President Donald Trump entered office this year, was a major focus of the main summit of APEC heads of state from the 21 member countries in Danang, Vietnam.

Early in his presidency Trump announced his country's withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership or TPP, a multilateral trade pact with 11 other Asian and Pacific Rim countries in Australasia, North America and Latin America, sparking consternation in the region.

Many governments are fearful of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which "has created hopes for higher productivity but also anxiety about its transformative implications", said Vietnam Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh, co-chair of the APEC ministerial meeting on 9 November, which preceded the leaders' summit on 10-11 November.

Universities can inform policy-makers on how to prepare for disruption, particularly understanding what is happening with students, who are at the cutting edge of innovation, delegates from business, government and universities heard at the University Leaders' Forum in Danang on 8 November, organised by the Association of Pacific Rim Universities or APRU.

With many universities already collaborating in cross-border and multidisciplinary research, "we can see many opportunities and an emancipation from the national context," said APRU Secretary General Christopher Tremewan.

Referring to disruptive technologies, Chi Youngsuk, chairman of Elsevier, a science information and analytics company, told the forum: “The issues that we approach today are too big for one nation to tackle, too complex to understand concretely in one discipline, it runs across all disciplines.”

RESISTING ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

Chi added universities were the one place where economic nationalism could be resisted.

“Collectively APRU has the most powerful set of universities with [an] incredible voice to overcome this period of turning our back [away] from multilateralism,” Chi said. “We want to see more collaboration because the problems are just too damn big. We cannot solve this alone. Multilateralism is giving way to bilateral conversations which does not accomplish as much for the world as it accomplishes for individual countries,” said Chi.

While major companies cannot resist the trend for many governments to move towards more inward looking economic and trade policies, universities can try to promote multilateral discussion, as well as understand the pace of change and challenges at a time when governments are focused on short-term initiatives, he said.

He called on universities “to stick your neck out and resist this [nationalism] trend, which is dangerous for all of us”.

Though there is much talk about cross-sector innovation, “there are still a lot of barriers against innovation, especially in relation to partnerships between governments and universities”, said Wang Yan, coordinator of the Education Network of the APEC Human Resources Development Working Group.

he pointed to the APEC Education Strategy Action Plan endorsed at the APEC summit – the first educational blueprint up to 2030 since the inception

of APEC in 1989 – as a new example for multilateral education collaboration, including in delivering the skills required for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

“It is increasingly important that education and training deliver competencies that reflect the current and future needs of the regional labour market and that these competencies be commonly understood and recognised across borders, and systems,” according to the policy document drawn up earlier this year on APEC’s education strategy and submitted to the summit by the APEC Human Resources Development Working Group.

International trade lawyer and digital trade expert, Robert Holleyman, previously deputy US trade representative during the administration of former US President Barack Obama and now CEO of C&M International, a trade and public affairs consultancy, told the forum that university collaboration with the private sector and policy-makers in APEC can produce the next generation of leaders who will understand how better to collaborate.

“Government officials are focused on short-term initiatives,” Holleyman said, and this can be as short as their own term in office. Yet the disruptive changes of the Fourth Industrial Revolution can seem threatening because of the pace of change and extensive global competition.

Universities bring to the table, especially in APEC, things that policy-makers are looking for, “in some cases before the policy-makers know what the questions are”, including understanding what is happening in a fast-changing technological and research environment, Holleyman said.

“Artificial intelligence poses opportunities for more quality jobs in the future,” said Huang Dinglong, founder and CEO of China’s Malong Technologies, which focuses on artificial intelligence.

Companies will need more people to do interesting work in these areas. “The best job has not been created yet, it is still coming,” he told the forum.

SKILLS MISMATCH

APEC economies have identified structural unemployment and a skills mismatch as major concerns for the region. There is a gap between the skills of workers looking for work and the skills required for emerging job opportunities according to the 2017 APEC Economic Policy Report on structural reform and human capital development.

In Danang, the Association of Pacific Rim Universities announced a partnership with APEC’s Project DARE on data science, analytics and raising employment to bridge the skills gap in the region. “Higher education institutions will play a critical role in addressing the future DSA [data science and analytics] skills shortages,” said Nguyen Kim Son, president of Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

“The lack of DSA skills currently sits on top of the skills shortage in the APEC region, not just in terms of the size of the gap, but also its essential role in driving artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, cyber-physical systems that are at the centre of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the future of work and the future of global prosperity,” said Project DARE Co-chair Clay Stobaugh, executive vice-president of Wiley, a global publishing and research company.

“One million jobs will go unfilled in APEC because the skills sets won’t be able to provide for data analytics as required by employers,” Stobaugh told the University Leaders’ Forum.

Project DARE was launched by APEC earlier this year to develop the competencies required for future DSA workers.

“DSA-enabled knowledge workers will have skills not easily replaced by automation; instead they will be

better prepared to unlock the promise and potential of data and the technologies that depend on it,” according to the APEC Human Resources Development Working Group in a June communication in preparation for the November summit.

The competencies were developed by a 50-person advisory group from 14 APEC member economies, co-chaired by Wiley and the Business-Higher Education Forum. Advisors included business leaders who oversee data science and analytics within their companies, academics involved with inter-disciplinary data science initiatives and curricula, and government officials involved in human resources development.

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About THF

The HEAD Foundation is a charitable organisation set up in 2013 in Singapore to contribute to the development of Asia. As a think tank, we focus on issues around:



Human Capital



Education



Leadership



Sustainability

We aim to influence policies and create positive social impact which will contribute to the sustainable development of Asia. We partner with like-minded regional and global experts and institutions to advance our common goal, and promote public awareness on issues in our fields of expertise.

Our Work

- We support worthy research projects and social initiatives in Asia
- We publish newsletters, research reports, policy documents and a book series to disseminate knowledge and share opinions
- We host regular public talks to create awareness and share knowledge with our community
- We run capacity building programmes to equip community and education leaders in Asia with practical skills to address pressing challenges

Our People

- Our Advisors and Fellows share their extensive experience and leadership. They are instrumental in helping the Foundation shape its projects and programmes, and in building new alliances.
- Our team comprises of specialists from across the region. They bring with them management skills, domain knowledge and execution experience from various sectors.

Our Partnerships

- We collaborate with individuals and organisations that bring along with them expert knowledge, resources and on-the-ground networks to help achieve our goals
- We work with our partners to strengthen the influence and impact of our activities to achieve meaningful outcomes

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The **Center for International Higher Education (CIHE)** at the Lynch School of Education, Boston College, promotes the belief that an international perspective is needed to foster enlightened policies and practices in higher education. With this mission, CIHE was founded in 1995 to advance knowledge about the complex realities of higher education in the contemporary world through its research, publications, training programmes, and advisory activities.

Its flagship publication, *International Higher Education*, is read widely around the world, in English as well as in Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese and Vietnamese. In addition to its collaboration with The HEAD foundation on HESB, CIHE is also in collaboration with the National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia, on *Higher Education in Russia and Beyond (HERB)*. This year, CIHE will also start a similar collaboration with Latin American partners on Higher Education in Latin America. Visit CIHE's website at: www.bc.edu/research/cihe.html.

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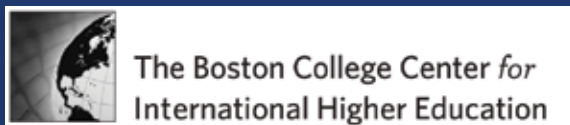
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