



IIEP Policy Forum, 2-3 July 2009

**Tertiary Education in Small States:
Planning in the context of
globalization**

IIEP/SEM 293/Inf.1

PROGRAMME



Thursday, 2 July 2009

8.30 - 9.00 Registration

9.00 - 9.30 Welcome

Mark Bray
Nicholas Burnett
Georges Haddad

Introductory sessions

9.30 - 10.15 Trends in the development of tertiary education in small states – An overview

The inaugural session will discuss trends, patterns and factors in the tertiary education systems of small states. A broad mapping of situations and policy responses will be presented as a prelude to more detailed discussion of the specific circumstances of individual states at a later stage during the Policy Forum.

Mark Bray
Michaela Martin

10.15 - 10.45 Coffee break

Plenary Session 1: The new global environment and its impact on tertiary education in small states

During this session, current features of the contemporary and changing global environment will be identified. They relate to the growing influence of globalization, international political agendas, the knowledge economy, climate change and the global financial crisis. This global environment strongly affects small states, which are more open and may be more vulnerable to the effects of this environment than larger states. This session will discuss the implications of the wider environment for two small states located in different parts of the world.

Chair: Michael Crossley

Discussant: N.V. Varghese

10.45 - 12.30 **How is tertiary education in small states affected by the new global environment? A perspective from Saint Lucia**

Dame Pearlette Louisy

This paper will provide a detailed examination of key challenges and developments in tertiary education in Saint Lucia, a small country which has for many years identified international collaboration as a critical strategy to meet the quantitative expansion of tertiary education and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The paper will present three key challenges to the planning of tertiary education in Saint Lucia: the expansion of tertiary education; the balance between national and regional initiatives; and the need to strengthen local research capacity.

To what extent is the global environment challenging tertiary education planning in small states? How can small states achieve the necessary balances in strengthening their national tertiary education sector in response to local needs and priorities while remaining well attuned to the wider environment?

How is tertiary education in small states affected by the new global environment? A perspective from Maldives

Mohammed Waheed Hassan

The Republic of Maldives comprises 202 inhabited islands and has some typical characteristics of small states, including limited diversification of the economy, openness and vulnerability to economic crisis. This paper explores how Maldives is trying to meet its critical educational and manpower needs in the context of globalization.

More precisely it addresses the following issues: How to meet training needs, which are almost as diverse as in large states, while facing constraints in funding and resources. Should small states send their students overseas as globalization is giving access to a diverse marketplace of programmes of varying quality and cost? To what extent is the amalgamation of small tertiary education institutions into multi-purpose institutions an appropriate strategy for small states? What are the implications of the growing necessity for the smallest states to appeal to cross-border providers and e-learning facilities to cater for the varying and vast demand for tertiary learning? How can regionalization and strategic partnerships constitute a palliative to brain-drain when small states cannot cater for the varying and vast demand for tertiary education by themselves? How can small states be assured that they will fully benefit from developing regional collaboration?

12.30 - 14.00

Lunch

Plenary Session 2: Challenges for the planning of tertiary education in small states

This session will address some cross-cutting strategic themes for the development of tertiary education systems in small states. These are: 1) funding policies for the sustainable development of tertiary education; 2) education and training for local and increasingly global labour markets; and 3) cost-effective options for external quality assurance in the light of an increasing number of cross-border providers

Chair: Mohammed Al-Bandary

14.00 - 15.00

Challenges of sustainable financing of tertiary education in small states

Jamil Salmi

This presentation analyzes ways in which tertiary education in small states can develop in a financially sustainable way in order to ensure positive contributions to economic growth and social development. It starts by outlining recent international trends in terms of reforming financing policies (resource mobilization and resource allocation), which is likely to have a significant impact on the future of tertiary education financing. It then reviews some of the distinctive challenges faced by small states with respect to the development and financing of their tertiary education institutions. It goes on to look at the impact of the global financial crisis. Finally, it proposes three alternative financing scenarios for small states and outlines the conditions under which each one could become reality.

Discussant: Jacques Sciberras

15.00 - 16.00

Linking the development of tertiary education and the labour market in small states: Between localization and internationalization

David Atchoaréna

Improving the linkages between tertiary education and the labour market universally constitutes a major policy concern for higher education. Even in the most advanced economies, improving linkages between the provision of high level competences and skills and their utilization remains a challenge. In recent years, the transformation of the labour market as a result of globalization has produced new constraints, but also new opportunities. In small states, the size and the structure of the domestic labour market obviously constitute the major constraints for establishing links between tertiary education institutions and employment. The scale of migration in small states represents another specificity that affects the relevance of policy responses. Indeed, employment opportunities for graduates from small states are not limited to the domestic economy, but are by nature global. Furthermore, migration also concerns students, in particular in countries that do not have tertiary education institutions. These realities, together with the rise of off-shore offerings, hamper the capacity of small states to control the supply of graduates in relation to their labour market needs. Beyond concerns for domestic and global employability, tertiary education policies of small states need to cater to broader issues, in particular issues pertaining to new forms of vulnerability which have emerged in recent years, such as the hazards resulting from climate change and increased globalization. In this context, the combination of local provision and internationalization constitutes a major challenge to build resilience among graduates and for society at large.

Discussant: Roberta Bassett

Coffee break

16.30 - 17.30

Quality assurance and accreditation: what are the options for small states?

Antony Stella

This paper will explore the diverse strategies of small states which desire Quality Assurance (QA) and accreditation bodies at a national, regional and/or transnational levels. It will focus on some gaps that still need to be bridged. Are the internal, local, national or transnational QA and accreditation options equally effective and relevant? Are they likely to provide an adequate response to small-state contexts and needs? Are they likely to ensure highest standards of academic excellence and strict regulatory requirements for local tertiary institutions, as well as for distance providers and 'Off-shore' education? And to what extent and how do those QA bodies need capacity building to become effective?

Chair: Roli Degazon-Johnson

Discussant: Jean-Michel Domingue

18.00

Cocktail reception

Friday, 3 July 2009

Plenary Session 3: Organizational models for tertiary education in small states

This session will discuss trends in the development of organizational models for tertiary education in small states. The regional university model in the Caribbean and the Pacific has been evolving over the years and has taken on new roles and responsibilities. Community colleges are emerging in many small states, and there is also a trend towards the amalgamation of non-university colleges to full university status. Technology offers new avenues for institution-building and collaboration.

Chair: Rajesh Chandra

9.00 - 10.00

**Revisiting the regional university model – how well does it still stand?
A perspective from the University of the West Indies**

Bhoendradatt Tewarie

Sixty years after its establishment in 1948 (as the University College of the West Indies), the University of the West Indies remains the principal tertiary institution in the Caribbean with 4 campuses, a presence in 15 countries, and 41,000 students. However, over the last 60 years the landscape for tertiary education has changed considerably with over 150 institutions now operating in the region – public, private and offshore. This paper will discuss the extent to which the regional university model, which has guided the evolution of the University of the West Indies, is still valid in the current context of globalization given the expansion and growth of tertiary education provision in the Caribbean. Does the existence and potential development of additional institutions pose a challenge for UWI and, if so, how is this challenge to be defined? Is there opportunity for UWI to rationalize its role as a regional institution that is even more relevant and responsive, and at the same time play a leadership, developmental, rationalizing and integrative role supportive of other tertiary institutions?

Discussant: Hubert Charles

10.00 - 11.00

Technology for collective action: The case of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Sir John Daniel

In 2000 the triennial conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers took place against the heady backdrops of the Millennium Declaration and the dotcom frenzy. Fearing that their individual states did not have the critical mass of trained people and infrastructure to go it alone in integrating ICTs into education, the ministers from the small states created the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) as an instrument for collective action in the e-world. Since then 32 small states have worked together to: 1) train hundreds of their nationals in advanced skills for online collaboration; 2) create e-learning courses in tourism, life skills, building safety, disaster management and fisheries; and 3) develop a Transnational Qualifications Framework to facilitate the offering of these and other courses in small states around the world.

Discussant: Zacheus Kazapua

Coffee break

11.30 - 12.30

Creating a new university linked to development: The University of The Gambia
Mamadou Tangara

The University of The Gambia (UTG) was set up in 1999 as the fourth tertiary education institution in The Gambia, in addition to three already existing other colleges which offer programmes below the Bachelor level. The University of The Gambia now has four faculties, namely the Faculties of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences; Science and Agriculture; Humanities; and Social Sciences. The university started in 1999 with 300 students, and by 2002 had 2000 students enrolled. In nine years of existence the University of The Gambia has conferred the Bachelor's degree to 787 students (636 male, 151 female).

This presentation will focus on the process of setting up and developing the University of The Gambia. It will focus on the need to establish a university in a small and peaceful country, the process of developing an academic offer in line with the developmental needs of the country, as well as on how to engage in strategic partnerships.

Chair: S.E Mme Vera Valentine Duarte-Lobo De Pina

Discussant: Emma Kruse Vaai

Parallel sessions: Reform and innovation in tertiary education in selected small states under different policy rationales

The two parallel sessions will examine recent tertiary education reforms in selected countries amidst tensions between globalization, regionalization and national policy agendas.

Group 1: Building integrated tertiary education systems in the light of globalization and increasing cross-border provision

Chair: Margaret Richardson

14.00 - 15.30

The case of Fiji
Rajesh Chandra

The University of the South Pacific was created in 1968 to serve 12 small island countries. Fiji has been host to the largest campus, and has also been the USP's primary funder and beneficiary.

This paper will explore recent developments in tertiary education in Fiji and the policy challenges at the national and regional levels. Analyzing the process that led to the announcement of the establishment of a national public university scheduled for 2010, this paper will nurture the debate on the relevance of settling a national university in campus countries of regional universities.

What motives for small countries involved in a regional tertiary education system lead them to consider the establishment of a national university as a sustainable policy option? Which challenges are emerging from this ambition? Does it develop a risk from riding too many horses? Will it satisfy the requirements in terms of quality and resources? Does competition between diverse institutional fabric (national, regional and foreign institutions) constitute the best way to address the challenges that tertiary education is currently facing in small states?

The case of Oman
Saif Alshmeli

Oman stands as a model in terms of the development of its education system considering the phenomenal growth it has experienced in the last two decades – commonly described as massive, unprecedented and unsurpassed by any other country. This paper will try to determine the implications of this dramatic growth on the tertiary education system and the consecutive challenges faced by Oman in their efforts to increase participation of the 18-24 year old age cohort in tertiary education from roughly 20% to 50% by 2020.

How does Oman envisage developing rapidly an independent and diverse system of tertiary education? How can a country combine the reliance on cross-border provision with the necessity to nationalize a system of tertiary education that still heavily relies on expatriate expertise, especially in the academic domain? How can a country protect its tertiary education system from fraudulent for-profit provision? And what could be the path towards increasing the private provision of tertiary education without jeopardizing quality in small states? How can collaborative strategies for sustainable and context-sensitive development be worked out with academic partners?

Group 2: Tertiary education reform between regional integration and nation-building

Chair: Alain Arconte

14.00 - 15.30

The case of Malta

Jacques Sciberras

Acceding to membership in 2004, Malta became the smallest member state of the European Union. Since then, the Bologna Process and the EU's Lisbon Agenda have overhauled the reform agenda for the tertiary education system of Malta.

This paper aims at taking stock of recent developments and structural reforms in the tertiary education sector in Malta. What do the structural reform requirements imply in order to integrate a regional framework such as the European Higher Education Area? Why do the frameworks for governance, funding, quality assurance and qualification need to be revised and updated? How is Malta advancing in this process? How can single-university countries successfully integrate a regional system that was formerly designed by/for bigger states? In what does Malta's tertiary education system benefit from its membership to the European Union? What can be the respective constraints likely to hinder tertiary education developments in Malta?

The case of Armenia

Arayik Navoyan

Since gaining independence in 1991 following the collapse of the USSR, Armenia, a small country between Europe and Asia, has experienced dramatic political, social and economic transformation. Together with the Soviet education heritage, Armenia's international integration commitments have guided ongoing reforms. After joining the Bologna Process in 2005 and committed to overhauling the Soviet heritage, Armenia maintains the objective of becoming a full member of the European Higher Education Area.

This paper will explore the implications of Armenian tertiary education reforms, and will discuss whether the progressively-developed new legal framework is likely to offer to tertiary education the governance arrangements necessary to face growing social demand and decreased state funding.

15.30 - 16.00

Coffee break

Final Panel Session

The final panel session will draw conclusions from the presentations and discussions. It will present different stakeholders' perspectives on the strategies to develop tertiary education in small states, and on needed action at the country level and at the level of international organizations.

Chair: Mark Bray

16.00 - 17.30 | **Stakeholder perspectives on the way forward**

Policy-makers' perspectives

Dame Pearlette Louisy
Mohammed Waheed Hassan

International organizations' perspectives

Stamenka Uvalic-Trumbic (UNESCO)
Bonaventure Mvé Ondo (AUF)
Roli Degazon-Johnson (Commonwealth Secretariat)

17.30 - 18.00 | **Closing remarks**

Mark Bray
Michael Crossley
Michaela Martin
